Introduction

This dissertation is a historical ethnography of religious diversity in post-revolutionary Nicaragua, a study of religion and politics from the vantage point of Catholics who live in the city of Masaya located on the Pacific side of Nicaragua at the end of the twentieth century. My overarching research question is: How may ethnographically observed patterns in Catholic religious practices in contemporary Nicaragua be understood in historical context? Analysis of religious ritual provides a vehicle for understanding the history of the Nicaraguan struggle to imagine and create a viable nation-state.

In Chapter 1, I explain how anthropology benefits by using Max Weber's social theory as theoretical touchstone for paradigm and theory development. Considering postmodernism problematic for the future of anthropology, I show the value of Weber as a guide to reframing the epistemological questions raised by Michel Foucault and Talal Asad. Situating my discussion of contemporary anthropological theory of religion and ritual within a post-positive discursive framework—provided by a brief comparative analysis of the classical theoretical traditions of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber—I describe the framework used for my analysis of emerging religious pluralism in Nicaragua.

My ethnographic and historical methods are discussed in Chapter 2. I utilize the classic methods of participant-observation, including triangulation back and forth between three host families. In every chapter, archival work or secondary historical texts ground the ethnographic data in its relevant historical context. Reflexivity is integrated into my ethnographic research, combining classic ethnography with post-modern narrative methodologies. My attention to reflexivity comes through mainly in the

description of my methods and as part of the explanation for my theoretical choices, while the ethnographic descriptions are written up as realist presentations.

Masaya, especially its indigenous residents, played a prominent role in the resistance and insurrection that eventually contributed to the overthrow of the Somoza family dynasty. The 1979 Sandinista Revolution was noted for its embrace of liberation theology, a Catholic theological approach to the analysis of structural economic and social injustice that dared to bring the theological idea of the Christian gospel as "good news" for the poor into dialogue with actual economic, political, and social conditions of poor people. This radical approach utilized some elements of Marxian thought in order to understand Nicaragua's peripheral position in the capitalist world-system.

Realizing that liberation theology is one interpretation of Christianity among several available in Nicaragua, I focus on the religious thought and behavior of lay Catholics in Masaya and its Indian barrio of Monimbó as they experience religious competition within and against their religious worldview. Nicaraguan culture is saturated with Christianity, especially the public manifestations of Roman Catholicism that are practiced in the streets through ritual processions during feast days for saints and major holidays in the church's liturgical calendar. However, increasingly evangelical faith groups are presenting a challenge to Catholic cultural hegemony. The growth of evangelical Protestantism beginning in the 1950's and the much faster growth of Pentecostalism since the 1960's have been accompanied by different forms of worship within Roman Catholicism itself. While the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church may be losing its cultural hegemony, at the same time lay Catholics are showing remarkably diverse forms of agency in the performance of their religious charismas.

Chapter 3 presents a brief historical sketch of the city of Masaya. I trace this history from the time of Spanish domination over the Mesoamerican Indian population living in Monimbó to the present, when their descendants are a distinct ethnic group

living in the largest barrio of the modern-day city. The physical continuity of Monimbó as a place of work and residence has facilitated their self-identity as Indians in spite of the loss of indigenous language, dress, and religion. Catholicism plays a prominent role in the self-identity of Monimboseños.

Chapter 4 describes Masaya's San Jerónimo patron saint celebration from the point of view of the subaltern male members of the religious brotherhood (*cofradía*) whose role it is to carry the saint in street processions. Having observed a social drama during the 1999 patron saint festival in which the men who carry the saint symbolically rebuffed the then-sitting president of the country, Arnoldo Alemán, my attention focused on making sense of this politically symbolic use of ritual. Wondering who they were and why they would use this form of political protest lead me to an analysis of the ethnic and gendered history of the Catholic religious brotherhood that has its roots in the colonial institution of the civil-religious cargo cult.

Chapter 5 is about another annual Catholic ritual celebration, la Purísima, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, whose history also reaches back to the colonial period, when it was introduced by Franciscan priests. Celebrated in the first week of December, la Purísima captures more time and attention in Nicaragua than Christmas. Discovering that Nicaraguan scholar Edgardo Buitrago considered la Purísima the "soul" of the nation, I began to ask questions about how imagining a distinctive Catholic nation impacted Nicaraguan history. How should the relationship between this festival ethnographically observed in the neighborhoods of Masaya and the Immaculate Conception as a national patron saint be understood? Could understanding Marian devotion shed light on the fate of the Sandinista effort to imagine a revolutionary nation-state?

Chapter 6 is framed by a question posed by political scientist Anthony Gill: Can the emergence of liberation theology be more adequately explained by the phenomenon

of rapidly growing evangelical, non-Catholic religious competition than by a hypothesis of an internal awakening within the Roman Catholic Church to the injustices of poverty and political repression? Gill's hypothesis prompted questions not only about how the "invasion of the sects" may have challenged the Roman Catholic Church to reconsider its lack of pastoral services to the poor majority, but also how the specific history of the Nicaraguan Roman Catholic Church reveals its transformation into a politically oppositional institution challenging the state. Could this transformation have actually taken place under the Sandinista government, not under the Somoza regime? While observing the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the Neocatechumenal Way, I began to ask questions about these "new" movements are Catholic responses to the challenge of evangelical Christianity quite distinct from the more widely studied Christian Base Community associated with liberation theology. Gill's hypothesis about religious competition leads me to ask questions that draw out similarities between these three modern Catholic religious movements rather than overemphasize their differences.

What follows sheds light on how religious practices have influenced the way Nicaraguans imagine themselves as a nation. Religious rituals are useful windows for observing people make their own history. As the people of Masaya perform their faith, they illuminate a complex articulation of economic class, social status (principally ethnicity and gender), and political party.

Chapter 1

The Weberian Tradition and Postmodern Challenges: Theoretical Implications for a Historical Ethnography of Religion and Politics in Nicaragua

The Discursive Nature of Social Theory

Most theory courses in cultural anthropology begin by teaching three classical social theorists—Durkheim, Marx, and Weber (Moore 1999:3)—and such was true in my case. A key text was Anthony Giddens' (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, a comparative analysis of these classical traditions that anthropology shares with other social sciences. Given that contemporary anthropology has been split between those seeking to find scientific tools for the study of humankind and those who believe that anthropology and the social sciences generally are best conducted as interpretive analysis, it is useful to return to the classics because all three "sought to break through the traditional philosophical division between idealism and materialism," although this has not always been recognized by "secondary interpreters" (Giddens 1971: xv). All three classical thinkers were attempting to understand the structure of modern society, especially the impact of changes in the economic system (i.e., emergence of modern capitalism).

I have chosen to take a postpositivist approach to social theory; i.e., a systematic, comparative examination of the discourse among social theorists in light of contemporary problems and issues. Jeffrey Alexander's article (1987:21) has been my touchstone; he takes note of the way in which anthropology and its sister disciplines have found it difficult to arrive at consensus on abstract concepts, overarching theoretical frameworks, and empirical referents. Due to this lack of consensus, reference to the classics is needed to integrate the discourse. Following Alexander (1987:27) who says,

"To mutually acknowledge a classic is to have a common point of reference," I have chosen the Weberian tradition as my common point of reference. Yet, the Weberian tradition does not represent a body of research and theory wholly independent of the other two classical traditions here discussed. Understanding social theory emerges by working in "a body of discourse that enables us to read or know our way around a concept" (Kosman 2003:16). Hence, this dissertation specifically presents a way of reading "around" concepts of religion and power, using a comparative framework.

Durkheim and Marx have had greater influence on anthropology than Weber (Boon 1982; Keyes 2002).[1] Weber's interest in the historical unfolding of political, economic, and cultural factors as well as his attention to connections between human agency and social patterns offers a rich source of theoretical insights for anthropology. Agency for Weber refers to the actions of people who are "carriers" of cultural ideas and practices—people who make choices among the sources of power and authority at their disposal in the context of on-going conflictive social processes. The study of agency for Weber includes the "empathetic understanding of another person's values or culture" (Morris 1987:60), a fundamental assumption in cultural anthropology. Sociologist Bryan Turner (1992a:8) thinks the recent resurgence of interest in Weber marks "the revival of a culturalist perspective" for sociology. I think Weber's conceptual analyses of social structure, power, and authority offer a rich theoretical corpus for improving cultural anthropology.[2]

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[1]This is being corrected by some historical anthropologists; i.e., Robert Carmack (1996a), Jane Schneider (1990).
[2] Some of the anthropologists who have influenced me in understanding agency in the production of culture rather than describing culture as the transmission of shared values include Sherry Ortner (1984), Robert Carmack (1995; 1996a), Liliana Goldin (1999), and Louise Burkhart (2001; 1996a).

The culture concept, central to cultural anthropology as practiced in the United States, has come under increasing scrutiny in recent years.[3] Stanley Barrett (2002:5) summaries the key elements of this critique:

> Not only does culture allegedly promote timelessness, discreteness, homogeneity, holism, consensus, continuity, essentialism, and localism, but it also obfuscates power for the benefit of Western domination. Relativism itself may have been one of the culprits. By floating the idea of equality across supposed unique cultures, it diverted attention from the power imbalances among them, especially between the West and the Rest.

I pay attention to power imbalances and understand culture as a fluid, conflict-ridden process of people interacting with each other within matrixes of unequal access to power and authority. The emphasis on "practice" in anthropology since the 1960's (Ortner 1984) attempts to conceptualize culture as a dynamic process. Human beings, a culture-bearing species, actively attempt to reproduce tradition and promote change; those trying to make changes often claim they are following tradition and those trying to maintain tradition are often changing it. Victor Turner (1985:154) writes that culture is "an endless series of negotiations among actors about the assignment of meaning to the acts in which they jointly participate." Although Turner's definition limits culture to meanings, his definition implicitly brings in the concept of power through the word, "negotiations." These negotiations may be manifested in subtle everyday interactions within the family or between neighbors, and they can be observed at higher levels of human interaction from city to region, to state or international. Negotiations can breakdown, becoming serious conflicts, violence, or war. Jack Eller (1997:252) has captured an important insight about culture: "Groups appear to fight *about* culture, but actually fight *with* culture" (quoted in Barrett 2002:15). As I use the concept, culture is a summarizing term for the processual "tools" (behavioral and mental, physical and conceptual, charismatic and institutional) that groups of human beings create and use in

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[3] Some of those I have consulted on the culture concept, in addition to those I have already mentioned in the main body of my text, include Kuper (1999), Sewell Jr. (1999), and Brightman (1995).

"bargaining" (peacefully or violently) for power and authority, but it is an abstraction that should not be reified. It indicates the complex interweaving of social actions and institutional structures situated in historical context.

Russell Leigh Sharman (2006:843) argues that cultural meaning "is rarely shared as much as it is constrained by social relations of power."[4] Power clearly is central to any adequate definition of culture. With the turn towards postmodernism, power as a theoretical concept has taken center stage, but working with Weber's social theory as a common reference point, I will make clear the inadequacies of pursuing a postmodern trajectory through the theoretical discourse on power, juxtaposing Max Weber over against two postmodern scholars, Michel Foucault and Talal Asad. The corrective that thinking with the aid of a Weberian approach fosters in cultural anthropology is to reestablish "the connections between ideas and social processes, more specifically the feedback between religious and political and economic development" (Kuper 1999:80).

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[4] Russell Leigh Sharman (2006:843) notes that Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) and James Clifford and George E. Marcus (1986) are among anthropologists who have rejected the culture concept outright as "unavoidably essentialist;" they argue that culture and meaning have been conflated without including an analysis of power. Not wanting to reject the culture concept, Sharman (2006:842) reframes culture as an aesthetic system, seeking to avoid reductivist views of culture as meaning or pre-cultural views of experience as purely natural. Sharman's theory offers great value in analyzing religious phenomena. He explores ritual and political struggles that appropriate saint devotions in his historical study of the La Negrita devotion in Costa Rica, in which he argues that neither state nor church can completely control how the subaltern, the so-called "mulato" population, experiences the ritual object; the hegemonic discourse must "constantly revise its own response to the agency of experience" (Sharman 2006:845). Sharman's theory is infused with insights from Victor Turner (Turner 1974; 1986) and Antonio Gramsci (1971). Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" moved Marxist discourse away from economic determinism and closer to issues of culture and individual agency. Sharman (2006:843) describes Gramsci's (1971) contribution: Gramsci saw power as "personal, not ideational. Meaning did not have any integrative power, people had power; 'meaning' was a tool produced by the organic intellectuals of the dominant class to create consent among the subaltern" (cf. Crehan 2002). Sharman contributes greater attention to agency for subalterns than Gramsci, and his Gramscian-influenced insight into power enriches Victor Turner's theory of ritual. Sharman's theory discusses ideas that are in a similar discursive realm as my analysis of saint devotions in Nicaragua, but he does not without explicitly adopt terminology from the Weberian tradition.

Theories of Religion and Power

Comparing Marx and Durkheim

Bruce Lincoln (1985) has argued that social theory in the mid-1980s had reached a theoretical stand-off between "materialist" (Marxian) and "romantic" (Durkheimian) views of religion and power (see also Giddens 1971). Marx (1957) looked[5] on religion as a mystifying ideology that tends to blind the working class to its alienation. Relegating religion to epiphenomenal status in the "superstructure" as the "opiate of the masses," Marx did not give serious attention to the study of religion; instead he gave theoretical primacy to class structure as the underlying nature of modern society. Objective economic forces are the "base" that drives social change. Contradictions in the capitalist character of the economy (due to the division between those with productive property and those without) are the internal motors of change in society and culture (Giddens

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[5] Although I am using an expository, comparative approach similar to Anthony Giddens (1971), I do not use the present tense when describing the main points of the classical social theorists. Giddens (1971: viii) says he uses the present tense to emphasize the contemporary relevance of the three classical theorists, but I prefer the past tense since they are classical writers whose works (although still relevant) were shaped by a time and place now past. Others may take up their ideas, but they are transformed and adapted in different historical contexts. I take this stance for the same reason that I do not accept the "ethnographic present," a writing convention used by earlier anthropologists trying to salvage knowledge about native cultures before they disappeared. However, this meant that they "deliberately (screened) out what was going on around them" due to European conquest and colonization (Sanjek 1991:612ff). For more on the contemporary critique of the "ethnographic present," see e.g., Johannes Fabian (1983:80), David McKnight (1990:58), Renato Rosaldo (1993:42), and Erve Chambers (2000:855). Writing in the "ethnographic present" is now called an error in contemporary guides to ethnographic research guides. R. F. Ellen (1984:67) writes that this convention implies that the community is "frozen in time, thus obviating the necessity of worrying about history, change and the diachronic aspects of any culture, especially those being forced on the community by outside agents." My ethnographic descriptions of Nicaraguan life are essentially historical data regarding observations made in 1999-2000. Historical context is an essential aspect of this dissertation, not an assumption that cultural patterns have changed little since "time immemorial" or that a culture is "authentic" only if it is "uncontaminated" by the "outside" world (Ellen 1984:67). My mode of presentation is the "excerpt strategy" as described by Robert Emerson et al. (1995:179-186); i.e., my ethnographic notes are "accounts composed in the past, close to events in the field" (Emerson, et al. 1995:180-181).

1971:240). Revolution was envisioned as necessary to advance industrial society beyond capitalism to a classless society and a withering away of the state.[6]

Durkheim (1915), in contrast, thought religion performed the important function of creating moral consensus, binding people together in society. He considered religion as a projection of a social group's vision of a desirable social order rather than divinely-given truth. Durkheim's research explored the social elements necessary for maintaining stability, viewing revolution as symptomatic of social breakdown rather than the Marxian view that it is a breakthrough to a new level of social organization that would end oppression (Kimmel 1990:37). For Durkheim, religion was a social fact, a widespread phenomenon in human societies that creates social coherence, a guide for maintaining a "moral community" (Morris 1987:116). Although the state has a moral as well as a political role to play, Durkheim thought that state should be connected with, but distinct from, civil society, where religious groups operate (Giddens 1971:241).

Durkheim was aware of social problems. He thought that social misery indicated a lack of functional solidarity and some forms of religion offer greater protection than others against social misery. Anomie, a feeling of normlessness or social disorientation, results when the division of labor in modern society (unified by an "organic" solidarity) has moved faster than the development of moral regulation to cover the changes (Giddens 1971:80). Although Durkheim was by no means a revolutionary, Morris (1987:110) notes that "his concept of 'anomie' has a critical aspect, implying that

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[6] Marx thought that a communist revolution would occur in industrial core countries of world capitalism; he did not predict that Russia would be transformed by revolution or that peasants would end up being more important to revolutionary struggles than the working class. As I began my study of anthropology in the 1990s, shock waves in the world of existing socialism from a series of events: the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989, the brutal suppression of the democracy movement in China also in 1989, the beginning of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the Sandinistas being voted out of power in 1990. These developments in actually existing socialist countries caused a paradigm crisis in Marxian thought (i.e.,Aronson 1995; Blackburn 1991; Callari, et al. 1995; Herra 1991; Magnua and Cullenberg 1995).

contemporary capitalism is, in a sense, pathological."[7] The causes of anomie in the

"organic solidarity" of modern society included regimented work lacking meaning, an

unregulated market, and class conflict (Morris 1987:110); hence, Durkheim recognized

some of the same material causes of social problems as Marx.

Durkheim's theory yielded data on the differential strength of religious groups in

protecting adherents against developing severe anomie that results in suicide. Durkheim

found a lower rate of suicide among Catholics and Jews than among Protestants, which

he thought was due to less religious coherence in Protestantism, a dissenting movement

that continued to fragment into additional religious denominations. Durkheim

(1951:169) made the claim that suicide results from the loss of religious consistency, not

competing secular theories or knowledge:

> Man seeks to learn and man kills himself because of the loss of cohesion in his
> religious society; he does not kill himself because of his learning. It is certainly
> not the learning he acquires that disorganizes religion; but the desire for
> knowledge awakens because religion becomes disorganized. Knowledge is not
> sought as a means to destroy accepted opinion but because their destruction has
> commenced.

Durkheim thought that "the Anglican church is far more powerfully integrated than

other Protestant churches" (Durkheim 1951:160), and that this social fact was

responsible for England having the lowest rate of suicide among Protestant nations. Jews

had the lowest rate of suicide of all religious groups studied. Durkheim (who was a non-

religious Jew) argued that Jews seek education "to be better armed in struggle" against

the hate they experience rather than to question their faith (Durkheim 1951:167-168).

Durkheim's (1951:157-169) study of differential rates of suicide by religion is an

example of his theory's ability to suggest significant research questions for the

comparative study of religions. Marx, who was fundamentally hostile to religion, gave no

comparable insight into the varieties of religious systems and their interaction with other

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[7] Durkheim was critical of economic determinism, but his mode of analysis was nonetheless
materialist; however, the materialist prime mover was not the Marxian emphasis on means and
social relations of production but demography (Morris 1987:109-110).

aspects of social life. Although Marx noted a positive feature of religion in his comment

that religion is the "heart of a heartless world," he was saying that religion can soothe the

pain caused by class inequality and conflict, but religion is a mere "painkiller" rather

than a cure (Bottomore 1991:465).[8] Marx's theory hints at religion's role in addressing

the theodicy question[9], but some of his followers adopted a more mechanical or "vulgar"

interpretation of Marxism (Antonio 1985:34-35). They tended to dismiss religion as an

obstacle to revolutionary change, a mystifying worldview, or a delusion.

Robert G. Williams' (1986) excellent socioeconomic study of the crisis in Central

America in the 1980's gives an example of the limitations of Marxian theory for

suggesting interesting questions about religion.[10] Economic shifts in the cotton and

cattle agrarian industries to capitalist forms of production caused disruptions in the

peasant economy. This economic disruption of the previous social relations eventually

led to revolutionary struggles in three Central American countries—Nicaragua,

Guatemala, and El Salvador. Williams states that these economic changes produced a

change in religion. The paternalistic religion that served the coffee plantation owners

was disrupted by the harsh impacts of the capitalist shift in cotton and cattle, which

needed wage workers only during harvest-time (cotton) or only a few wage workers all

year round (cattle). Peasants were needed to tend the coffee trees year round as well as

during the harvest; landlords allowed them to use land to grow subsistence crops such as

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[8] Engels wrote more on the history of religion and politics than Marx, but Bottomore (1991:466) argues that Engels' writings on religion, nonetheless, remained limited because he was engaged in polemical argument against German idealist historians in his effort to promote the primacy of class conflict rooted in material interests.

[9] Weber understood the theodicy question as a problem that becomes acute when God is understood as universal, omnipotent, and omniscient. Weber (1993: 138-139) wrote, "...the more the development (of a religion) tends toward the conception of a transcendent unitary god who is universal, the more there arises the problem of how the extraordinary power of such a god may be reconiled with the imperfection of the world that he has created and rules over."

[10] To be fair to Williams (1986), he did not set out to suggest any research questions about religion. His analysis is an excellent structural analysis of the socioeconomic transformation in Central America that underlies the crisis of the 1980's. I use Williams because his study had a strong influence on my thinking when first I began to study the region.

corn and beans, accepting a portion of their crops as payment rather than rent paid in cash. The capitalist changes in land and labor associated with cotton and cattle displaced peasants who moved to cities. Little industry was available in the cities to absorb the displaced; an industrial revolution similar to the earlier pattern in England or the United States was not transforming Central America. Unemployment increased; workers suffered increasing immiserization. "Once the economic basis of paternalistic rule was destroyed, very soon thereafter there came a dissolution of the religion that has gone with it," Williams (1986:157) maintains, but here his discussion of religion ends.

Williams' theoretical tools for analysis are classically Marxian, so they do not encourage exploration of the varieties of religious practices that began to emerge, as the previous form of Christianity dissolved. The varieties of new religious expression in Central America include various forms of Protestantism, Pentecostalism, Catholic liberation theology, other alternatives within Catholicism (i.e., Charismatic and Neocatechumenal Way) as well as changes in Catholic ritual forms that may still appear to be "traditional" (i.e., patron saints and Immaculate Conception) but are actually being continuously modified under new economic and political conditions. Marxian theory encourages research questions about new forms of religion being ideologically manipulated by the ruling class but is less effective in suggesting ways to look for agency among subalterns who may choose new religious practices over atheism or revolution.

Although Durkheim theorized religion as a projection of a society's image of itself, he did not dismiss religion as a delusion. The fact that religion is widespread indicated to him that it serves vital human needs (Morris 1987:114). Durkheim (1915:3) wrote:

> In reality—there are no religions which are false. All are true in their own fashion, all answer, though in different ways, to the given conditions of human existence. So when we turn to primitive religions, it is not with the idea of deprecating religion in general, for these religions are not less respectable than others. They

respond to the same needs, they play the same role, they depend upon the same causes; they can also well serve to show the nature of the religious life.

At the heart of his understanding of religion, then, Durkheim found the theodicy question, which is a central feature of Weber's approach of the study of religion.

Bryan Turner (1996:148) defines theodicy as the problem of grappling with the contradiction between belief in a good, all-powerful God and the presence of pain and sin in the world, which gives rise to a fundamental question: "If a wise and just God exists, why is there evil in the world?" Weber identified three solutions to this question: (1) an eschatological solution, a future in which the poor and weak supplant the powerful; (2) a dualist solution in which there are two gods, one good and one evil, in constant battle; and (3) a karmic solution in which moral and immoral actions are rewarded or punished in a future life through reincarnation (Weber 1993:139-150). For Weber, Christianity was an example of the "eschatological" type in which a resolution to the problem of evil in the world would only be resolved when the "end of time" finally arrives; i.e., salvation will only come about at the second coming of Christ. Weber also paid considerable attention to the historically recurrent tensions around the question of whether the path to that future salvation is through "world-mastery" or "world-flight," i.e., social action in the world to help God's Kingdom as an on-going process on earth ("this-worldly") or mystical withdrawal ("other-worldly") from an evil world hopelessly flawed (Turner 1996:148).

This brief comparison seeks to illustrate the discursive stand-off between vulgar Marxian materialism (which dismisses religion as an ideology derivative from the economic base, blinding the working class to the cause of their pain) and the more positive Durkheimian view of religion as a potential source of "social glue" (which is needed to hold society together, orienting its people to their place in the social order.) This theoretical stand-off on religion between a materialist-critical and a functionalist-

romantic view (Lincoln 1985) can be overcome by widening the conversation to include

Max Weber's analysis of the theology problem, which suggests research questions about

culturally distinct solutions to this problem situated in their historical contexts.

Weber on Religion and Power

Weber sought to develop a theory and a method that would make it possible to

understand both structural constraints and cultural-political aspects of human social

action, consciously looking for the means to resolve a stand-off between materialist and

idealist social theories. Although Talcott Parsons' (1968) interpretation of Max Weber's

work tended to cast Weber as an idealist thinker in opposition to Marxist historical

materialism, subsequent re-examinations (e.g.,Antonio and Glassman 1985; Giddens

1971) have found common ground between these two classical social theorists.

Max Weber (1864-1920), like Durkheim (1858-1917), was a later contemporary of

Karl Marx (1818-1883). Weber and Durkheim entered a discursive context already

profoundly influenced by Marxian ideas, but Durkheim did not engage the Marxian

tradition to the extent that Weber did.[11] Moreover, Durkheim and Weber wrote their

studies before there were any governments that called themselves "socialist" or claimed

to be inspired by Marx (Giddens 1971:245); however, Weber did examine the 1905-1906

events in Russia that preceded the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (Scaff and Arnold 1985).[12]

In contrast to Marx who saw class structure as the organizing principle of modern

capitalism and Durkheim who highlighted the organic solidarity created by an

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[11] In addition, Weber and Marx were much more directly involved in the political events of their day than Durkheim, whose works were scholarly and rarely polemical (Giddens 1971:65).
[12] Scaff and Arnold (1985:195-196) write: "For Weber, not only Marx but also Marxism is felt on every page of (Weber's 1906) *Bourgeois Democracy in Russia*. The reason lies in the rationalization of economic life in the context of Russian intellectual culture... Complaining about the romantic revolutionaries, Weber notes that, 'for their knowledge about the nature of capitalism they have generally read no one except Marx and have misunderstood even him, since they leaf through his work with the incessant question about 'the moral lessons of history.'"

increasingly complex division of occupations (without using the term capitalism), Weber

focused on rationality as the key to understanding capitalism:

> In Weber's conception, rational calculation is the primary element in modern
> capitalist enterprise, and the rationalisation of social life generally is the most
> distinctive attribute of modern western culture. The class relation which Marx
> takes to be the pivot of capitalism is in fact only one element in a much more
> pervasive rationalisation, which extends the process of 'expropriation of the
> worker from his means of production' into most of the institutions in
> contemporary society... The 'disenchantment' of the world which is both
> prerequisite to, and completed by, the advent of rational capitalism, transforms
> what previously was only a 'means' (rational pursuit of gain in a specialised
> vocation) into the 'end' of human activity (Giddens 1971:241).

Weber's concept of rationalization helps to structure questions about how religion, as a

non-rational aspect of human society, is impacted by the spread of an economic system

based on rational calculation. The primary objective of his historical studies of world

religions was to look for empirical evidence of cultural blocks to capitalist development

that may explain why capitalism developed first in the West.[13] Protestantism emerged as

a more rationalized form of religion; while still a non-rational component of society, it

ironically contributed to the disenchantment of society as it changed the practices of

Christianity in response to economic change (Schneider 1990:52).

It cannot be overemphasized that, for Weber, the study of religion requires

historical analysis of particular cases. With the shift in anthropology away from

synchronic functionalism, we need theoretical paradigms for developing dynamic,

diachronic models. Because Weber is a "historical thinker" (Morris 1987:59-60) who

aims at the unification of the cultural and social sciences (Morris 1987:58; Ringer 1997),

he is a good classical source for historical anthropology. His analysis of power and

authority (as well as the parallel terms of charisma and institutionalization) is useful

because these terms highlight questions of agency. Thus, Weber retained the best of the

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[13] Weber is not without bias because his comparative focus is meant to explain his own society,
e.g. why the West developed capitalism and other societies did not. Turner (2002) develops a
critical analysis of Weber's orientalism; i.e., the ways Weber privileged western forms of
rationality and Calvinist piety over other forms of rationality and religious expression.

Marxian concern for the impact of economic change, while avoiding economic

determinism.

While Marx argued that class is the material reality that causes ideology (as a

derivative result of objective economic change), Weber argued that ideology is not an

"effect" that can be deduced from material reality (Giddens 1971:210). For Weber, non-

rational charismatic innovation creates new values, focusing his theoretical lens on

agency. He did not conclude that charismatic authority (religion being a prime example)

produces a mystifying ideology, but rather various charismas create new grounds for

social action; people take action based on a synergy between their economic and value

interests. Weber does not treat theologies or secular ideologies as disembodied ideas but

rather he looks for individuals or social groups who are the "carriers" of ideas, i.e. those

who had an "elective affinity" for a particular religious belief, practice, or form of social

action.

Bryan Turner (1992:226), following Friedrich Tenbruck (1975), highlights

Weber's research interest in religious ethics as fundamentally anthropological. It is

worth quoting Turner (1992:226-227) at length on this point:

> Wherever there is an elementary expectation about how life ought to be there is a
> problem of theodicy because everyday reality conflicts with our sense of fairness,
> justice and correctness. Death, disease and disaster challenge any idea of divine
> purpose (Turner 1983). Weber thus developed the contrast between fortune and
> suffering to describe how human moral assumptions conflict with the sheer
> actuality of things (*Dinge in ihrer schieren Tatsachlichkeit*). No purposive-
> rational solution to the disorder of the everyday world is entirely satisfactory,
> because rationality cannot ultimately provide meaningful solution to the problem
> of theodicy. The anthropological significance of religion is to provide powerful
> solutions at the level of symbol, ritual and doctrine to the senseless character of
> the mundane world. Here is the real location of charisma in Weber's sociology,
> namely as a spiritual force which, in going beyond our experiences of the
> mundane world, offers hope that there is a meaningful reality beyond everyday
> reality. Religion is thus related to this universal anthropological quest for
> meaning.

Bryan Turner (1992:227) emphasizes that Weber went beyond conceptualizing religion

as a quest for meaning to a focus on religious institutions embedded in social structures

as well as the social actors who live and work within and against such institutions. Religious groups embody historically particular answers to life's difficulties and, perhaps even more important for social change, they are vulnerable to "the perennial threat of unrestrained charisma" (Turner 1992:227). This "threat" of charisma is particularly relevant to the study of the history of Christianity generally and is fundamental to my study; I examine competing charismas within Christianity as they are being played out in Nicaragua, a historically specific example of economic, political, and religious change.

Unlike Durkheim's (1915) search for "elementary forms" of religion, Weber examined historically specific instances of religious change among the world religions (rather than the minority religions of non-European indigenous groups),[14] trying to unravel the complexities of the intended and unintended consequences of religious ethics for society (Turner 1992:227). Turner (1992b:223) finds thematic unity in Weber's mature work in the attention he gave to "the implications of religious cultures for economic practices." Weber turns his attention to "quite specific contingent struggles between religious, secular, political and other social groups" (Turner 2002:130).

Hence, Weber (1993) does not view religion as inherently positive or negative, neither as social glue holding society in equilibrium nor ideologically blinding the disempowered. Instead, he views religion as a potential source of power and legitimacy for both ruling elites and non-elite social groups who grab what power they can to challenge or support authority structures in society, depending on who is up or down at any given point in a struggle.

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[14] Weber can be situated in the paradigm of "world religion;" as an anthropologist I share in the paradigm of religion as a "cultural necessity" (Bell 2006); see also Tomoko Masuzawa (2005). My study operates within the discourse of these two paradigms, as Catherine Bell (2006) sets out, including in that discourse the postmodern critique of the anthropological geneaology of religion and ritual, even though I reject most postmodern assumptions and conclusions, as the reader will see later in this chapter. Anthropologists have specialized in studying the religious expression of non-European peoples and the clash of these native religions with "world religions," e.g., Christianity or Islam; a sampling of a few introductory texts on the anthropology of religion bears this out: William Lessa and Evon Vogt (1979); Fiona Bowie (2000); and Brian Morris (2006). Recently, anthropologists have begun to focus specifically on Christianity (e.g.,Cannell 2006).

The Postmodern Dilemma in Anthropology

My project of promoting Weber as a worthy classical model for developing a research agenda must grapple with the dilemma that postmodernism poses for anthropology. The epistemological arguments about positivism, postpostivism, and postmodernism in anthropology are influenced by debates in the philosophy of science.

Bryan Turner (1996:6) argues that "Weber represents a major turning point in the breakdown of positivism." Marx and Durkheim were both positivists. Marx believed that he had achieved a scientific theory in which class conflict is a law driving the formation of capitalism and the inevitable source of the force necessary to affect social change, especially revolution. Durkheim endeavored to establish sociology as an independent discipline grounded in scientific methodology for the empirical and comparative examination of "social facts," understood as external "things" that constrain individuals (Morris 1987:106-111). Sharing with Durkheim an interest in comparative and causal analysis, Weber nonetheless rejected the functionalist reification of social facts and its tendency towards ahistorical method. Weber sought both explanation (universal patterns of social action) and interpretation of human social action in its historical complexity and uniqueness; he did not think it was possible to achieve the status of scientific law in explaining social patterns.

Kuhn's Challenge to the "Positivist" Approach to Science

Thomas Kuhn's (1962) historical study of scientific revolutions challenged the philosophical project of developing a rational reconstruction of the "positive" approach to science. As philosophers developed their critiques of logical positivism, Karl Popper

(1959) argued that a rigorous scientific method seeks to falsify hypotheses, and when theory is continuously falsified, it will be dropped and a new program begun under a different theory. Kuhn thought he saw a different pattern by examining the historical record of actually practicing scientists. He noticed that the accumulation of anomalies that do not fit the paradigm did not lead to the abandonment of the framework, even if falsified predictions were piling up. Most of the time scientists were doing "normal" science (solving puzzles) without questioning the dominant paradigm; only rarely, when a scientific revolution is underway, do they begin to argue over the theoretical underpinnings of their research programs and consider abandoning them.

According to this Kuhnian definition of science, the social sciences have never had a period in which a single, overarching paradigm[15] dominated the research agenda (Haycock 1992). In other words, the social sciences have never had a historical period that fits the picture Kuhn draws of "normal" science. Kuhn (1962:37) explains the value of a dominant paradigm in which fundamental assumptions are taken for granted:

> ...one of the things a scientific community acquires with a paradigm is a criterion for choosing problems that, while the paradigm is taken for granted, can be assumed to have solutions. To a great extend these are the only problems that the community will admit as scientific or encourage its members to undertake.

A question such as how to achieve world peace, Kuhn (1962:37) notes, is not a puzzle because it is a social problem that has no taken-for-granted paradigm that promises a clearly defined path for seeking a solution. Kuhn argues that the accumulation of anomalies does not, in and of itself, cause a shift in the paradigm. Scientific revolutions[16]

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[15] Margaret Masterman (1970) argued that Kuhn uses the term "paradigm" in 21 different senses. I have settled on the usage that assumes that a paradigm is a "general metaphysical viewpoint" or "metanarrative" that, broadly speaking, structures the types of questions that are asked in a research agenda. Specific theories and hypotheses are drawn from within this general framework that is not itself falsifiable through scientific methods. It functions to set out certain fundamental assumptions or premises. Philosophically speaking, a paradigm must posit such fundamentals in order to get started. Postmodernism challenges this "foundationalism" in theory building.
[16] Kuhn's examples of scientific revolutions through paradigm shifts are drawn from the natural sciences (physics, astronomy, and the electrical sciences); he describes changes from Newtonian physics to Einstein and quantum mechanics, Ptolemaic to Copernican astronomy, or Maxwell's

take place through flashes of intuition (Kuhn uses the metaphor "gestalt" shift), when scientists grasp that another paradigm may offer a better framework for understanding the accumulating anomalies and suggest a new set of testable hypotheses. This radical transformation is preceded by philosophical debates about alternative paradigms. Kuhn argues that when scientists engage in argumentation, they often end up talking past each other because different paradigms are incommensurable. Scientists working within different paradigms, Kuhn (1962:121) argues, tend to "see different things when looking at the same sorts of objects;" the change in paradigm "is not fully reducible to a reinterpretation of individual and stable data." The data are theory-dependent and cannot be "seen" apart from the paradigm.

Viewed from within the Kuhnian-inspired debates about scientific revolutions, the social sciences lack epistemic status as science because they do not have these periods of "puzzle-solving" normal science; they are "immature" disciplines because they have yet to achieve consensus on a paradigm that would generate widely-accepted experimental or quasi-experimental methods that approximate the rigor in the so-called "hard" sciences, i.e., physics. Sociologist Donald Black (2000) is one who dreams of a positivist approach in the social sciences. He has developed a fascinating scientific law for predicting which research subjects in the social sciences are most likely to be treated with a positivist approach. Black's hypothesis examines the social distance of the researcher from the research object; the greater the social distance, the easier it is to develop a hypothesis and test it. Marvin Harris (1968; 1979) argues insistently, almost dogmatically, that cultural materialism is the only truly satisfactory scientific theory in anthropology. His discourse is meant to weed out all the bad theories in anthropology.

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electromagnetic theory. Practitioners may work within shared community paradigms that they cannot articulate. They have learned their "intellectual tools…in a historically and pedagogically prior unit that displays them with and through applications" rather than the philosophy of science (Kuhn 1962:46).

In contrast, a postpositivist accepts this discursiveness as inevitable because we stand in a subject-to-subject relation with the "objects" of our research (Alexander 1987:20-21). We cannot distance ourselves easily from other human beings or questions that pertain to human society. Contrary to Kuhn (1962), however, I do not think the theories are incommensurable. Accepting Kuhn's "gestalt" metaphor means that scientists can, and do, shift back and forth between the different configurations, seeing different aspects of the same reality. A postpositivist perspective evaluates theories through comparison with other theories,[17] in contrast to the positivist approach that considers empirical tests as the best method to evaluate theory (Haycock 1992); hence, my earlier treatment of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber was a brief postpositive, comparative exploration of social theory. The three classical traditions are held in dynamic tension, so that understanding may emerge through the discussion, i.e., we gain insight through discussing our way around the concepts in question (Kosman 2003:16). Postpositivism encourages the understanding of theories as guides to research (i.e., "heuristic" or helping to discover), not ontological realities that can be proven true or false. This is a major distinguishing feature for postpositivism over and against the positivist assumption that theories are tested in order to either confirm the truth-value of the theory (Keat and Urry 1982) or falsify it without being able to corroborate its truth-value (Popper 1959). Within postpositivism, a theory can produce valid empirical data, even though some hypotheses may ultimately be falsified.

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[17] Different paradigms help you see different facets of the social reality in the same data. William R. Fowler, Jr. (1989:249-276) provides a good illustration in that he uses a cultural evolutionary theory to present his data about the ancient Nahua civilizations in Central America, but he concludes with a chapter in which he examines his data through the alternate lenses of ecological-functionalist and historical materialist approaches. He notes what each theory illuminates and fails to illuminate, such as historical materialism's premise that internal conflict causes social change as an "antidote" to the synchronic emphasis of functionalism, which looks for components of a social system and how they function to create the social whole observed. Fowler also notes what methods (archeology or ethnohistory) can provide evidence for which theories, i.e., ethnohistorical reconstructions can suggest evidence for the Marxian mode of production, but making this kind of inference from the archeological record is more difficult.

Postmodernism confronts the problem of the proper philosophical basis for science by rejecting the positivist approach, deconstructing faulty premises and adopting a Kuhnian "social constructivism," i.e., the data are entirely theory-dependent and scientists "see" a different reality within each paradigm. Postpositivism eschews this postmodern tendency towards philosophical idealism and rejects an assumption of a "socially constructed" world (Wuthnow, et al. 1984). Tim Ingold (1996) gives a trenchant critique of the problems of social construction, arguing for a concept of a "dwelt-in" world in which perception results from an interaction between culture and the environment in which human beings live rather than human cognitive cultural abilities being the dominate force that constructs our perceptions.[18] A postpositivist operates from a position of "critical realism" (Steinmetz 1998) in which reality exists outside the human mind, but the capacity to apprehend this reality is mediated by human culture.

Thus, the disciplines of the social sciences are characterized as epistemic communities in which critical discourse is continuous (Alexander 1987; Haycock 1992), rarely moving beyond the debates over fundamentals. For positivists, such as Black (2000) or Harris (1968; 1979), this is frustrating. They regard discursiveness as a major weakness that must be overcome; while, for postpositivists, the ongoing debate over theories is the life-blood of the "positive heuristic" (Haycock 1992:172). Weber developed a historical social science that aimed at resolving the tension between the positivist Carl Hempel and the idealist Wilhelm Dilthey (Ringer 1997). The practice of postpositivist comparative theoretical discourse encourages the search for points of contact that prevent claims of incommensurability, which serve only to close down the conversation.

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[18] Prior to Ingold (1996), various culture-environment models were advanced by Julian Steward (1955), Roy Rappaport (1984), Robert Netting (1986), and others. See Benjamin Orlove's (1980) critical review of the stages of the development of culture-environment models up to 1980, when "ecosystem" was the central term (cf., Moran 1990). Newer approaches to the environment within anthropology distinguish themselves from the "ecosystem" model, examining the history of human-environment interaction with "landscape" as a key concept in a historical ecology (Balée 2006:76-77; Crumley 1994) and environmentalism as "discourse" in which human definitions of responsibility for the environment are the subject of study (Milton 1993).

In the late twentieth century, postmodernism entered the discourse. Pauline Marie Rosenau (1992:3), in her analysis of the influence of postmodernism in the social sciences, remarks, "post-modernism haunts social science today." Indeed, I have felt haunted by postmodern "deconstruction" of paradigms and theories.

Consequences of Postmodernism for Anthropology

Postmodernism is the project of deconstructing the epistemic foundations of how we in the West understand the world, claiming to promote radical rethinking, especially questioning claims to objectivity. Jean-François Lyotard (1984:xxiii) describes the "postmodern condition" as one that exhibits strong skepticism about "metanarratives," which are "totalizing" or "grand" narratives that provide large-scale frameworks for understanding human society. A sampling of the metanarratives that Lyotard considers "totalizing" include some of the major theoretical traditions from which the social sciences have drawn their conceptual tools: "the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (Lyotard 1984:xxiv), a description that suggests the works of Hegel, Weber, Marx, and Adam Smith, respectively.

When I began formal study of anthropology, I was in the grip of a dimly perceived epistemological crisis, a crisis framed by postmodern questioning of science and objectivity. Yet, my interest in anthropology springs from a deeply felt sense of moral purpose for social science research: research should serve "some conception of social justice, equity, freedom, and progress—that is to say, some idea of what a good society might be" (White 1999:316). The search for truth and adequate tools for evaluating social action must go hand-in-hand. Being neo-Kantian, Weber did not think scientific research alone could answer essential value questions; however, he did not shy away from making

his own reasoned judgments on value questions, especially political or public decisions about the direction of human society.

While raising important questions about unacknowledged bias in social theory, postmodernism raises perplexing issues. Coherence of the subject, culture as text, and questioning the possibility of historical analysis are three of the most significant postmodern issues, which if accepted, would have detrimental implications for anthropology.[19]

a. Coherence of the Subject

Claiming that the fragmentation of the self is an aspect of the postmodern condition, postmodernists attempt to "subvert" confidence in the coherence of the subject, suggesting that we should "abolish" the subject. Michel Foucault (1970:261-262) is among those postmodernists who "question the value of a unified, coherent subject such as a human being, a person, as a concrete reference point," criticizing the subject for "seizing power, for attributing meaning, for dominating and oppressing" (Rosenau 1992:42). Foucault argues that assuming a coherent subject is a "linguistic convention," an illusion that illegitimately functions to help the powerful dominate others (Rosenau 1992:43).

Ethical questions that relate to the coherence of the self and the conduct of research confront anthropologists constantly. The ethnographer depends on a sense of self as a thinking-and-feeling subject who grasps, through intersubjective communication and observation of behavior, that other human beings are also subjects,

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[19] Although it could be argued that anthropology as a social science discipline should be abandoned, the fundamental human problem of communicating and interacting across cultural lines would not go away. Anthropology is an important, albeit fallible, discipline for promoting understanding among human groups and should not be given up as hopelessly flawed. Like other sciences, the data anthropology produces can be checked and corrected by follow-up research and analysis within a community of scholars.

not objects to be manipulated. The experience of culture shock is often described as the feeling of "losing" the self in a different cultural context, but what actually happens is that the self is revealed as dependent on relationships with others for its own self-understanding. When familiar cultural contexts are missing, the anthropologist's sense of dislocation becomes an instrument for detecting the parameters of the subject and its dependence on a particular configuration of local culture:

> (In culture shock) the local "culture" first manifests itself to the anthropologist through his own *inadequacy;* against the backdrop of his new surroundings it is he who has become "visible" (Wagner 1975:6-7).

In the initial attempt to see another culture, it is the anthropologist who sees him or herself in a new way. The discomfort is a disorientation or fragmentation of the self but, gradually, the anthropologist undergoes a process of reestablishing a new sense of coherence in the new surroundings, while retaining knowledge from the old surroundings. The anthropologist experiences a subject's intense desire and effort to achieve coherence once again, while learning what it takes to live in a different culture. The two cultural contexts can, then, be compared.

The subject has been central to anthropology; indeed, "to erase the distinction between the ethnographer and the subject being studied would be to do away with the field itself" (Rosenau 1992:51). Jerome Seigel (1999:298-99) clarifies the self as subject:

> Inescapably embodied, the self must realize its innate capacity for subjective comprehension in the world of social and cultural relations, which in turn nurtures both the self's cognitive and its physical growth… I do not mean to suggest that (the self) is always stable, reliable, or easily achieved. On the contrary, it is almost necessarily problematic and tension-ridden, since the components that make it possible run up against each other and conflict. Both desire and consciousness strain against the limits of relational selfhood, making stability and coherence aims or goals that are never fully realized.

Critical to anthropology is this understanding of the self through bodily, relational, and reflective dimensions—but also the tendency to strive for coherence.

In contrast, Foucault rejects the relational dimension of the self, the external

constraints built into culture (Seigel 1999:306). Calling for the postmodern subject to

"transgress" external constraints that regulate action,[20] Foucault claimed to have found

historical models of autonomous self-creation in the ancient Greco-Roman Stoic and

Cynic philosophers, who were supposedly not constrained by external forces (Seigel

1999:306). Although I do not have the space here to discuss the details, Cohen (1994)

challenges Foucault, showing that Foucault underestimates the "normalizing forces at

work in ancient societies" (also cf., Seigel 1999).

The postmodern "subverting the subject" has also been questioned because this

call to "abolish" the subject comes just as marginalized groups have grasped some of the

tools of power, claiming a place in the world as "empowered" subjects (Hartsock 1987;

Mascia-Lees, et al. 1993; Rosenau 1992:52). Contemporary feminists have articulated a

new understanding of power in which the "subject" does not inherently exercise power

illegitimately, i.e., power need not be understood as limited to power "over" others but

can also become power "with" others. The Weberian idea of agency can incorporate this

sense of the potentiality of power as a positive choice for getting something done,

especially the way in which "charismatic" authority can burst out of a set of given social

norms, creating a new social space in which the charismatic leader and his/her followers

can grasp power for themselves. In a Christian religious context, this charisma is making

a claim that one's spiritual authority comes direct from God, being legitimated less by an

institution than by a spiritual force (i.e., "Holy Spirit").

This postmodern challenge to the coherence of the subject has not taken hold in

the social sciences (Asad 1986; Bonnell and Hunt 1999; Rosenau 1992:42-61). In

anthropology, our purpose is to find (not abolish) our research subjects, translating their

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[20] Anthropologists may "transgress" cultural boundaries but not out of a perverse will to resist all
external constraints on behavior but because it is an occupational hazard in the process of
learning a new culture as an adult, aided by systematically recording this discovery of different
cultural boundaries—boundaries that are fuzzy rather than rigid.

world into terms that readers in other cultures can understand and also reading our interpretations of their culture back to them for further discussion. We are making sense of what we observe in order to improve cross-cultural understanding.[21]

b. Culture as Text

If the postmodern call to "subvert" the self has had limited influence in anthropology, the postmodernist trope of "culture as text" has had a much deeper impact. Clifford Geertz's (1973c:452) semiotic definition of culture has been very influential:

> the culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong.

Geertz expands this metaphor, claiming that the texts anthropologists read over the shoulders of their respondents become anthropological "fictions" (Geertz 1973b:15). Ethnographies are "thick descriptions" that result from "the power of the scientific imagination to bring us into touch with the lives of strangers" (Geertz 1973:16).

Positivist anthropologists accuse Geertz of brushing aside questions of how such "thick descriptions" are verified (e.g. Sidky 2004:326-333). Adam Kuper (1999:117-118) describes Geertz's "culture as text" metaphor as extreme idealism that depicts

> a society whose true life is governed by ideas, expressed in symbols, enacted in rituals. The ethnographer need only read the rituals, and interpret them. There is nothing outside the text, and if the texts pass over politics and economics in silence, then those matters can safely be ignored.

To further clarify what Kuper means, an excellent example is his discussion of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's 1921 argument against using culture (defined in idealist terms) as a rationale for apartheid in South Africa. It deserves to be quoted at length:

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[21] Respondents in Nicaragua frequently asked me what I thought about their lives. They wanted to hear and discuss my insights, both to see themselves in someone else's eyes and also to find out what erroneous or negative ideas I might be assuming about them. They demonstrated an interest in cross-cultural communication, which included a concern for how the description might impact their world and sense of self-esteem within a conflictive, often potentially violent, context. Talking to many respondents helps to evaluate which data are misleading or even lies (Metcalf 2001).

Radcliffe-Brown did not, of course, deny that cultural differences persisted in South Africa, but he rejected the policy of segregation on the grounds that South Africa had become a single society. National institutions crossed cultural boundaries and shaped life choices in all villages and towns in the country. Every one of its citizens (or subjects) was in the same boat. To base politics on cultural difference was a recipe for disaster. "South African nationalism must be a nationalism composed for both black and white."

In part as a result of his South African experience, Radcliffe-Brown was later inclined to treat all talk of culture with suspicion. "We do not observe a 'culture,'" he remarked in his Presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1940, "since that word denotes, not any concrete reality, but an abstraction, and as it is commonly used a vague abstraction." And he dismissed the view of his great rival, Bronislaw Malinowski, that a society like South Africa should be studied as an arena in which two or more "cultures" interacted. "For what is happening in South Africa (Radcliffe-Brown explained) is not the interaction of British culture, and Afrikaner (or Boer) culture, Hottentot culture, various Bantu cultures and Indian culture, but the interaction of individuals and groups within an established social structure which is itself in the process of change. What is happening in a Transkeian tribe, for example, can only be described by recognizing that the tribe has been incorporated into a wide political and economic structural system (Kuper 1999: xiii-xiv); (also cf.,Bohannan 1988: 315).

Max Weber would resonate with Radcliffe-Brown's emphasis on interaction "within an established social structure which is itself in the process of change." Cultural exchange does not necessarily change the social structure, but establishing a colony does, as Radcliffe-Brown explained, "There is a region that was formerly inhabited by Africans with their own social structure. Europeans, by peaceful or forceful means, establish control over the region, under what we call a 'colonial' regime. A new social structure comes into existence and then undergoes development" (Bohannan 1988: 314). Kuper's analysis of Geertz's symbolic interpretative anthropology highlights the contrast between British social anthropology and American cultural anthropology. Exploring Weber's work can assist anthropologists in the process of joining culture and social structure, reestablishing "the connections between ideas and social processes, more specifically the feedback between religious and political and economic development" (Kuper 1999:80).

c. Questioning the Possibility of History

Postmodernism has a tendency to be anti-historical. The claim is that conventional history is "a creature of the modern Western nations" and written to oppress Third World peoples (Rosenau 1992:63), making historical analysis appear generally suspect rather than a particular work being flawed. Sharing this ahistorical bias with Levi-Strauss's structuralism, the postmodern researcher is overly concerned with the present. Even when claiming to be doing historical analysis, Rosenau (1992:64) notes that, for the postmodernist, "the contemporary is the time frame that counts the most." Theoretical frameworks are rejected as "metanarratives" that presuppose their conclusions, and concepts of human agency are rejected, favoring the play of vague "forces" rather than individual or collective actions (Rosenau 1982:65).

d. Postmodernism as anti-theory

Postmodernism may appear to thrive on theoretical debate but actually it militates against development of productive theory. I believe postmodernism undermines both anthropology as academic discipline and the possibility of progressive social action (Epstein 1995). Henrietta Moore (1999:5-6) sets out the problem:

> One of the notable features of the post-modernist/ deconstructionist debate in anthropology, as elsewhere, was that it was anti-theory, in the sense that it provided a critique of the exclusionary practices of Western theorizing and explicitly eschewed 'grand theories' and 'meta-narratives' on the grounds that they homogenized differences... The critique of representation and the accompanying repudiation of 'grand theory' led to some practitioners in the discipline of anthropology apparently eschewing theory and generalization, and turning definitively to ethnography and the practice of fieldwork: empiricism and experience as solutions to the problems of representation and theory.

Deconstruction threatens to undermine the basis of human thought by attacking theorizing itself as hopelessly flawed due to inherent biases. The emphasis in postmodernism is on the hopelessness of the enterprise rather than on a realistic grasp of the limits of any particular theory. Theorizing is a critical process, necessary for

human knowledge. Weber's heuristic approach allows us to use a theory (e.g., sets of conceptual "ideal types" crafted to draw out questions about the data) to understand the data rather than prove the ontological truth value of the concepts or theory as research instruments (Sadri 1992:11-22).[22]

Although I came into university unconsciously awash in the postmodern ethos of the 1990's, I have become aware of the nihilism lurking in postmodern thought. Anthropology and social justice both require suspending judgment long enough to gain an understanding of other points of view and/or ways of life, but ultimately, they cannot function if one adopts moral relativism based on cultural differences.

One of the prominent terms in postmodern discourse is "difference," specifically proclaiming the importance of respecting differences between human beings and social groups without prejudgment. However, the postmodern emphasis on difference needs to be tempered by acknowledgement of human universals.[23] Donald Brown (1991:154) argues that anthropologists

> have dwelt on the differences between peoples while saying too little about the similarities (similarities that they rely upon at every turn in order to do their work).

We must not lose sight of the fact that anthropology purposely situates itself in the tensions between difference and sameness, universal and unique. Once again, Henrietta Moore (1999:7) cogently sets out the problematic in the anthropological method:

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[22] Consult Ahmad Sadri's (1992) discussion of ideal types in the context of his sociology of intellectuals for an application which is more revealing than an abstract methodology discussion. Sadri's (1992:105-106) explanation of ideal types as heuristic devices emphasizes that they are best understood as "modest tools" evalued for their usefulness to the analysis of empirical data; he recommends that various sets of ideal types be crafted as "a battery of context-dependent concepts," while simultaneously we researchers remain "aware of our position in time and space and the conceptual limits our 'human condition' sets on us."

[23] It has also been tempered by working within George P. Murdock's (1946) social structural theory and the method of cross-cultural comparisons, or the cultural ecology and neoevolutionary schools already mentioned in note 17 above, which emphasize nomothetic counters to extreme relativism and nihilism in overly idealist approaches to cultural anthropology (cf.,McGee and Warms 1996:221-266). The British social anthropological tradition, i.e. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (cf.,Bohannan 1988), emphasized social structure and criticized the American emphasis on culture and the individual (cf.,Kuper 1999).

Anthropology is based on the irresolvable tension between 'the need to separate oneself from the world and render it up as an object of experience, and the desire to lose oneself within this object world and experience it directly' (Mitchell 1988:29.) This tension is encapsulated in the method of participant-observation, and has been clearly demonstrated in the anthropological theorizing over the last twenty years... The problem for anthropology then is that a retreat to ethnographic particularism could never be an appropriate response to the charge that modernist meta-theories were exclusionary, hierarchical and homogenizing. Valuing cultural differences requires theory, assessing the connections between forms of cultural difference and hierarchical relations of power requires theory; linking personal experiences to processes of globalization and fragmentation requires theory.

Describing cultural phenomena without explicit attention to theory, as Franz Boas (1940) attempted to do in his inductive method known as historical particularism, inevitably ends up with theoretical assumptions poorly thought out through lack of critical analysis (Harris 1968:250-289).[24] When the task of theorizing is not directly engaged, we either think with old theories that have become so engrained we think we are operating on "common sense" or we have trouble finding robust patterns that aid in the interpretation of the data.

The postmodern method of deconstruction, I believe, is attempting to escape its own vulnerability to critique by undermining the practice of theory and theorizing itself. We cannot avoid the hard work of developing alternative theories, the necessity of working with them in conducting research, and subjecting them to critique in the continuous discourse that is social science. I will turn now to a comparison of Weber's philosophy of history and the postmodern approach to historical analysis, which Michel Foucault called "genealogy."

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[24] In fairness to Boas, Harris (1968:250-289) notes the reason for the "programmatic avoidance of theoretical synthesis" was his effort to overcome the limitations of the comparative method that dismissed many details of ethnographic data as insignificant due to its sweeping evolutionary assumptions.

Weber versus Foucault: History versus Genealogy

While postmodernists question metanarratives and tear down foundations, a vigorous counter-trend defends the importance of theory, including large-scale comparative theory. Some prominent examples are Marxian political economy (Wolf 1982), world-systems theory (Wallerstein 1984), civilization studies (Fernández-Armesto 2001; Sanderson 1995), historical anthropology (Carmack 1998a; Carmack, et al. 1996), and historical sociology (Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979). Max Weber's theory is an inspiration to contemporary scholars engaged in defending the necessity of theoretical foundations against postmodernism—and history is the method at the heart of what they defend (Callinicos 1995).

Michel Foucault is my touchstone for understanding postmodernism through his advocacy of "genealogy" rather than history. Drawing on Nicholas Gane's (2002:113-130) comparison of Max Weber and Michel Foucault, I will sketch out similarities and differences between Weber's modernist historical sociology and Foucault's postmodern genealogy. I seek to demonstrate the value of using Weberian themes to critique postmodernism, while also valuing the contemporary discourse in which these questions arise. While developing a standpoint closer to modernism by linking back to Weber as a classical theorist, I also bring selected postmodern themes to bear on Weberian theory, particularly reflexivity. I am heir to post-colonial self-criticism in which anthropologists began to question our own location in the power and authority structures of the European encounter with "primitive" peoples during conquest, colonization, and neocolonization (Asad 1973; Davies 2008:11; Hymes 1969; Patterson 1997; Wolf 1982). Franz Boas' emphasis on reporting precontact social or cultural forms, for example, ignored or "looked through" the effects of contact on Native Americans in order to capture knowledge about how life was lived before contact, the so-called "salvage" ethnographies. Sanjek (1991:613) reports that Malinowski noted late in his career that it

was a "serious shortcoming" that he had never described or analyzed European influence on the Trobriand Islanders (Davies 2008: 194).

Weber and Foucault share a common concern with issues of power, including modes of domination, and discipline. Foucault matters more to my discussion here than other postmodern theorists discussed by Nicholas Gane because Foucault is concerned with issues of power, whereas the other postmodernists he deals with are more concerned with aesthetics (Jean-François Lyotard) or eroticism (Jean Baudrillard). The influence of Foucaultian "genealogy" has been strong in anthropology, and Talal Asad's (1993) work on religion is important for my study.[25]

Gane (2002:123) describes Weber's research program as comparative and developmental, seeking to understand social action in terms of establishing clarity and facts, causality and meaning, whereas Foucault's project challenges the very possibility of facts, clarity, stable meanings, and cause-and-effect relations. Foucault calls for a "transgressive" re-evaluation of the values of modernity, seeking to "overturn and overcome modern values through affirmation of the otherness concealed in our past" (Gane 2002:123). This use of the term "transgression" suggests a daring challenge to conventional understandings of morality, which Foucault considers to be, in actuality, immoral because conventional morality legitimates repressive political forces that maintain oppressive structures. Foucault examines topics such as mental illness or punishment, focusing on those who are marginalized and disempowered by contemporary systems of social control.

Weber amassed historical data and argued for true explanations and interpretation of the data. Foucault, in contrast, claims to doubt the possibility of truth and prefers not to propose solutions to the problems he analyzes because he believes any such attempt will only end up becoming complicit in illegitimate uses of power. Arguing

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[25] This brief critique of Foucault sets a context for understanding the benefits and limitations of Asad's (1993) critique of religion and ritual which I take up later in this chapter.

that intellectuals ought to relentlessly critique modern techniques of power and discipline, Foucault seeks "to open history to the free play of lay interpretation" (Gane 2002:123). In this insistence on non-expert knowledge, Foucault asserts that he is resisting constraints on the liberatory activity of those who lack power in society. He hopes that the "subjugated knowledges"[26] of subaltern groups in society will expose and weaken the hold of "official" knowledge.

Since Foucault rejects the "subject" as a modern illusion created by language, he is not concerned with the use of power by human agents. Donald Kurtz (2001:29-30) notes that, for Foucault, power is not an abstract concept but "an anthropomorphized agent that exists in many shapes and forms and comes from many directions," a conceptualization that actually makes it impossible to study power because "there is no way to discern, distinguish, or compare qualities and degrees of power." Unlike Weber, who provides direction through ideal types, Foucault provides no explicit conceptualizations. Gane (2002:125) describes this as a contrast between a Weberian "political ethics of legislative and interpretive practice" and a Foucaultian explicit rejection of "political responsibility in favour of the contingency of discursive play." Foucault's method of genealogy is experimental, a "radical form of political provocation;" he claims "not to prescribe a particular route to a particular future, but rather to open the limits of political possibility itself" (Gane 2002:117). Both Weber and Foucault confronted disillusionment with the promise of progress that emerged in the twentieth century. Weber's view was that a realistic assessment of the emergence of legal-rational

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[26] Foucault (1980:81-82) defined "subjugated" knowledge as "historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systematization" and, more than being buried, they are "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity." Rather than these "local popular knowledges" being inadequate, Foucault sees them as the source of critical reflection on how powerful forces have suppressed knowledge that is inconvenient for their political projects of domination through control over the "discursive and institutional modalities of subjection and rationalization" (Gane 2002:116).

forms of social organization required an acknowledgment that it would lead to the

"disenchantment"[27] of the world. This cultural transformation was part of the price

society had to pay for progress: it posed a threat to human freedom, even though

important for effective modern government and profit-producing economies. Foucault

promoted his genealogy as a method to break down the false visions of modern progress

being inevitable. His method seeks to operate "at a micro-level, eschewing grand

narratives in favor of local events," as he unearthed historic struggles over whose

knowledge would prevail (Gane 2002:115).

Foucault and Weber share an understanding of power as the ability to force

someone to do something, but Foucault is extremely negative about power. In contrast,

Weber respects leaders and considers them essential, if flawed (Gerth and Mills 1946:77-

128), to the political process. Foucault was adamantly opposed to the modern state,

while Weber was a supporter of the consolidation of the German state and the projection

of its nationalism on the world stage.[28] Foucault considers all power illegitimate and

coercive; however, he has reified power as a disembodied force in his analyses. Weber

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[27] Gane (2004:15) argues, "for Weber, the transition to modernity is driven by a process of cultural rationalization, one in which ultimate values rationalize and *devalue themselves*, and are replaced increasingly by the pursuit of materialistic, mundane ends. This process of devaluation or *disenchantment*, gives rise to a condition of cultural nihilism in which the intrinsic value or meaning of values or actions are subordinated increasingly to a 'rational' quest for efficiency and control." By this measure, it could be said that Latin America has not progressed very far along this path towards modernity, but that would be a seriously ethnocentric conclusion. In fact, the secularization hypothesis has been undermined with the resurgence of religion throughout the world (Bruce 1992); e.g., see my colleague C. Mathews Samson's (2004) dissertation in which he argues that Maya Protestantism in Guatemala reflects religious and ethnic renewal as a "re-enchantment of the world."

[28] This aspect of Weber's theory and political position is problematic in my view, but the juxtaposition of the two theories reveals that more theorizing needs to be done in the middle ground between Foucault's lack of adequate engagement with the problem of state power and authority and Weber's valorization of imperial state power. The state is a key structural reality in the modern world-system, and the problem of forming a "nation" linked with the power and authority of a state apparatus is a significant source of conflict that has far too frequently led to brutal state violence from human rights abuses to genocide, from civil wars to regional and world wars (e.g.,Giddens 1987). We are in a new era with increasing violence being wielded by terrorists who wage their battles without state authority, yet the response from the United States is to declare war against states rather than take police actions against individual or small groups of perpetrators who operate outside the parameters of state authority (Asad 2007: 8; Badiou 2002).

argued that collectivities (e.g., the state, association, or corporation) should not be reified into cultural or social totalities but rather understood as social groupings made up of individual people taking action separately and collectively (Morris 1987:59). Hence, Weber discerned cultural patterns, but he strives not to deface the people who are "carriers" of the ideas and plans into disembodied forces.

Foucault claims to have no control over or interest in the political uses to which his transgressive genealogy might be put, while "for Weber, it is the duty of both the political leader and the intellectual to take account of the bearing of their work on the future" (Gane 2002:125-126). Weber's neo-Kantian fact-value split comes into play in that the findings of his cultural science do not dictate the political or moral decisions that human beings must make, leaving room for the non-rational arenas of human life (i.e., politics, religion) to debate and struggle over particular courses of action. Weber developed two ideal types of political ethics: the "ethic of conviction" is in play when a social actor takes a passionate and rigid stance on ultimate values, believing that it is more important to do what is right than to consider likely consequences, while someone following the "ethic of responsibility" determines more pragmatically when it may be necessary to relativize particular values (Gane 2002:68-69).[29] Foucault's position of transgressive research could be characterized as an example of the ethic of conviction in Weberian terms, inasmuch as he does not value pragmatic assessment of means and ends. He holds his value of radical deconstruction of dominant discourse as an absolute

[29] Joan Estruch (1995) in her study of Opus Dei contains an insightful application of the two ideal types, the ethics of conviction and responsibility. She concludes that Opus Dei and the New Cathechism of the Roman Catholic Church both reveal similar patterns in the way they apply the two ethics. She finds "a more or less conflictual integration of the ethics of conviction and responsibility in the cases of war, the death penalty, conscientious objection, and so on, and a sharp rejection of an ethics of responsibility in all sexual and family matters" (Estruch 1995:280). The ethics of conviction and responsibility are integrated most consistently in matters dealing with the modern economy, while Opus Dei and the New Cathechism do not make comparable "concessions" to modernity in matters of sexuality, procreation, and family life (Estruch 2002:260-276). This lends to each their character of being traditional and modern, reactionary and forward thinking, at the same time. It may also be said to indicate the force of material causality of the modern world economy which demands accommodation for survival, while other spheres of modern life allow more room for resisting change.

value necessary to achieve the end of challenging oppressive modern systems of power. Weber called for leaders, intellectual and political, to synthesize the two ethics, working "within and against the limits of modernity," while Foucault's "anarchic spirit of transgression" seeks to advance beyond the limits of the modern (Gane 2002:120). His system is meant to be open-ended and avoid questions of empirical verification or falsification (Wuthnow, et al. 1984:141).

> Gane (2002:116) explains Foucault's research as
>
> an experimental mode of political resistance and transgression, for it exposes conditions under which knowledge is formed and functions, and may be used to exploit the instability of history wherever discourses are in competition or in the process of transformation.

Foucault aims to expose weaknesses in "official" discourse, especially claims to scientifically verified knowledge,[30] and in keeping with his goal of open-endedness, he does not want to develop alternatives. Gane (1992: 128) notices that, although Foucault claims not to offer a particular end to which his reconstituted subjugated knowledge may be put, his work actually "conceals the position and purpose of its historical attack," which is to show that modern Western society is a "surveillance" society with rational techniques of discipline and social control that are oppressive and ought to be resisted. He studies some selected spheres of Western culture in which the trend towards rationalism had indeed resulted in the loss of human freedom.

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[30] Foucault's "attacks against the formation of specialized knowledges also is a reaffirmation of the French philosophical tradition as well as an attack on American scientificity. Therefore, it may not be entirely accidental that Foucault's concerns with the origins of the scientific age were first formulated—in the late 1950s and in the 1960s—at a time when American scientific methods were proliferating in Paris at an astonishing pace, and this threatened to displace humanistic traditions" (Wuthnow, et al. 1984:175). My response to Foucault is no doubt also influenced by my location as an American more familiar with our scientific milieu on this side of the Atlantic than the French philosophical tradition. Yet, I am also situated within a time period in which critiques of positivism were loud and vociferous. Postmodernism usefully pointed out that "the role of the observer in interpreting reality...especially where human interaction is involved" must be acknowledged as opposed to seeking "purely objective scientific laws" (Wuthnow, et al. 1984:256). Weber is my classical tradition because he helps in establishing a qualified critique of positivism that avoids the problem of cultural analysis being entirely speculative hermeneutics. Unfortunately, Weber is not mentioned in the otherwise valuable discussion of Peter Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas that I have been consulting here; i.e., Wuthow et al. (1984).

Although Foucault critiques the metanarratives of other social theorists, he is actually working within an unacknowledged metanarrative. Moreover, he makes truth claims, while claiming no objective basis for truth exists (Gane 2002:129). Additionally, Gane (2002:129) observes that Foucault violated his own claim not to prescribe any particular vision for society or direction for social action because his underlying message is a call for transgressive activity, which seeks "to energize an undefined movement against" the social order he has described as oppressive and illegitimate due to its manipulation of power/knowledge. Gane (2002:127) acknowledges that Weber also violated his claim to value-freedom. Weber declares that scientists <u>ought</u> to keep judgments of what "ought to be" separate from their analysis of what "is." Thus, Weber posits

> an ideal that affirms the commitment of the scientist to the clear distinction of facts and values, thus indicating that Weber's empirical science operates on the basis of a 'normative' statement, a judgment of what should be. This judgment, however, while raising doubt as to the presuppositions of 'value-free' methodology, defines rather than compromises Weber's commitment to value-freedom, for it places the value of responsibility at the heart of intellectual and political activity (Gane 2002:128).

Foucault's transgressive ethic not only compromises his claim to be free from normative prescriptions but undermines his liberatory aim through intellectual irresponsibility. Foucault advocated tearing down official knowledge through discovering what has been hidden and devalued, but he did not take responsibility for the ends to which this reconstituted knowledge might be put; he separated himself from the consequences of his ideas. A categorical refusal to develop concepts that flow from one's research is an abdication of responsibility to think through logical consequences. Although it may be difficult to imagine unintended consequences, it is another thing to reject such responsibility outright. Weber recognized that intellectual and political actions often have unintended consequences (Gane 2002:64-79). Although Weber analyzed a trend towards greater rationalization, he nonetheless realized that "ethical irrationality" is

prevalent in human society and is ultimately caused by the constant possibility of

political violence:

> all political action is ultimately sanctioned by the exercise of force, a fact which places the struggle for political success in fundamental opposition to the pursuit of an ethical good, for it precludes the possibility of a purely ethical correspondence between political means and ends (Gane 2002:65).

Weber's sociology of the intellectual reveals that the scholar is caught up in this problem

of ethical irrationality because ideas influence social action; hence, researchers are

always potentially public intellectuals, whether or not they seek the limelight (Sadri

1992).

Weber did not refuse the intellectual task of developing theory, although, like

Foucault, he too refused to develop definitions (Morris 1987:69). Instead of definitions,

he constructed "ideal types" or models of rational action, which he used as heuristic

devices to guide analysis of social and historical realities (Ringer 1997:5).[31] Foucault

neglected systematic comparative analysis (Cannell 2006:19), whereas Weber's research

project rests on extensive systematic cross-cultural and transhistorical comparisons—a

rich source for paradigm development. Foucault, and other postmodernists, share a

failure "to suggest, much less formulate, an alternative postmodern vision," fatally

reducing the usefulness of their work (Kurtz 2001:192).

An illustration of ideal type in the work of sociologist Rowan Ireland is a fruitful

application to the questions of understanding the growth of evangelical religion in Brazil.

I believe that Rowland Ireland's (1991) study of religion and politics in Brazil suggests

the value of using ideal types, in spite of the fact that he appears to misunderstand the

method! Ireland discusses the data about Pentecostal believers in Brazil and compares

his data with the ideal type of "Puritan" (Weber's sense of this term means Calvinist this-

worldly asceticism). Ironically, Ireland (1992:54) rejects the Puritan ideal type as a

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[31] Joan Estruch (1995:264) defines ideal types as "analytical constructions that do not *describe* a specific reality but are formulated to help in *understanding and explaining* reality." (Italics in the original.)

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"stereotype," but he actually uses it exceedingly well as a contrastive tool that draws out the ways in which Pentecostalism in Brazil is different from European Protestantism during the Reformation. His analysis illustrates how an ideal type may be employed to reveal what is <u>not</u> in the "one-sided exaggeration,"[32] clearly structuring the data in opposition to the ideal type, privileging the data over the concept.

The Puritan concept proves very useful for understanding important differences between the ideal type and the experience of Ireland's respondent. Severino, who is part of the Pentecostal Assembly of God church, the largest non-Catholic denomination in his town, rejects the political term "injustice" that Ireland used in favor of the moral term, "wrongdoing" (*impio*). He passionately condemns the actions of rich landowners and politicians but does not advocate fighting for the rights of poor people in political arena or the courts because he thinks politicians and governments operate through the law of greed. A poor person gets nowhere in the world unless he succumbs to greed. Thus, unlike the Puritan, Severino is not supportive of striving for upward economic mobility because it works against salvation rather than being a sign of God's favor. Moreover, Severino feels no anxiety about salvation because he is not wondering whether or not he is predestined to be saved. Pentecostalism does not emphasize predestination; it is not an heir of Calvin's Reformed tradition. Severino rejects the work ethic, if understood as a means of earning one's salvation and assuming that the resulting wealth is a sign of God's grace. For Severino, God-pleasing work is an imperative, even if bosses fail to live up to their responsibilities. Virtuous work is not properly judged if one uses the definitions of success in worldly terms. Material success, more often than not, proceeds from sin because compromises have to be made with the evil ways of the world. Due to his vision of salvation through grace as God's gift rather than earning salvation through

[32] Ireland's ethnographic description can usefully be compared with, e.g., David Stoll (1990b) and some policymakers in the United States (cf.Harrison and Huntington 2000) who use the "Protestant Reformation" as a frame for understanding the rapid growth of Protestant and Pentecostal rivals to Catholic cultural hegemony in Latin America.

works, Severino's condemnation of greed does not translate into protest action. Unlike the Puritan, he has no this-worldly utopian vision (Ireland 1991:52-57). Protest action presumes a belief in the possibility of improving the world, but Severino's Pentecostal worldview emphasizes that no amount of tinkering with corrupt human systems can remove its corruption; for that the faithful must wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Genealogies of Religion in Anthropology

The foregoing discussion sets the stage for understanding Talal Asad's (1993) application of a Foucaultian genealogical methodology to anthropological concepts of religion and ritual. Asad's (1993: 55) deconstruction of their intellectual history (i.e., "genealogy") aims to reveal what makes our contemporary anthropological concepts appear to us to be so "plausible" (Asad 1993: 55), which is problematic in Asad's reading. His ultimate concern is the theoretical inadequacy of assuming separate spheres for religion and politics. Inasmuch as Asad draws on the postmodern critique of power rather than the Weberian tradition, I propose to pull out the implications of Asad's (1993) theory and sketch out how his concepts may become stronger, if bolstered by an understanding of Weber's ideal types.

I begin with Asad's deconstruction of Clifford Geertz's enormously influential definition of religion.[33] Acknowledging the influence of Weber, Geertz (1973c:90) defines culture in the following way:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.

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[33] Sadly, Clifford Geertz died on October 30, 2006 (Ortner 2007).

Yet, unlike Weber, Geertz does not hesitate to develop a definition of religion:

> A religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1973c: 90).

Geertz's "unpacking" of this definition has been a productive hypothesis in anthropology and history.

One especially effective use of Geertz's definition of religion as a cultural system in writing history is Lynn Hunt's (1984) study of the French Revolution. She divides her analysis into two parts: the cultural symbolic (anthropological) and the social (sociological). The first section examines the "poetics of power," especially the secular symbolic forms the revolutionaries developed in explicit opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, which they, nonetheless, "enunciated with religious fervor" (Hunt 1984:28). The second part of her analysis is about the "new political class," the social actors who overthrew the *ancien regime* and made the first modern revolution. Hunt (1984:216) described French revolutionaries, not as an objective economic class, but as a new class of culture brokers:

> The recent arrivals, young notables who had gone away to school, merchants who traveled around the countryside, lawyers with connections in the departmental capital or Paris, innkeepers who met with all the visitors, and tradesmen who occupied the social space between a town's workers and its upper classes—such men were likely to become builders of political networks, carriers of new ideas, and agents of outside political authority. Their professions and social standing were often different, but their roles as brokers of culture and power were fundamentally similar.

Hence, Hunt emphasizes, first, the cultural roots of the revolution as ideas being carried by social actors who came to believe that it was possible and desirable to transform the fundamental structures of society through the deliberate action of seizing the state. In Weberian terms, her emphasis focuses on the cultural agency of the actors who create collective symbolic actions. Then, she asks who these revolutionaries were; i.e., who were

these carriers of the cultural components of the revolution in terms of class, status, and political networks? Hunt (1984:208) explains that the change in the identity of political actors "accompanied a change in the foundation of the state's legitimacy...they (went around) stirring people up, planning new festivals, organizing banquets, giving speeches, naming committees, in short screwing up the pitch of political awareness."[34]

Hunt's two-step approach beautifully illustrates the beauty and power of using Geertz's theory, but Asad objects to this strategy. He argues that identifying religious symbols first and then relating them to social processes isolates those symbols from their historically shaped social and political contexts; religious symbols "cannot be understood independently of their historical relations with nonreligious symbols or of their articulations in and of social life, in which work and power are always crucial" (Asad 1993:53).

Moreover, Geertz's aim was to craft a secular social scientific definition of religion (cf. Cannell 2006: 1-50). He asserts that the definition does not live up to the claim of being either entirely secular or universally applicable because its underlying premises depend fundamentally on the discourse about belief in the history of Western Christianity.[35] In other words, although the definition does not use any terminology that is specifically Christian, it is deeply rooted in Geertz's cultural milieu. His definition is a

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[34] Hunt's portrait of revolutionary France is relevant to my study of Nicaragua not just as an application of Geertzian theory but also because the French Revolution is the historic prototype of modern social revolution, one that increased the participation of formerly marginalized social groups in politics (Hunt 1984:209). The overthrow of Somoza in 1979 was such a revolution because the Sandinistas changed "the foundation of the state's legitimacy" and "screwed up the pitch of political awareness." The revolutionary leaders were not, by and large, workers or peasants, but social actors shut out of politics and economic development by Somoza's heavy hand, including university students, a newly emerging group of cotton growers, and descendents of the former ruling class deposed by José Santos Zelaya in 1893, and those sidelined by Somoza's opportunistic alliance with the U.S. Marines in the 1930's (e.g., Everingham 1996; Wickham-Crowley 1992).
[35] British anthropologist, Malcom Ruel (2002:100-109), in an essay originally published in 1982, notes that "believing" has become a secularized concept, detached from its previous Christian religious context, yet he questions the value of "belief" as a concept in anthropology because it carries a contradictory range of meanings even within the Christian historical tradition (Lambek 2002:99) and, moreover, he does not find evidence for its applicability in other world religions.

secularized abstraction that is unthinkable apart from a particular cultural history. Asad detects an unacknowledged historical and cultural debt to the post-Reformation project of separating religion and power, without which a purely cultural domain of religious symbols could not have been constructed. The symbols appear unrelated to structures of power, either secular or ecclesiastical, but power and discipline operating in given historical contexts have, in fact, shaped the symbols and the "moods" these symbols are said to establish as "uniquely realistic." Asad (1993:28), further, objects to claims for a transhistorical definition based on a separation between religion and politics because, historically, this "rhetorical" move was made in the context of a particular liberal enlightenment project that created a standard of church-state separation, while criticizing Islam as a cultural tradition that continued to combine religion and politics.[36]

Asad's genealogy exposes the religious underpinning of this supposedly secular social scientific concept by tracing a transition from "discipline" to "belief" in the history of Christianity. Christianity underwent a change from spiritual disciplines (notably, practiced on and through the human body) to disembodied symbols, which Geertz then understands as somehow causing certain emotions conceived as inner religious moods or experiences. Asad (1993:39-43) objects to the way the semiotic definition of religion assumes "the standpoint of theology" due to this emphasis on belief, which tacitly encapsulates a positive approach rather than a neutral one. Geertz places emphasis on symbols, as if they had not been constructed through doctrine and practice within and through particular institutions. Writing theology[37] and enforcing theological meanings

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[36] The recent world-wide resurgence of religion in the public sphere, which even poses challenges for the historically unique configuration of church-state separation in the United States, indicates that the trend towards secularization was historically contingent, not inevitable or permanent. We are witnessing "new forms of ethical engagement" resting on faith claims; although right-wing fundamentalism (cf.,James 1995; Kaplan 1992; Marty and Appleby 1991) has received the most attention, other examples include liberal or left-leaning movements, i.e., human rights or environmentalism (cf.,Bloch 1998; Gottlieb 2006; Johnston 1997; Lambek 2002:511).

[37] It is worthwhile noting here that Weber's understanding of rationalization as a cultural phenomenon in history included the development of theology as a rationalizing process. The

through forms of discipline are "authorizing" processes underwritten by power as "a constituting activity." Asad's (1993:47) genealogy exposes Geertz's definition as

> a modern, privatized Christian one because and to the extend that it emphasizes the priority of belief as a state of mind rather than as constituting activity in the world.

Geertz's interpretive symbolic anthropology privileges an idealist view of religion as the inner activity of the mind, reflecting a Christian tendency in the West to seek the divine through an inward turn.[38]

Although stimulating and suggestive of fascinating research questions, Asad's analysis suffers from an insufficiently historical approach to deconstruction. His geneaology is akin to intellectual history and draws its examples from the European context in which Christians grappled with the emergence of the modern state, science, and capitalism (Giddens 1971). One needs to understand the distinctive history of the Americas for my study. In broad strokes, this history shows that the separation of church and state proceeded to a rational-legal form of authority in the United States based on the historically-contingent situation of religious pluralism in which it seemed virtually

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problem of why an all-powerful, just God would allow evil to flourish in world is a contradiction, and efforts to resolve the problem have contributed to religious change. "This is the deep significance of religious rationalization in Weber's work. The more rationalized a religious world view, the deeper and more pressing the contradictions it creates, and the stronger the impulse for religious innovation (Swidler 1993:xv). Sociopolitical conflict can spark the development of theology. John Esposito (1991:70) writes that Islamic theology "emerged as a reaction to specific debates or issues that grew out of early Islam's sociopolitical context, for example, the Kharijite split with Ali, early Christian-Muslim polemics, and the penetration of Greek thought during the Abbasid period. Although theological issues and discourse began during the early caliphal years, the science of theology, sometimes referred to as the science of (divine) unity, developed as an Islamic discipline during Abbasid times under royal patronage. Its scope reflected the mixing of faith and politics."

[38] This inward turn may have an even deeper geneaology. In the fourth century, Augustine's adaptation of the Platonist inward turn to a Christian concept of a private inner space or soul that looks up to a transcendent God is a key source for the development of semiotics in Western thought, according to Phillip Cary (2000:143), who argues, "Augustine originates medieval and modern semiotics by classifying both words and sacraments as a species of signs. His is the first expressionist semiotics, in which signs are understood as outward expressions of what lies within. It is also a Platonist semiotics, in that the most important use of signs is to signify intelligible things." Asad (1993:34-35) draws on Augustine for his analysis of coercion, power, and discipline in Christian practice, but he is more interested in how politics and religion came to be separated and, for that topic, the Reformation is the important period.

that any one Protestant denomination could establish itself as the state church, but such religious pluralism did not take place in Latin America, which was conquered and settled at an earlier date by Spaniards who brought with them their faith in Roman Catholicism forged in the Reconquest of Spain against Muslims, at the time when the Protestant Reformation was beginning in Europe (Seed 2001). The emergence of the modern secular nation-state in Europe was uneven: the French Revolution and the German Reformation challenged Roman Catholic cultural hegemony, while Spain became the staunchest defender of the counterreformation, forming its sense of modern national identity in the context of a militantly defensive Roman Catholicism. After independence from Spain, the republics established the Roman Catholic Church as the state religion; the state refused entry to those who professed the heresy of Luteranism and other dissenting religions views (Bastian 1994). Consequently, religious pluralism did not force a separation of church and state from the bottom up, as it did in North America, but rather the formal principle of separation was imposed more by the influence of European models and American intervention than a cultural process in civil society. In Nicaragua, religious pluralism began to have a significant impact by the 1960's, but it was pushing up against the long history of an established state church. If Asad's critique is conceived as an ideal type, the different configurations of church and state observed by triangulating between Europe, North America, and Latin America illuminate the critical historical conjunctures that produced these distinctive social formations. The pattern of greater church-state alignment in Nicaragua highlights the impact of "authorizing processes" that worked to saturate its cultural history with a certain form of religion, creating a polity that is "enchanted" rather than "disenchanted," a confessional state that made sure there were no competing religious worldviews to confuse or devalue the ultimate values that the Roman Catholic Church esposed. The introduction of Asad's

term "authorizing processes" signals a transition to an examination of this important

concept.

Asad (1993:37) emphasizes "authorizing processes" as forms of discipline in the

history of Christianity. Although his use of the term "authorizing" is somewhat vague, he

appears to mean the systematic discourse of power and practice made possible by the

authority invested in the church as institution (Asad 1993:37-38).[39] Thus, Asad's

emphasis on "authorizing processes" hints at the Weberian distinction between power

and authority, emphasizing that the authority, or delegated legitimacy, of an institution

greatly enhances its ability to enforce discipline. Following Foucault's inspiration in the

study of changing techniques of punishment, Asad (1993:83-124) examines rituals in

Medieval Christianity in which the Church authorized discipline that inflicted physical

pain as part of the inquisitorial system against heretics. Asad (1993:103) writes:

> The concept of penance as medicine for the soul was no fanciful metaphor, but a
> mode of organizing the practice of penance in which bodily pain (or extreme
> discomfort) was linked to the pursuit of truth—at once literal and metaphysical...
> The medical metaphor is to be found articulating the discourse and practice of
> penance throughout Christian history.

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[39] Rebecca J. Lester's (2005: 22) ethnography of a convent in Mexico is a superb application of
Asad's ideas of "discipline" and "authorizing" discourses, but she goes well beyond his rather top-
down theoretical construction to describe the forms of body discipline from the point of view of
her respondents, the young women religious postulants, whose unique subjectivities are shaped
by the experience in the convent. "The forms of body discipline I observed in the convent," Lester
(2005:36) writes, "were much subtler, much more nuanced than rigorous fasting, wearing of hair
shirts, or painful flagellation. As micropractices of disciplines and control they are arguably more
effective in the alteration of internal experience than extreme (but less frequent) disciplinary
tactics, functioning together in what we might call an aesthetics of embodiment. They focus not so
much on radically depriving or punishing the physical as on developing new ways of experiencing
physicality." Lester (2005:4) argues that "joining this particular congregation seemed to help
these young postulants deal with tensions about being a woman in contemporary Mexico by
offering them an alternative to two conflicting cultural models of femininity: the modern,
upwardly mobile, techno-savvy, independent woman and the traditional, domestic, morally solid
homemaker." The choice to be a nun could almost be seen as a "feminist" decision, "a language of
resistance to—modernity" (Lester 2005:260) because they are able to obtain an education and
have a career without being hindered by children or husbands, except that the convent teaches
that surrendering to God is a feminine disposition, reinforcing traditional norms. A psychologist
might call this cognitive dissonance, but Lester does not use the term; her ethnography is
sensitive to the religious dimension in which various ways of feeling empty, restless (*inquietud*),
or broken have been resolved within an institutionally structured religious discipline where
unique subjectivities still flourish (Lester 2005:4;260). She has applied Asad's theory of discipline
(in conjunction with belief) to examine religious practice.

Heresy was punished with physical pain because the "disease" of spiritual disobedience was considered to be especially resistant to change. Confession and penance were officially promoted as spiritual disciplines for all Catholics after the Lateran Council of 1215. Although the painfulness of the spiritual practices was reduced from previous practice by the Council, the discourse emphasized the mental anguish (psychological pain) a believer feels when rebelling against God (Asad 1993:83-124).

Asad (1993: 54) denies any intention of advocating a better definition of religion than Geertz; he wants only to deconstruct and aims to problematize the idea of anthropological definitions in general as marked by their particular histories of knowledge and power. However, like Foucault, Asad refuses to acknowledge the theoretical alternatives embedded in his critique and their transhistorical value for comparative analysis. It is hard not to be frustrated with Asad's refusal of the problem of developing a definition of his own. Could it be to avoid having his definition deconstructed in its turn? No such escape is possible! Asad's terms for interrogating Geertz's definition suggest a set of concepts within a paradigm that takes the stance of a nonbeliever who objects to the authority of an institution to discipline and punish. Asad's critique does not escape from being itself situated in "a particular history of knowledge and power," which is, late-twentieth century Western society in which social science is supposed to have non-religious terminology and the analysis of power has become a popular theoretical concern, rejecting the prior functionalist emphasis on social equilibrium.

Are we stuck with dueling deconstructions in which theories are rendered worthless because bias of one sort or another can be excavated through postmodern genealogy? No, there is another way to handle this problem: the ideal type. Weber developed the ideal type in order to develop theoretical concepts that are self-consciously

grounded in their time and place but held lightly as a guide to research. Thus, from a Weberian standpoint, there is nothing wrong with utilizing a corpus of biased concepts within a theory meant to organize them into a meaningful whole because "ideal types" are supposed to be "one-sided exaggerated" attempts to develop a heuristic to explore the data (Ringer 1997:111). Weber (Runciman 1978:23-24) recognizes that an ideal type will be an "unrealistic" model crafted for conceptual clarity and "adequacy on the level of *meaning"* rather than an "average" type found in empirical statistics. He articulates a distinction between ideal and average types as important because "historically or sociologically relevant action is influenced by a variety of qualitatively different motives which cannot be 'averaged' in any legitimate sense;" the use of ideal types in historical analysis joins together the theoretical task of sociologically formulating *general* statements about social patterns with a historian's interest in assessing "*individual* culturally significant actions" (Runciman 1978:24).

Let me illustrate this by discussing the use of ideal types in Weber's historical sociology of religion. Like Foucault and Asad, Weber rejects the notion of developing definitions. A definition is a category against which empirical data are compared to determine if the data "fit" the "thing" that is defined. When defined, religion becomes a reified object rather than a dynamic human process. Weber prefers an ideal type of social action in order to illuminate the contours of human behavior in actual historical cases. In other words, if one defines religion as the realm of culture related to supernatural beings with ceremonial rites in honor of divine beings, then a social phenomenon such as Buddhism does not fit the definition. Yet, inasmuch as Buddhism is a "spiritual" or "mystical" practice, most social scientists would want to include it as a religion. When asked a question about supernatural beings, Buddhists explain their worldview as one that neither denies nor affirms a divine being but rather seeks "to find a higher affirmation" (Suzuki 1964:39). Formulating three ideal types that asks about the

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presence and/or degree of denial, affirmation, or transcendence related to beliefs or practices about divine beings is a Weberian move—but an even more Weberian question would be: What causes which individuals to group themselves around which conception (or denial of a concept) about a divine being and at what times and places in history is this taking place?

Weber develops ideal types about social action related to sacred values, so one could say that Weber defines religion as having to do with sacred values, similar to Durkheim. However, Weber is more interested in "the practical impulses for action which are found in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religion," which he calls the "economic ethic" of religion (Gerth and Mills 1946:267). Not to be mistaken for relating narrowly to the market or productive forces, this "economic ethic" refers more to an analysis of stratification as an indicator of who is likely to be attracted to various forms of social action. Thus, Weber developed contrasting ideal types; i.e., routinization/charisma, church/sect, other-worldly/this-worldly, ethical/mystical, virtuoso/mass, and exemplary/emissary prophecy. These ideal types are models of social action which I find useful for addressing the diversity of local Christian practices in a specific part of Nicaragua in the late twentieth century. I focus on Catholic varieties in the context of opposition to evangelical "sects."[40]

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[40] Although I present only a limited historical sketch of the Protestant history of Nicaragua with a focus on Baptists in Masaya, Pentecostal and other non-Catholic religious groups (e.g., Mormon, Jehovah Witness) are present in Nicaragua. The literature on Protestantism and Pentecostalism in Latin America that I consulted include Boudewijnse (1991); Deiros (1991); Stoll (1990b); Bastian (1994); Cortés (1992); Bastian (1990); Bastian (1986); Brusco (1993); Martin (1990); Bastian (1993); Martin (2002); Garrard-Burnett (2004); Chesnut (1997); Chestnut (2003); Lehmann (1996); Robbins (2004); Swatos Jr. (1994). Some additional references that are specific to Central America include: Goldin (1997); Goldin (1991); Zub Kurylowicz (1996); Pak (1996); Zub Kurylowicz (1993); Madrigal Mendieta (1999); Gooren (2005); Gooren (2003); Arnaiz Quintana (1992; Samson 2004).

As a world religion,[41] Christianity has many different institutions that have emerged from historically specific incidents of conflict and argument over which religious practices or doctrines are the "true" response demanded by God as well as various missionary impositions of the faith on conquered native peoples. Having at its inception the experience of a charismatic outburst of the Holy Spirit, Christianity is constantly at odds with its own creative energy. Weber grasped this recurring pattern of charismatic outburst and routinization; i.e., an initial charismatic energy is later disciplined and a new enduring institution emerges (Collins 1986). This process has repeated itself in Christianity over and over again since the initial Reformation, producing some 400 Protestant denominations. In the twentieth century, the Roman Catholic Church (as the "Mother" Church preaching the unity of the "One, True Faith") continues to grapple with charismatic innovations among the Catholic faithful. The institutional actors (the Pope and his supporting agencies within the Vatican) allow some expression of creative differences without allowing them to move too far from centralized authority, which might threaten the Church with another round of schism. My research examines social conflict in the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, as it is mediated through theological argument and ritual expression in competing forms of Catholicism—saint processions, Marian devotion, liberation theology, charismatic renovation, and neocatechumenal way.

Scholars studying the dramatic growth of the Pentecostal religious movement in Latin America have searched for the reasons this form of religious expression is attracting converts at a rapid rate (Robbins 2004). The classic studies (D'Epinay 1969; Willems 1967) relied on Durkheim's concept of anomie to explain the appeal of the

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[41] Weber trained his comparative analysis on "world" religions, so called because they have managed to "gather multitudes of confessors around them" (Gerth and Mills, 1946:267) as opposed to "primitive" religion, theorized by Durkheim's (1915) as an exemplar of "elementary forms of the religious life." From an anthropological perspective, so-called non-world religions are seen as oppressed minorities, whose worldviews have lost out due to conquest and domination rather than to any lack of intrinsically valid sacred truths.

charismatic or Pentecostal religious movements, arguing that the disorientation and deprivation due to modernization leaves the poor, especially those in the urban areas, open to the new form of religious community that provide estatic religious hope for a better future and strong social networks among converts that peovide mutual support (Robbins 2004:123-124). More recently, other aspects of the phenomena are being explored as more insightful in understanding the appeal. Specific aspects of the religious rituals and the type of religious community have been explored as holding the key to the explanation of its appeal. Evangelization encouraging a strong role for the laity in bringing others into the faithand the exuberant religious ritual inspired by the Holy Spirit (charismatic outburst) emphasize transformation in one's individual life and the life of the new community being formed (Robbins 2004:124-127). Brusco (1995) and Chesnut (1997) explain the appeal to women because the new Pentecostal movement challenges the "male prestige complex" in which men are expected to give up drinking and drugs, extramarital sexuality, fighting, and gambling. Although patriarchical structures prevail, the public authority of men in preaching is mitigated by women being able to criticize a man who is not living a Godly life (Robbins 2004:132-133).

Picking up again the thread of definition within Asad's work, I notice theoretical concepts that have transhistorical applicability in spite of his objections to claims of universality. Asad's questions for exploring religion are built on valuable concepts—power, authorizing process, and discipline. These concepts can be developed within a Weberian framework as ideal types that suggest models of social action, providing good questions with which to interrogate any given case. The values and historically-situated concerns embedded in the concepts can be acknowledged at the outset. A theory that asks the researcher to look for "authorizing" forms of domination is the start of a heuristic tool for interrogating power and authority in historical context, which may

open eyes to various forms of bias without assuming that anyone can escape all bias (understood as value orientation).

For example, applying the concept of "authorizing process" to secular civic religion in the United States, it can be seen as relevant to the way in which "civil society" has been resurrected within an authorizing process of democratic theory and practice constituted by the domination of the United States in the Western hemisphere. In spite of a rather robust separation of church and state, the United States never made a complete break from Christianity, and ritual remains important in secular, civic religion (Kertzer 1988; Moore and Myerhoff 1977).[42] As political actors who gain authority in the United States claim to promote transitions to democracy in countries such as Nicaragua, political scientists are asking questions about the influence of different religious practices on civil society, biased towards norms of liberal democracy (e.g., Booth and Richard 1998; Poffenbarger 2005) or the influence of religion on the likelihood of revolution against domination, biased towards subalterns who resist that hegemony (Lincoln 1985). Peripheral nation-states, often at great cost, as the recent history of Nicaragua attests, have challenged the domination of the United States and the social actors have often been animated by different religious practices than those imagined by North Americans.

Anthropological Theory of Ritual as Process

Important sources of the anthropological data in this study come from observation of ritual and discussions with participants about the meanings of ritual for individuals and society. Victor Turner's theory emphasizes the human tendency to

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[42] With the resurgence of fundamentalism (e.g., Kaplan 1992), even secular civic religion of the nation-state is being re-infused with Christian content, if not completely shutting out the diversity of existing religions.

display power and authority through symbols enacted in public ritual. Turner has been a great inspiration in anthropology, a deep well that continues to assist in the production of insights into human society.[43]

Turner's (1969) formulation of human social action describes this action as a ritual structure in three stages, a process in which the participant transitions from one social status to another. First, the initiate is separated from everyday life through preparation for the ritual. Next, the participant undergoes the ritual itself, which takes place in a liminal place in between the prior status and the new one (a temporary period of *communitas* in which bonds of equality are forged). In the final stage, the initiate is reintegrated into society, transformed by the ritual process so as to be ready to assume the new social status. The typical rituals that first suggested this theory were rites of passage observed in many cultures. Such rituals are performed to mark and make effective social transformations, such as puberty rites in which a child is recognized as an adult, weddings in which single individuals are transformed into a married couple recognized as a unit by the community, or funerals in which the living are helped through the crisis of death. Turner also generalized this theory of ritual process beyond the level of the individual to explain larger social structures and their phases.

Turner's theory has its weaknesses. Perhaps the most important one is that it does not provide tools for understanding how ritual itself is contested, struggled over, negotiated and hence transformed in whole or in part—how changes are made in ritual process (Eade and Sallnow 1991). Although he did examine these struggles and negotiations over ritual in his early work (Turner 1996 (1957)), Turner increasingly turned to symbolic analysis within structural-functionalist theory. As a theoretical approach founded on Durkheimian paradigms, structural-functionalism tends to stress

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[43]I have been especially impressed by the work of Barbara Myerhoff (1978) and David I. Kertzer (1988).

the way societies maintain equilibrium rather than insights into conflict (Cohen 1992; Gluckman 1956; Swartz, et al. 1966).

A strong affinity, if no explicit theoretical connection, exists between Turner's *communitas* as a counterpart to Weber's *charisma* (Keyes 2002:248). A charismatic religious movement is relatively loose and unstructured; this can be understood as a liminal phase, using Turner's concept, in his three-part analysis of ritual: separation, liminal phase of "communitas" (or anti-structure) where transformation takes place, and then reintegration into the social group with a new status.[44] The routinization that Weber observed in the process of institutionalization of a charismatic religious movement is a transition from a marginal group separated from society into a social group with social standing in society, a resolution of the liminal state (where participants experience an anti-structure) into an established church where structure returns. A sect has less hierarchical structure than a church, which tends to accommodate itself to its culture, reincorporating many assumptions about status such that social stratification emerges. Weber emphasized that, if a loosely structured charismatic group is to last beyond the lifetime of its founder, then social structures have to become regularized or systematized to form a more predictable pattern. The group must figure out a way to go beyond the original charismatic inspiration to successors who may have less personal charisma but are more adept at the administrative skills needed for a formal institution. Weber observed that the unique position of a charismatic leader gives way to an "office" occupied by those who are not expected to introduce significant new forms of charisma.

Anthropologist David Kertzer (1988) extends Victor Turner's theory of ritual as process for religion in small-scale societies, demonstrating the applicability of Turner's theory to modern, industrial society. He provides an analysis that transcends the

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[44] Turner examined religious pilgrimage with this three-part structure. This is an example of how he expanded his theory to consider larger social processes; this can be utilized to understand a transformation from sect to church.

dichotomy between secular-religious or profane- sacred in ritual studies. Kertzer

(1988:2) writes:

> Ritual is a ubiquitous part of modern political life. Through ritual aspiring
> political leaders struggle to assert their right to rule, incumbent power holders
> seek to bolster their authority, and revolutionaries try to carve out a new basis of
> political allegiance. All of these political figures, from leaders of insurrections to
> champions of the status quo, use rites to create political reality for the people
> around them.

Kertzer argues that industrial society sacralizes power through ritual no less than

peoples in so-called primitive society, an insight also found in Weber's work; however,

Kertzer does not draw on Weber in making his argument. Weber looked for continuity

between the pre-modern and the modern world, noting the qualitative differences in the

modern conditions, yet not arguing that a radical "break" in culture had taken place. In

other words, Kertzer (1988:2) questions the "assumption that ritual remains politically

significant only in less 'advanced' societies" and marshals empirical examples that allow

us to see that however "advanced" our own society may appear in certain areas, such as

technology or science, we still rely on ritual to maintain the social order.[45]

Demonstrating the power of Victor Turner's theory of ritual process to explain

political actions in modern industrial society, Kertzer (1988:12) contends that ritual

forms lend strong cultural continuity to whatever political actions are being taken,

indicating a conservative element in ritual forms that "make ritual a potent force in

political change" because it is necessary for consolidating the changes. Kertzer's process

model combines elements of both Turner and Geertz. John Kelly and Martha Kaplan

(1990:136) write about the fruitfulness of this combination:

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[45] Nicaragua is a "less advanced" society, if described in modernization theory terms; or it is a
poor, Third World country in a structurally peripheral position in the capitalist world-system, to
use the conceptual analysis developed by Wallerstein. Whichever framework or terminology one
chooses to use, the reality is that Nicaragua is a poor country, but it does not lack civilization or
cultural complexity. Both modernization and dependency theory, while ideologically opposed and
in direct conflict with each other to explain economic conditions and ways to solve economic
problems, share a fundamental materialist causal explanation for progress and neither gives us
sufficient tools for understanding the cultural resources that people use to motivate themselves to
take social action.

The process model is powerful. The image of social life as "process" puts narrative at the living heart of description, and it also effaces the distinction between the unique and the typical, a distinction surely arbitrary and definitely optional to any effort to depict the ongoing flow. Turner's method, especially in combination with the interpretivism of Geertz (a favorite combination in ritual studies), enables sweep, selectivity, and great authority in boundary- and connection-drawing, licensing ritual analysts to capture the speech and practice of ritual and evoke the experience of it without making explicit claims about the ongoing reality of any system.

Kertzer argues that politics is as much about the enactment of cultural symbols as it is about rational actors arguing from the vantage points of their respective interest groups, making an anthropological critique of "rational choice" theory that has been adopted by some political scientists and sociologists who study religion.[46]

In the next section, I will contrast the theory of ritual as "enacted symbol" with ritual as "apt performance" to further draw out other important elements of the anthropological concept of ritual. The next section highlights the difficulties of conceptualizing ritual as enacted symbol from both postmodern and Weberian perspectives, returning to the work of Talal Asad to explore his genealogy of ritual.

Critique of Ritual as Enacted Symbols

Talal Asad (1993) presents a cogent critique of ritual as enacted symbols, directly linking the anthropological genealogy of ritual to its semiotic category of religion, and argues that an analysis of ritual as "an assemblage of embodied aptitudes" is preferable to ritual as "a medium of symbolic meanings" (Asad 1993:75). Asad notes that anthropological theory has not changed fundamentally from the nineteenth century evolutionary view, which assumed that ritual is more primitive than myth. Noting its genealogy as a secularized form of Christian doctrine dating from the Protestant

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[46]I will discuss rational choice theory as applied to religion and politics in Latin America in chapter 6, drawing especially on research by political scientist, Anthony Gill (1998).

Reformation, Asad (1993:58) finds embedded in this privileging of myth over ritual the notion of "correct belief" being "more highly valued than correct practice." Asad notes that, since Edward Tylor (1958 (1871)), anthropological theory has maintained a distinction between "outward sign" and "inward meaning." Asad argues that Tylor's derogatory judgment against cultures that do not focus on inward meaning is theoretically embedded in symbolic, interpretive anthropology. The idea that a respondent who is an expert in ritual form possesses an inferior object of cultural knowledge—i.e., "mere rules" for performance (Asad 1993:59)—is an unacceptably narrow assumption underlying the anthropological category of ritual.[47] Anthropologists have incorporated a Christian theological preoccupation with meanings-standing-behind-symbols into their social scientific analysis of ritual, although they think they have developed a secular, scientific concept. For Asad, this is an example of theory as part of culture rather than theory being superior to "folk culture." Moreover, he objects to the assumption that professional, scientific analysts of culture have greater authority to make judgments about a symbol's meaning. Asad objects to anthropological experts who consider indigenous discourses ethnographically "inadequate," when the respondents do not articulate meanings that fit their theory. Asad (1993:61) is critical the ethnographer setting him or herself up as the one who identifies and establishes symbols because, following Sperber (1975), symbolism is not a property of objects, acts, or utterances but rather of "conceptual representations that describe or interpret" (Asad

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[47] Sidney Mintz (1985:14) also addresses this question in his history of sugar, *Sweetness and Power*: Meaning "is not simply to be 'read' or 'deciphered,' but arises from the cultural applications to which sugar lent itself, the uses to which it was put. Meaning, in short, is the consequence of activity. This does not mean that culture is only (or is reducible to only) behavior. But not to ask how meaning is put into behavior, to read the product without the production, is to ignore history once again. Culture must be understood 'not simply as a product but also as production, not simply as socially constituted but also as social constituting' (Roseberry 1982:1026).. One decodes the process of codification, and not merely the code itself." Hence, Mintz and Roseberry are also engaging in critique of Clifford Geertz along lines similar to Asad. The 1982 Roseberry (1989:17-29) article cited by Mintz has been included in Roseberry's collection of essays on culture, history, and political economy, *Anthropologies and Histories*.

1993:61). In other words, anthropologists forget that they participate in cultural processes no less than the people they are studying.

Asad (1993:62) argues for a different understanding of ritual as "apt performance," that is, ritual as abilities acquired according to rules of performance rather than obscure meanings to be decoded. Asad's corrective to the Geertzian emphasis on symbol encourages a focus on ritual as a social practice in which the formation of the skills required to perform movements is the salient feature. He encourages the analysis of "the body as an assemblage of embodied aptitudes" rather than "a medium of symbolic meanings" (Asad 1993:75).[48]

John Kelly and Martha Kaplan's analysis of anthropological theory of ritual reflects the historical turn and is congruent with Talal Asad's critique of ritual as enacted symbolic meaning. They argue not only for an analysis of ritual as an act of power (like Kertzer) and as performative movement (like Asad), but also as history. Asad's postmodern practice of genealogy is historical in the sense of uncovering previously unexamined historical accretions (cultural baggage) that theories contain, while Kelly and Kaplan (1990:141) are more interested in an analysis of ritual as "a principal site for new history being made."

John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan (1990) update the theory of ritual to reflect the theoretical consequences of the "anthropological turn to history," reconsidering the nature of ritual in relation to structure and history. They trace the development of ritual from a repetitive, ancient practice that expresses or reproduces structure to the Turnerian conceptualization of ritual as a process and, then, to their analysis of ritual as "a principal site of new history being made" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:141). Kelly and Kaplan situate ritual within the larger economic structures of the modern world, without

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[48] Asad is drawing on Marcel Mauss's (1979) formulation of *habitus,* later elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (1977); however, Asad (1993:75) claims that Bourdieu does not acknowledge Mauss' contribution.

privileging political economy as the force that defines "the real" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:141). They reject the vulgar Marxian or Foucaultian views of ritual as mere mystifying ideology or sinister forms of authorizing power, calling ritual a "life-empowering" process (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:141).[49]

Although they know ritual is often used to reproduce social structure, Kelly and Kaplan favor analysis of ritual from the point of view of those who contest, deconstruct, and transform authority. Ritual is performed as "acts of power that fashion structure" through the "assertion of the *lack* of independence asserted by a ritual participant" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:140). In other words, ritual has special power because participants claim to adhere to limits on their personal agency, appealing to ancient traditions or eternal mandates. This theory holds in tension a participant's emic view of ritual that militates against open acknowledgement of agency and the "invention of tradition" which looks at ritual from an outsider's etic view that ritual is, in fact, being employed to make history and invent something new that relates to the contemporary situation of participants.[50]

Kelly and Kaplan (1990:140) combine Victor Turner's notion of ritual as social drama with ritual as historical practice, formulating ritual as the process of ocial actors who "struggle to control the sign" in "a highly encoded resistance to hegemonic order."[51] They examine the limitations of the anthropological theory utilizing three concepts: divine right of kings, cargo cults, and carnival. They recast each of these concepts as dynamic rituals figuring in historical processes of change. They note that formerly

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[49] Kelly and Kaplan's view is a positive evaluation of ritual, which makes it congruent with Victor Turner's theory and Weber's. They acknowledge influence from Hocart (1950; 1952). I do not know if Asad has commented on Kelly and Kaplan's theory, but I think there is little doubt that he would be critical of their positive evaluation of ritual as a "life-empowering" process because this is a bias in favor of religious behavior.

[50] Kelly and Kaplan are grappling with the same problem Hobsbawm (1997:266-277) identified as "identity culture" that is often in conflict with a historian's task of writing critical history. Asad wants to escape this tension, but we must explore it rather than seek to avoid it.

[51] Kelly and Kaplan, like John and Jean Comaroff (1992) whom they cite, are more interested in ritual as resistance to (rather than reproduction of) the social order.

anthropological theory was ahistorical: the ritual of divine kings was conceived as justification for the status quo in political rule; cargo cults as static "traditional" native culture (as if unchanged by colonization) bursting out to protest the dynamic history of the colonizers; and carnival as ultimately reinforcing social structure by relieving pressures that might otherwise have built up enough to force change. They argue that the anthropology has moved from being excessively focused on social equilibrium to a concern with both change and continuity in historical context. Following Kertzer's (1988) that "all political action develops a ritual dimension" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:125), they reconfigure these concepts—divine kings, cargo cults, and carnival—in dynamic historical terms as rituals that have the potential to change social structure. Ritual performances interact with the political and religious struggles of their day. They are used by actors as a common language for communication within a given society; the presentation will depend on whether the actors are in or out of power, whether they are seeking to establish their right to rule or to destabilize recognized authority, but they are operating within a unified frame in which the ritual forms are understood as challenges to the social order or efforts to support it.

The Central Theme: Domination or Types of Authority

Anthony Giddens (1987:7-9) defines power as the "transformative" capacity to influence a "given set of events" through using resources:

> Resources do not in any sense 'automatically' enter into the reproduction of social systems, but operate only in so far as they are drawn upon by contextually located actors in the conduct of their day-to-day lives. All social systems, in other words, can be studied as incorporating or expressing modes of *domination*... Power may be at its most alarming, and quite often its most horrifying, when applied as a sanction of force. But it is typically at its most intense and durable when running silently through the repetition of institutionalized practices. As I use it, therefore, 'domination' is not a concept that carries an intrinsically negative connotation (Giddens 1987:8-9).

Weber's concept of power and authority are behind Giddens' conceptual formation. Charismatic power may burst forth in the context of seizing whatever resources can be found, but routinized power, ensconced in institutions, means the rulers have acquired a socially recognized authority to rule and, thus, they are comfortably established and social action can run along rather quietly. Weber described the dominant type of authority in modern society as legal-rational domination, but instances of charismatic power may nonetheless challenge that authority from time to time.

Callinicos (1995:111) argues that the defining feature of social scientists working in the Weberian tradition is the neutral formulation of the term, *domination*:

> The reason why I call Gellner, Giddens, Mann and Runciman *Weberian* historical sociologists is less because of their explicit adhesion to Weber's thought as a whole or their endorsement of any specific theses advanced by him—most, indeed, tend to present themselves as somehow transcending the Marx-Weber debate—than because they accept the proposition that relations of domination are universal and plural.

My dissertation is informed by a concern for the relations of domination more than the relations of production, i.e. power rather than economics, although it rests on the assumption that inequalities of material resources are often the decisive resources that underwrite a hold on power and authority (Mann 1986).[52]

An important Weberian refinement of the concept of power is its connection to authority. While power is a "capacity" to have influence in social action, authority means "delegated rights to exercise decisions" (Carmack 1995:xxiv; Smith 1974). Authority is based on legitimation of power, the perceived "right" to exercise that power, but power can be exercised in the absence of any such perceived right. Hence, those who appear to

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[52] On a cautionary note, Alex Callinicos (1995:127) concludes that the emphasis on domination by Weberian theorists is a "one-sided" preoccupation that neglects the analysis of economic forces. I acknowledge this criticism because the use of Weberian theory has encouraged my focus on religion (as one aspect of culture) and politics. I do not suggest the primacy of culture and politics above economics, my current focus is, however, positioned to illuminate the Nicaraguan case. I share historian James Dunkerley's (1988:246) conclusion that the Nicaraguan revolution had "no overbearing and inescapable economic logic" and "was generated far more directly by a crisis of a *political* nature in which the determinants of oppression prevailed over those of exploitation."

have relatively little power within a given social system may be able to use "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1985) to resist authority they cannot challenge directly. Those with relatively little power seek to gain more resources to increase their power, often looking for opportunities to use their power and gain authority to make changes. Authority offers greater possibility of making societal changes than the mere capacity to influence social action. In other words, authority is ultimately more than simply legitimated power because authority takes structural forms that are enduring.

Antonio Gramsci's (1971) term *hegemony* is a useful concept in this context because it illuminates the social fact that those with authority are dependent on the consent of the governed, even in authoritarian state systems (Crehan 2002). A state ruled by excessive naked displays of coercive force eventually becomes unstable. A *legitimation crisis* (Billings and Scott 1994; Bourdieu 1987; Habermas 1975) may lead to political reorganization or violent overthrow of a regime, as it did in Nicaragua in 1979. As Anastasio Somoza Debayle's right to rule was increasingly challenged, he resorted to repressive force in a desperate, but eventually unsuccessful, attempt to hang on to authority. Institutionalized religion and the state have had a special relationship of mutual legitimation in human history. In Nicaragua in particular, the Roman Catholic Church is maintaining its pivotal political importance in civil society by articulating in word and deed that the polity should be an "integralist" one in which Roman Catholic religious values have cultural hegemony and the Church is a co-leader of society in close association with secular political authority. The institution faced an external political challenge when the legimation crisis resulted in a generalized perception that the Church had been too closely associated with a repressive regime, one that had become intolerably abusive. Moreover, it also faced an internal challenge from a theological critique of the long-standing alliance of the Church with the wealthy, ruling class that contradicted the Biblical message of "good news" to the poor and the oppressed, while

73

upholding another Biblical theme that advised Christians to obey civil authority because all human political authority ultimately derives from God. To revise the emphasis of what is considered theologically primary was a threatening change in religious values coming from within. As an institution that bases its authority on having its supernatural access to the unchanging eternal truths, change is destabilizing. Thus, the legitimation crisis in Nicaragua went beyond a crisis in a secular state to a crisis in the dominant religious institution and, ultimately, given that society was saturated with this particular religious worldview, to a wider crisis engulfing the whole of society.

After a period of euphoric hopefulness of a people suddenly freed from a long-running dictatorship, the difficulties of effecting social change brought pragmatism and pessimism back into the picture. Weber "set a premium upon examining political life without illusions, looking at it as a struggle between individuals and groups with conflicting beliefs and interests, always decided in the end by the reservoir of power available to the winning side and by its greater ability to use that power effectively" (Bendix 1960:7). Thomas Walker's (1997) edited volume on Nicaragua in the 1990s carries that phrase, "Nicaragua without Illusions." Weber's lack of romanticism (or utopia vision) is a useful element of realism; it is especially helpful for a study of a society after a revolution, when those without authority used charismatic power to seize the regimes of government and attempt to transform power gained through violence into legitimate authority, seeking to forge consensus around a different vision, a new basis for hegemony, a new form of enduring structural forms.

In the trend towards post-modernism, power has achieved more theoretical attention than authority. John Gledhill (1994:148) describes the postmodern view of power as a force that moves through society "in a capillary way rather than coming 'down' from a centre of control such as the state." He contrasts this view of power with Max Weber's designation of a state as a political entity whose authority structure rests on

a monopoly of coercive force. Gledhill (1994:12) considers Weber's theory of power to be too narrowly confined to issues of the state as governmental apparatus but, unfortunately, Gledhill does not fully appreciate the analytic strength of Weber's three ideal types of domination as tools for understanding the relationship between the ruled and the rulers in any given historically-contingent social formation. Charismatic, traditional patrimonial[53] and legal-rational forms of domination are ideal types of authority that can be used transhistorically to analyze actually existing forms of domination. Authority-dominated politics, such as the modern bureaucratic state, have great stability compared to the fluidity of power in stateless societies in which followers only continue to follow a leader, if they have confidence in his charismatic personal qualities (Carmack 1998a). Yet, Weber considered power to be a creative force more readily available to social actors than authority. Power, then, is a resource that could be used to accomplish new ends desired by social actors, even against the legal-rational domination of the modern state. This distinctly Weberian linkage of power and authority has great analytical power. Let's see how it can clarify and critique what Foucault says about power.

Foucault in his *Discipline and Punish* (1977:23) explains his purpose as the study of the "power to punish" by examining the "genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justification and rules." He notes a transformation in the form of punishment carried out by the modern state from "torture as public spectacle" in 1750's to a much less public (almost hidden) system

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[53] Nicaragua under the Somoza dynasty has been usefully studied as a "neo-patrimonial" state or a "patrimonial police state" (Wickham-Crowley 1992:270; Falcoff 1987). It was not a traditional patrimonial state because personalized wielding of power was blended with components of the legal-rational type. In attempting to extricate the Marines, the United States sought to create stability by emphasizing key features of its own legal-rational polity: elections to legitimate the transfer of political power through peaceful means and the National Guard conceived as an apolitical police force to maintain social order (Millet 1978); however, this vision of introducing liberal bourgeois democracy did not taken seriously enough the cultural features of patrimonialism. See Gobat (2005) for an especially insightful analysis of the cultural and political ramifications of the U.S. project of regime transformation for this period in Nicaraguan history.

about 100 years later in which there is a "bureaucratic concealment of the penalty" (Foucault 1977: 7-10). Equipped with the Weberian concepts of power and authority, it can be seen that Foucault is writing not about power *per se*, but about a historical transformation in the forms of authority used to legitimate penal systems. The new form of authority utilizes a "scientifico-legal complex" which justifies its power to punish. In short, Foucault is examining what Weber would call the changing basis for "legitimation of authority" in the history of the modern European state. Foucault's use of the concept "power" leaves "authority" under-theorized. Weber (1978: 38) uses the term "power" to refer to a set of qualities that are "sociologically diffuse" and his conceptualization is not too distant from power as "capillary" action, which Gledhill (1994:148) calls the postmodern view.

What Weber adds is a critical understanding of authority as enhanced legitimated power, power that has found structures within which to operate, enduring structures that enable more than the mere exercise of power. Weber defines the "state" as quintessentially political because it "claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in order to impose its regulations" over a given territory (Weber 1978:39), but he does not assume that power can only come down from some center of control, such as the state. Weber's theory of history sees "real people struggling for precedence" (Collins 1986:36) within institutional constraints, seeking ways to break out of those constraints and, if successful, establishing new or modified durable structures—which in turn set up a different configuration of institutional constraints. History is the tracing out of tensions and balances between competing social actors, competing jurisdictions, and authority structures.

Weber's analysis of power and authority has a cross-cultural comparative and historical time frame that is deeper and broader than the one Foucault uses in his study of change in French prisons. The authority of the modern state tacitly frames Foucault's

research question, whereas Weber makes the forms of state authority an explicit topic of his research, noting the bases of authority—charismatic, patrimonial, and legal-rational—as ideal types. All three forms can be in use in modern society and, as ideal types, they do not exist in "pure" form but allow us to ask questions of empirical circumstances or events.

Authority in the Weberian corpus is translated as "domination," perhaps an unfortunate term due to its tendency to have a negative connotation in English. Foucault seeks to give "power" a positive valence to counter our folk sense of power as negative (undoubtedly due to the consequences created historically by the power concentrated in states), while Weber examines the uses of power and authority as either negative or positive, depending on the social actor's vantage point within the system. He argues that some form of domination is a universal necessity in any human society. Domination, for Weber (1978:38), is more specific than power, because it describes the formation of a geographic or spatially determined arena in which "a specified group of people …obey a command" and, although their obedience frequently does not rest solely on coercive threats, the threat of force is always present. Based on this definition, Weber's use of domination may ultimately not be useful because it appears to be a synonym for the state.[54]

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[54] Authority structures in a religious institution, however, may be understood within this definition of domination. The Roman Catholic Church, e.g., is a religious organization composed of a "specified group of people" who "obey a command" from religious leaders, who in turn, rest their authority to command obedience on sacred texts that reveal the ultimate authority of God. Priests and nuns operate under greater expectation of obedience within clerical authority structures than the laity; however, "Weber gave great attention to the monopolization of symbolic power in its various manifestations: the church's monopoly of spiritual violence through its control over sacraments as a consequence of the routinization of charisma" (Turner 1992: 216). Weber (Gerth and Mills 1946:294) gave the term "hierocratic" association to a religious group that attempts to monopolize symbolic power through the authority of the priesthood to bestow or deny spiritual values. Weber also referred to spiritual values as "religious goods" (Gerth and Mills 1946:284)—a hint of his economic analysis of religion (Collins 1986) and also a hint that Weber is a potential classic source for deepening the "religious economy" school that uses microeconomic models (i.e., rational choice) to understand patterns of behavior in religious institutions. Anthony Gill's (1998; Gill 1999) hypothesis of Protestant religious competition as a predictor of the uneven incidence of church leaders criticizing authoritarian governments in Latin America as well as the

It is precisely at this point of legitimation that a bridge between Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Weber can be built, and such a linkage saves the concept of hegemony from being understood as mere ideology. Although Kate Crehan (2002:200) does not build such a bridge between Weber and Gramsci, her description of Gramsci's concept has much in common with the Weberian project of holding material and ideal realities together:

> Hegemony in (Gramsci's) prison notebooks, I would suggest, is an approach to the question of power that in its exploration of empirical realities—how power is lived in particular times and places—refuses to privilege either ideas or material realities, seeing these as always entangled, always interacting with each other. It is a concept, that is, that rejects any simple base-superstructure hierarchy.

Crehan illustrates an instance of hegemony in Roger Keesing's (1994) analysis of the lived reality of *kastom* ("custom") among the Kwaio people on the island of Malaita in Melanesia. Keesing slowly realizes that what had at first appeared to him to be ancient indigenous custom had actually been created much more recently in the colonial period. Crehan (2002:203-4) explains:

> Not that colonial officials, missionaries or any of the other players on the colonial stage, such as anthropologists, had imposed this category on local people. Rather *kastom* had emerged out of struggles between colonizer and colonized as those who were now reduced to a subaltern status within the new regime of power attempted to deny the legitimacy of a colonial state, which they had already learnt they could not defeat through force, in terms that that state would recognize. This is one aspect of what hegemony means in practice: the power to determine the structuring rules within which struggles are to be fought out. That colonized people had 'custom', and that in certain contexts local custom could trump colonial law was an accepted part of most colonial regimes. From the perspective of the colonized the problem was: what would the colonial authorities accept as genuine, authoritative 'custom'? How could they, the colonized, frame their demands in the language of 'custom'?

Although Keesing's explanation exposes the process as an "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), it can also be grasped as a form of indigenous agency within a coercive colonial regime, a matter of survival for colonized local peoples who

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uneven adoption of liberation theology is a stimulating example of this "religious economy" school that is relevant to my study of religion and politics in Nicaragua. See chapter 6 for a greater elaboration of this point.

fight back with culture (*kastom*) framed in terms of prior authority—something that they found the dominators understood. A particular shape of "authentic" culture became forged in a power struggle; colonized people found that defending their culture as "primordial"[55] was necessary in the crucible of power and authority that respected few other indigenous rights. Weberian theory adds the conceptual tools of power, authority, and their interrelationships to any discussion of the struggle for, against, or within any given configuration of hegemony.

Analysis of Religion and Revolution

Weber does not theorize extensively about religion and the seizure of the apparatus of the state through social revolution, but he does examine charismatic authority as a form of revolutionary action broadly conceived (Collins 2005; Kimmel 1990:33-36). Weber was not optimistic about achieving positive outcomes through revolution. Yet, his attention to class, status, and party provides theoretical concepts that can illuminate revolution. Michael Walzer's (1965) Weberian-influenced study of the English Puritan Revolution, for example, articulated a contrast between factional politics and social revolution. Factional politics rest on rational self-interests which do not need to articulate their goals to a wider public. In contrast, a social revolution requires a "public language," articulating "a set of transcendent goals with an ethical or religious basis" (Hart 1996:178).

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[55] Richard Thompson (1989:49-71) explores two theories of ethnicity as primordial sentiment (among other theories of ethnicity). One of these theories argues for a biological basis in which one's particular culture has a "natural, genetically based origin," e.g., Pierre L. van den Berghe (1981), while the other, advocated by Clifford Geertz (1973a), locates ethnicity "in the dialectical interplay between deeply rooted historical ties based on assumed kinship, custom, language, and race and the recent demands placed on such primordial ties by the requirements for effective statehood" (Thompson 1989:54). Keesing's (1994) view has a strong affinity to the Geertzian view.

This distinction is important for understanding the difference between the previous factional history of Nicaraguan politics that had not developed clear political ideologies and the period dominated by modern revolution in the 1980s. The Sandinista Revolution did articulate a public language, seeking the transformation of the country into a nation-state united behind a revolutionary ethic, a new hegemony of transcendent values based on *Sandinismo*. Resistance to this effort to transform Nicaraguan society resulted in ideologically polarized positions, revolution versus counterrevolution.

In Weberian terms, a revolution is a charismatic political breakthrough against an existing form of domination (Kimmel 1990:33-36).[56] Less concerned with causes than outcomes, Weber predicts that a revolution will be followed by routinization, which produces more centralization of power in the hands of the rulers and bureaucracy than existed before. Charismatic authority is transitory because its basis is in the power of individual leaders. Michael Kimmel (1990:35) explains Weber's perspective: Once a revolution comes to power, the "revolutionary potential disappears through the process of institutionalization as easily as it does if the movement of followers is crushed politically or militarily." The creative upheaval of the revolution must give way to building up new institutions and solving the problem of leadership succession. Weber was not optimistic about revolutionary change being able to create positive change; he preferred reformist political measures rather than violence and revolutionary destruction of the existing apparatus of the state. He believed that the need to rebuild a functioning system under crisis conditions would produce authoritarianism, perhaps becoming even more oppressive the former regime.

Durkheim was also a non-revolutionary reformist (Kimmel 1990:36-39). He defined revolution as a large-scale disequilibrium that comes about because weak rulers of a state do not adequately articulate new moral understandings to accompany

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[56] This section draws on Michael S. Kimmel's (1990) theoretical analysis of revolution.

economic and technological changes. Normlessness (*anomie*) is the root cause of revolution because society lacks proper regulation and social integration. Normlessness as a result of social breakdown may be reflected in such disparate phenomena as high rates of suicide or violent social revolutions.

The reformism of Weber and Durkheim contrasts sharply with Marx, who advocated a proletarian revolution. Such a revolution, Marx believed, could achieve a radical breakthrough, allowing the formation of a new social order in which exploitation of the working class would no longer exist and eventually the state would wither away. In sharp contrast, Durkheim predicted that a population would not benefit from sudden, violent changes but rather be thrust more deeply into anomie. While Weber thought that the new state formed under revolutionary conditions would become too strong, Durkheim thought the revolutionary state would be too weak, "that the rebuilding effort will take too long and that the new institutions will be neither strong nor pervasive enough to fully integrate the society; these revolutionary institutions will therefore create more social dislocation and anomie than shoring up existing ones would do" (Kimmel 1990:39). Durkheim believed that the traditional mechanisms of social integration—the family and religion—were breaking down under modernization and that the division of labor would be the new institution that integrates modern industrial society (Kimmel 1990:38). Looking at Marx from a Durkheimian perspective, the critique of religion as the "opiate of the masses" is misdirected; religion anchors people in a moral community; therefore, Marx is blaming a symptom and missing the root cause of social problems.

Bruce Lincoln (1985) analyzes the classical theories of religion and revolution as being a stand-off between "materialist" and "romantic" explanations. The "romantic" theory maintains that religion is a positive force for social integration, whereas the "materialist" theory believes that religion serves the interests of the powerful, while it inhibits challenges to privileged classes. These two camps are, respectively, the

Durkheimian view in which religion functions as "social glue" that maintains social equilibrium, projected as fundamental for the common good. The other is the so-called "vulgar" Marxian materialist tradition in which religion is viewed as an overwhelmingly negative ideology because it serves only the interests of the ruling class. Lincoln notes, however, that both theories essentially agree that religion stabilizes society and comforts people in their suffering (Lincoln 1985:267). The "romantic" view understands this stability and comfort as a positive function for society, while the "materialist" theory understands religion as a negative or mystifying ideology that primarily benefits the dominant class. In other words, the Marxian view argues that religious ideology serves to confuse the subalterns who must overcome false consciousness to rebel against the dominant group, while the Durkheimian view argues that religion provides moral clarification that maintains or achieves social integration.[57] In order to move beyond this binary theoretical opposition, Bruce Lincoln develops three ideal types of religion: religion of (1) status quo, (2) resistance, and (3) revolution. This Weberian methodology will be useful for understanding the Nicaraguan case; however, I will add a fourth ideal type: religion of the counterrevolution.

A religion of the status quo legitimates a dominant group's right to prestige, wealth, and power, while also providing a transcendent justification for the lowly position of the subalterns (Lincoln 1985:269). This ideal type fuses the materialist tradition that sees religion as ideology serving the interests of the powers-that-be with the idealist view in which religion contributes to social stability by providing answers to the theodicy question. A religion of the status quo explains the social order as a God-determined order. Lincoln modifies his ideal type to cover religions in the European

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[57] Lincoln's formulation of the theoretical stand-off between the "romantic" and "materialist" theories of religion may be faulted for oversimplification of the two theories; e.g., a lack of attention to the dialectic in Marx. The dialectic is generally considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of Marx's work to understand (Schmitt 1987:43). See Bertell Ollman's (1993) discussion for a useful clarification of Marx's dialectic.

colonial situation, drawing on the historical details of Christianity. Although this may be a problem for the theory's cross-cultural application in cases of non-Christian religions, as a model for application to the Nicaraguan case, this lack of universality is less problematic. The Christian religious mission justified European colonial expansion by preaching that only the faith of the conquerors brings salvation. This ideology serves the material interests of the colonists who want either to eliminate the Indians or exploit their labor, demanding not just political submission but also cultural submission to those conquering them (Lincoln 1985:271-272). As Christianity is imposed, the subalterns begin to appropriate this religious worldview, claiming what power they can through adopting and transforming the symbols. Negotiations between missionaries or priestly authorities and the native groups continue without an open, systemic challenge to the social order.

Lincoln defines a religion of resistance as one that tends to develop in opposition to conditions of oppression and domination. While the goal of a religion of the status quo is to achieve ideological hegemony, certain elements of the population endure too much hardship under the rule of the dominant group to accept the imposed ideology. Their suffering is too great for them to be satisfied with the solace that a religion of the status quo offers (Lincoln 1985:272). A religion of resistance usually is unable to proselytize beyond a certain social setting or locale because the group barely has enough resources to survive; they tend to create inward-looking communities or focus on healing rituals rather than attempt a challenge to the dominant group's hegemony. Various religions of resistance may flourish at the same time, drawing on and expressing a variety of available cultural elements; e.g., ascetic or orgiastic, impassioned or quietist forms of religion. Lincoln believes too many religions of resistance exist to reduce the data to a short list of ideal types. The most important element in his characterization of a religion of resistance is its rejection of the religion of the status quo. Threatened by this refusal,

the carriers of the religion of the status quo stigmatize alternative religious expressions (Lincoln 1985:272-273). Lincoln notes that the leaders of religions of resistance usually do not come from the subaltern groups but from the "middle" strata of society. Marginal intelligentsia assume leadership of such religious groups, particularly members of the colonial elite displaced from the ruling clique or members of indigenous or mixed race groups who have education but are blocked from gaining higher social status. Often such leaders are "charismatic," claiming legitimacy through direct contact with supernatural, transcendent power (Lincoln 1985:274).

A religion of revolution is one that not only refuses to embrace the dominant religious beliefs but also actively identifies itself as in structural opposition to the dominant group (Lincoln 1985:275). Lincoln believes that religions of revolution grow out of the religions of resistance when (1) objective conditions worsen; (2) the group questions the right of the dominant group to rule; and (3) the group turns outward to recruit new members rather than continuing its inward-looking focus (Lincoln 1985:276). Key to this transformation is the worsening of the material conditions. At the root of this formulation of religion of revolution is the Marxian concept that a revolution becomes more likely as material suffering becomes increasingly unbearable. New adherents of a religion of revolution may come from either a traditional religious practice or from a religion of resistance. For someone who has been raised in the tradition of the religion of the status quo, the tradition no longer provides a credible rationale given increased suffering or disillusionment with promises that are never fulfilled. For those who have already been resisting through religious means, conditions have become so unbearable that an individual or small-group remedy is no longer sufficient and they begin to argue for structural changes. Often, they apply apocalyptic symbols from their religious tradition in order to inspire social protest.

Lincoln points out that, in the historical cases of the English, French, and American Revolutions, revolutionaries often made religious, rather than secular, arguments to justify their demand for dramatic social transformation, claiming that they are the ones who proclaim the "true" religion (Lincoln 1985:277). Religions of revolution use the values of the religion of the status quo to undermine the legitimacy of the status quo, pointing out contradictions and hypocrisy. This indicates some continuity with the past, the authority of the old religious worldview is considered betrayed by the people in authority. Rituals of the religion of the status quo are often declared to be empty formalism, not embodying the true meaning of the religion and being "other-worldly" pietism that fails to answer the theodicy question adequately. Christianity may be articulated as a religion of revolution; e.g., subalterns may grow weary of hearing that their reward is in heaven. They advocate concrete changes in the world in the present, no longer willing to settle for the promise of relief from worldly problems in an eternal afterlife. A religion of revolution is a "prophetic" religion that calls for this-worldly ethical action to correct injustice.

Religions of revolution no less than religions of the status quo create solidarity through rituals. Lincoln (1985:267) notes that "deliberate sacrilege, sexual abandon, and wholesale violation of taboos appear frequently in moments of revolutionary upheaval," intended to tear down the symbolic and ideological constructs of the rulers—a cultural process that Evans-Pritchard (1965) called a celebration of "collective obscenity." The king beheaded during the French Revolution was a symbolic destruction of the ideology of the divine right of kings, not merely the murder of a certain office holder. When revolution fails, such actions are condemned as atrocities; when they succeed, they are praised as a necessary sacrifice to achieve a more just social order.

Probably the most fascinating insight that Lincoln offers in his typology of religions is the idea that a religion of revolution dies at the moment it either achieves

victory or suffers defeat. If the revolution fails, either the authorities suppress the deviant religion or it reverts to being a religion of resistance. If the revolutionaries succeed, their religion must become a religion of the new status quo; they must legitimate themselves as a new group in power. The story of the revolution becomes the new national myth and the new authorities brand deviations from their ideology as counterrevolutionary (Lincoln 1985:281). In this reversal of political positions, the defeated forces become a new religion of resistance, a special type that Lincoln calls a religion of the counterrevolution, which may actively agitate to bring the dominant group back to power (Lincoln 1985:281).

One weakness of this typology is Lincoln's failure to develop his religion of the counterrevolution into a fourth ideal type. As Michael Kimmel (1990:5) argues, any theory of revolution should also include its opposite—the counterrevolution. Lincoln's theory falls short in providing conceptual tools for understanding those forces that resist the revolution and may even reverse the revolutionary transformation. When a revolutionary group comes to power, the former religion of the status quo does not devolve into a subaltern religion of resistance. A "deposed" ideological force, it usually continues to carry considerable power and legitimacy, even among subalterns, and certainly among the deposed secular political forces. The religion of the counterrevolution operates in a political climate different from the one that existed when the old order was in power, but it can easily take the posture of the legitimate party to whom an injustice has been done through force of arms. Religious actors of the counter-revolution learn new behaviors of resistance, focusing on tearing down and undercutting the political authority of the state. If they intensify their challenge to the new revolutionary order, they may experience repression or violence, but its leaders are not as powerless as the subalterns had been under the old order.

A problem encountered by the religion of the counterrevolution is the flip side of a problem experienced by the former religion of revolution, which now faces the need to learn new skills for reconciliation and binding together, when its prior experience has been one of tearing down and de-legitimating the old order. In the case of the religion of revolution in Nicaragua, for example, the emphasis on critique and conflict is expected to give way to defense of the revolution, including minimization of class conflict; while the "conservative" religion of the counterrevolution no longer functions to conserve the social order but rather engages in destruction of a social system in its efforts to resist the new regime.

My juxtaposition of classical theories on religion, ritual, and revolution suggests another element in overcoming the binary opposition between the "materialist" and "romantic" views. The discussion benefits from the Weberian understanding of authority, the responsibility to rule. A "religion of the status quo" rests on accommodation with secular authority, but social conflict may overwhelm its customary way of explaining injustice and hardship. A Marxian view of revolution encourages analysis of class conflict, but revolutionaries, once in power, need to unify participants around their vision of social justice, which means they would benefit from adopting a Durkheimian view. The "religion of revolution" has become a fragile religion of a new social order in formation; it is fighting against the former religion of the status quo, which is, in turn, learning new skills of opposition as a religion of the counter-revolution.

In either case, social actors of the religion of revolution or counterrevolution need ritual as "social drama" (Myerhoff 1978; Turner 1974) to communicate emotional, valued-laden messages—a need that is greater precisely because the social structure has been overthrown. The revolutionaries in power must create their own hegemony in order to create a new basis for stability and consensus, overcoming the polarization of the polity caused by its own revolutionary challenge to the previously established political

authority. Changes in ritual practices become points of contention in the struggle. While it has been conventional for anthropologists to think of ritual as a religious phenomenon, we have begun to see a more general human pattern of ritual, even in secular contexts (Kertzer 1988:14; Moore and Myerhoff 1977). The power of Victor Turner's theory of ritual as a "social drama" makes possible its application as a transhistorical concept, showing that ritual behavior is neither simply "premodern" nor merely "religious" behavior.

When the context is a social revolution fighting against a status quo in which religious ritual tended to buttress the old order, revolutionaries attempt to appropriate some elements of the old ritual forms in the transition. Sandinista efforts to modify some Catholic rituals, especially the patron saint festival for Masaya or la Purísima, show how difficult the project of creating a new revolutionary worldview can be. My research was conducted ten years after the Sandinista revolution (which embraced liberation theology as its religion of revolution) had been voted out of power and a political restoration had already been in progress for that time. The conservative forces within the hierarchy of the Nicaraguan Roman Catholic Church had been restored to a public position of influence as spiritual leaders working closely with a state that reasserted certain Catholic views of education, family, and political order. They explicitly rejected liberation theology.

The use of language about restoration should be used cautiously. The "restored" social order after the electoral victory of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in 1990 was by no means a return to the Somocista state. The social order had been profoundly transformed by changes made during the revolution and there is no "going back" to exactly the same configuration as during the Somoza family dynasty years.

Sociologist Ivan Vallier's (1970) model of church-state relations argued that the Latin American Catholic Church should avoid direct partisan political alliances and move

88

towards being an independent, "socio-ethical spokesman in society." Vallier recommended that the Church extract itself from its traditional alliances with wealthy elites, "insulate" itself from society for a time, then re-emerge with a new capacity as a non-partisan moral commentator on society. He thought he could see the model beginning to develop in Latin America in the late 1960s. This model does not fit the Nicaraguan historical case, but utilizing it as an ideal type reveals the shape of the actual trajectory in Nicaragua.

The theme of the relationship between religion and politics is an important lens for understanding these ideal types of religion. Asad argued against Geertz's secular social scientific definition of religion because he saw in it the unacknowledged cultural geneology of Christian concepts of belief and an implicit acceptance of the separation of religion and politics as two separate spheres of modern life. Within the theory of secularization and the assumption of liberal democracy as practiced in the history of the United States, the subordination of religion to a private sphere of life within a polity that rejected the idea of an official state religion, there was an implicit critique of the Catholic republics of Central and South America where the Church continued as a de facto state church, even if Constitutions stated the formal principle of the separation of church and state.

Charisma-Routinization/Sect-Church

Weber conceives the historical process "as a struggle between 'charismatic' innovation and bureaucratic 'rationalization'" that can be examined in a wide variety of social groups on many levels of society (Runciman 1972:5). Charisma and routinization are essential theoretical underpinnings for this dissertation as the antimony of two social phenomena in creative tension. They are useful for understanding a fundamental and

on-going process in human societies; they are transhistorical concepts of robust usefulness. Charisma is operative in the creative beginning of a new human project, broadly speaking, in which the group exhibits flexible, but fragile, structures. If the group survives, gradually routinization begins to produce greater stability and a new institution is formed. As stability increases, flexibility and creativity may be diminished or lost.

Routinization often takes the form of greater rationality. Weber noted elements of calculation, planning, and instrumental rationalism, especially systematizing of thought. He saw a general pattern in human history in which such efforts towards greater rationality "disenchant" a society. Although he saw a strong general trajectory towards greater rationalization in Western society, he was not certain this trend was inevitable or irreversable. Weber (1920: vol 1, 259) thought reaction would likely take place; "conflict with the moral postulate that the world is a divinely ordained cosmos or somehow oriented to meaningful ethics will surface again all the more forcefully" (quoted in Mommsen 1989:143), bringing to an end the rationalizing trend. The worldwide resurgence of religion in the late twentieth century refutes any hypothesis positing the inevitability of secularization, of permanent decline in religious belief and practice, or of the complete marginalization of religion in society (Bruce 1992; Casanova 1994; Forand 2001; Martin 1978; Samson 2004).

Weber encourages examination of when, where, and how charismatic outbursts have taken place in the past and the processes of routinization as those charismatic movements attempt to solve the problems of long-term survival, especially the problem of succession after the death of a charismatic founder. Kelly and Kaplan (1990:126) declare that it is "profoundly Weberian" to be interested in "charismatic as well as systemic phenomena;" i.e., to explore simultaneously "universals" and the "inexhaustible individuality" at work in any particular historical case.

In order to understand this relationship between charisma (broadly understood as creative, innovative, and destabilizing power) and routinization (the systematization or institutionalization of a social group), Weber advocates historically specific analyses of specific case studies. Jeffrey C. Isaac (1987:148) considers this to be a theoretical limitation because such a concept "has explanatory value only when attached to a theory of a historically specific social relationship or society" (quoted in Barrett 2002:75-76). Weber would counter with a reply, that concepts <u>cannot</u> be freed from their historically specific context and that this "one-sidedness" is precisely what saves the concept from merely being an abstract idea.

The "sect" versus "church" paired concept is a specific instance of charisma and routinization useful for the analysis of social dynamics of change in religious groups (Oden 1991).[58] Ernest Troeltsch (1950 (1911)) developed this analytic pair through discussions with Max Weber. It is a classic theory, much used and often criticized because the terminology draws so clearly from the historical Christian context in which they lived. Yet, the pattern they identified has productive analytical force for examining change in religious organizations, especially in the application I will use for understanding contemporary, inner dynamics of the Roman Catholic Church.

The "church" concept refers to an institution, an organization with stability based on mechanisms for passing on the tradition to each new generation. A new religious group becomes a church when it adds more new members by birth, i.e. children being born and raised by families within the group rather than by conversion. As routinization proceeds, membership in a particular church may come to be felt as natural, as natural as being born into a family. Thus, church membership is closely tied to the social structure of a particular place, such that belonging to a particular church appears to be

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[58] My discussion of the church/sect conceptual pair depends upon the wonderfully clear and succinct description presented by Robert Oden (1991), formerly a professor of comparative religion at Dartmouth College.

obligatory. A church strives to be universal, the moral authority for a whole community, preaching an inclusive, universal ethic.

An authority structure is an important feature of a church, i.e. the institution has set up criteria for recognition of legitimate leaders based on people holding an office. The offices of priest or bishop are examples of the "depersonalization" of charisma (Oden 1991). The charisma is being passed on through institutionalized procedures that depend little on the personal charisma of the individual. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church, procedures were established for the consecration of priests and bishops to perform certain functions, i.e. administering the sacraments.

In contrast, a sect is formed by people leaving a church (i.e., that "natural" group in which they were raised as a child) to create a new group whose membership is voluntary. Joining the new group is based on consciously deciding to accept the criteria of belonging to this new group rather than the obligatory belonging that comes from being raised in the faith. The inspiration for the new group is a charismatic leader or leaders, i.e. those who communicate a new religious vision and exhort people to follow them in the new ways. Sects preach an exclusive religious ethic, believing that their way of understanding the truths of the faith is the right one, while others (especially in the mother church) are in spiritual danger. Membership is based on having a religious experience that convinces the leader and other members of the group that the convert has found their newly-offered key to salvation. This new expression of faith is articulated as closer to the "true" heart of the faith, showing greater purity than the corrupted expression. The development of a sect often contains explicit criticism of the institutionalized form of religion from which it broke away; that institution has become less pure, less fervent, or downright lax or corrupt. Drawing on the spontaneous charisma of a founding leader, sect-like behavior is anti-institutional. They have few structures and require evidence of having had the proper religious experience for

inclusion rather than training in theology, doctrine or other formal transfers of authority. Charisma resides in the person of the leader, not the office. Succession issues are a problem that must be surmounted, if the group is to have any staying power beyond the death of a founder.

The analytical strength of this conceptual pair stands out when it is applied to the history of change in Christianity, which clearly began as a charismatic sect. The followers of Jesus were Jews, members of a religious community into which they had been born (technically fitting the concept of a "church"), but their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, resurrected after his death, marked them as a heretical group because their belief did not coincide with mainstream Jewish thinking about the Messiah (Galambush 2005).[59] Although not originally intending to create a new religious institution, their failure to convince the Jewish community as a whole that Jesus was indeed the Messiah eventually led to a new minority group within Judaism (a sect) and eventually a break with the parent organization. As Jews who believed in Jesus separated from the larger Jewish community and focused on the conversion of Gentiles, the sect was gradually transformed into a stable religious institution. With the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity, a persecuted minority sect became the official religion of the Roman Empire, taking a big leap in its historic transformation into a stable institution. In short, it became a church.

Weber and Troeltsch, drawing on the history of the Protestant Reformation, noticed a church-sect social process in which institutions that had reached some level of routinized stability could be challenged by another new instance of charismatic fervor. Once Christians formed dissident groups that pulled away from the Roman Catholic

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[59] Claims that Jesus was the Messiah (in the face of his death on a cross and claims of his bodily resurrection) were a scandal in light of Jewish ideas about the fulfillment of the prophecy for the Messiah. A Jewish Messiah could not die, especially not by the ignoble form of execution on a cross, and he would lead the Jewish nation, indeed he would be the King of the Jews on earth, bringing an end to earthly oppression and domination.

Church, other believers became dissatisfied in their so-called "reformed" church. Dissatisfaction with the perceived level of devotion, purity, or a doctrinal argument might result in another splinter group forming a new charismatic group. Protestantism has had many such splits, creating many denominations which continue to use some or all of the sacred texts but with differing interpretations and practices.

This phenomenon of a strong charismatic outburst of religiosity has been felt within the Nicaraguan Roman Catholic Church without causing schism.[60] One solution to this problem of dissatisfaction with the level of religious purity was the formation of an "expert" group within the Church; i.e., training clergy who would devote their lives to religious practices. Experts would keep the standards of purity high and share their insights with the "laity" or non-expert who, by definition, does not devote much time to religious practices. This solution, however, did not prove to be a definitive one. The clergy, necessarily interacting with the laity in regular celebrations of the mass and sacraments, were too much in the world; therefore, those who are called to practice their faith with greater vigor and purity decided to form religious orders in which withdrawal from the secular world facilitated a concentration of piety uncontaminated by worldly temptations. Thus, continuously over the years, the Roman Catholic Church contained and controlled periodic outbursts of charismatic impulses—in other words, this "sect-like" behavior—without having the groups involved break away from the parent organization. This creative solution resulted in the recognition of various religious orders, each with different emphases, e.g. Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, to name just a few, while maintaining the essential unity of the institution. Roger Finke and Patricia

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[60] The only schism since 1870 (Badone 1990:20) took place in 1988, when Pope John Paul II excommunicated the French Archbishop Marcel Lefevbre, whose traditionalist movement represents a challenge from the right. They reject the reforms of Vatican II, including saying the Mass in the vernacular language, preferring to stay with the Latin Mass. In 1988, Lefevbre ordained four bishops who follow this charismatic leader in his traditionalist "sect," defying Pope John Paul II's authority.

Wittberg (Finke and Wittberg 2000) have applied this church-sect ideal type to understand how religious orders have functioned as "sect-like revival movements." They trace the history within the Catholic Church of allowing new expression by "virtuosi" religious actors without producing schism because religious orders were established to vent the charisma.

Bryan Turner (1996:111-116) explores Weber's suggestive contrast between "virtuosi" and "mass" interests in which he notes that spiritual talents are unequally expressed, producing a "stratification of grace" between those who make up the "unmusical" mass of people in a society and those who have exceptional religious talent. Weber (Gerth and Mills 1946:287-288) observed:

> men are *differently qualified* in a religious way…The sacred values that have been cherished, the ecstatic and visionary capacities of shamans, sorcerers, ascetics and pneumatics of all sorts, could not be obtained by everyone. The possession of such facilities is a 'charisma' which, to be sure, might be awakened in some but not in all. It follows from this that all intensive religiosity has a tendency toward a sort of *status stratification*, in accordance with differences in the charismatic qualifications. 'Heroic' or 'virtuoso' religiosity is opposed to mass religiosity. By 'mass' we understand those who are religiously 'unmusical'; we do not mean those who occupy an inferior opposition in the secular status order. In this sense, the status carriers of a virtuoso religion have been the leagues of sorcerers and sacred dancers; the religious status group of the Indian Sramana and of the early Christian 'ascetics,' who were expressly recognized in the congregation as a special 'estate;' the Paulinian, and still more the Gnostic, 'pneumatics,' the pietist *ecclesiola*; all genuine 'sects'—that is, sociologically speaking, associations that accept only religiously qualified persons in their midst; and finally, monk communities all over the world.

The withdrawal of religiously virtuosi groups from the mundane world in which one has to work to obtain food and shelter creates social stratification based on religious talents (Turner 1996:113). The virtuosi often depend on the laity to provide donations that allow their single-minded devotion to non-productive religious practices. Since this economic linkage may prove to be problematic, religious orders sometimes undertake economically

productive activities within their order, although occasionally this causes them to become the center of controversy.[61]

Laity may be attracted to the message of charismatic spiritual renewal movements, but Turner (1996:113) notes that they put pressure on religious experts to "water down, to simplify and to minimise the moral and ritualistic requirements of 'authentic' charisma" because these requirements are difficult for laity to sustain while carrying out their everyday economic and domestic responsibilities. The appearance of lay-run religious revival movements, such as Neocatechumenal Way, Charismatic Renewal, and Opus Dei,[62] within the Roman Catholic Church are contemporary examples of charismatic inspirations leading to the formation of new groups within the Church. They present a particular challenge to the parent organization because they resist being classified as religious orders, as set out in current canon law. Having the paired concepts of charisma-institutionalization and sect-church helps to understand the tensions between desires for religious vibrancy (needed as a defense against Protestant and Pentecostal competition) and for institutional control of charismatic outbursts (to prevent institutional fragmentation through schism or internal challenge to authority).

The church-sect concept also helps to place in perspective the controversy about the Christian Base Community movement being a parallel "Church of the Poor" (accused

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[61] The Jesuits readily come to mind as one religious order whose economic and political strength has caused controversy within the church and with certain governments (Cerutti 1984; Martin 1988; Mörner 1965).

[62] There were rumors of Opus Dei influence in Nicaragua, but I did not have time to pursue them. Opus Dei was founded in Spain by Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. It is first, and so far, the only "personal prelature" recognized in the Roman Catholic Church, which is a new organizational category that indicates that Opus Dei is not a religious order following any already-exisiting models. A short description of Opus Dei can be found in the context of a contemporary history of Spain by journalist John Hooper (1995:140-143). Also I recommend highly Joan Estruch's (1995) sociological analysis of Opus Dei. Estruch (1995: 133) touches on the accusation made against Opus Dei as a "parallel" church within the Roman Catholic Church in that it may be encouraging members to ignore the authority structure of the diocese (i.e., the bishops). Weber's concept of "virtuosi" to understand Opus Dei members as a "select few" who practice worldly asceticism is an important part of Estruch's (1995: 243-245) analysis.

of causing schism and being overly involved with politics).[63] I juxtapose the Christian

Base Community with the far less public controversies over two different types of

potentially parallel churches—the Neocatechumenal Way and the Catholic Charismatic

Renewal. All three movements interweave religion and politics in different manners,

although the Neocatechumenal Way and Catholic Charismatic Renewal movements

claim not to be political at all.

Conclusion

Theory is essential for tackling the "big problems" that anthropology frames in

cross-cultural perspective from the vantage point of "local places" (Brettell 1998:515).

The big problem I find in Masaya, Nicaragua is power in relationship to authority.

In the face of the postmodern challenge, I argue for turning to Max Weber as a

classical theorist who can guide us into developing research designs that respect

individual social action (agency), while also finding social patterns (structure) because,

in a study of the political dimensions of religion, he suggests how to take the content of

religious belief seriously (Laitin 1978; Peterson 1997:20).

A historical turn working in a Weberian idiom is far more fruitful for

anthropology than a postmodern turn. A Weberian postpositive interpretivism,

assuming a dwelt-in world rather than a socially constructed one, avoids the problems of

postmodern nihilism, which in its questioning of the coherence of the subject, treating

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[63] This accusation against the Christian Base Communities of the "popular" Church (*iglesia popular*) planning to split from the rest of the Roman Catholic Church was born of the particular political conjuncture in Nicaragua's history. In El Salvador, this term is not widely used, and the archdiocese is more supportive of the Christian Base Community movement, e.g. the songs of *Misa Popular Salvadoreña*, written between 1978 and 1980 by Christian Base Community members in the capital city of San Salvador are sung in the church, along with the Nicaraguan *Misa Campesina,* while they are forbidden in the official church in Nicaragua. Moreover, these songs are included in an official songbook produced by the Archdiocese of San Salvador (Peterson 1997:xxii).

culture as text, and rejecting the possibility of history threatens to undo the basis of conducting anthropological analysis. If we hold our theories lightly as a "heuristic" guide, we are more likely to be able to see the errors and problems.

The postmodern use of "genealogy" as a substitute for cross-cultural comparative anthropological and sociological history fails on the grounds of its inadequacy as a productive theory-building project. Although postmodernism may appear to relish discursiveness, it actually works against theories being held up to examination and critique. Asad's genealogy of religion offers an interesting deconstruction of Geertz's definitions of religion and ritual, suggesting concepts of power, discipline, and authorizing processes but, in the end, he refuses to gather them together into an explicit theoretical project. Asad's failure is one shared generally among postmodernists: the failure to formulate an alternative paradigm that could guide robust and productive research agendas (Kurtz 2001:192). Returning to the classical tradition, we can begin again to take up the important task of developing overarching paradigms and theory.

I think it is fruitful to utilize "ideal types" as heuristic devices to guide analysis of social and historical realities (Ringer 1997:5), i.e., the Weberian pairs of ideal types of charisma and routinization or sect and church, and I hope the ethnography of the Nicaraguan case which follows will demonstrate that for the reader. Bruce Lincoln's ideal types join religion and politics. They facilitate an understanding of the struggle between "carriers" of liberation theology and those of the Church hierarchy. Liberation theology and the Christian base community were not the only responses to the challenges of the revolutionary decades. This dissertation explores other changes within the Catholic Church, revealing responses to the "invasion of the sects" (Protestant and Pentecostal religions) with the possibility of new sect-like practices within the Church.

Nicaragua, as a modern nation struggling for its identity, was built on the "cult of the saints," but in recent history, ruling elite and subalterns use that religious practice in

different ways. The "traditional" patron saint celebration in Masaya and devotional practices to honor the Virgin Mary are being modified, while these practices are taking place in the context of newer religious expressions. Weberian theory of church and sect facilitates the juxtaposition of the Christian Base Community movement with two of the so-called "new movements" in Roman Catholicism, which are rarely examined together.

Chapter 2

Anthropological Method: Interdisciplinary and Disorderly

Underlying Assumptions

My research methodology is informed by four underlying assumptions. First, "the best approach to answering anthropological questions remains immersion in the culture of those who have the answers" (Hopgood 2000:214), a truism for any cultural anthropologist. Participant-observation, which has been fundamental to cultural anthropology since Bronislaw Malinowski pioneered the method, is immersion par excellence in which detailed fieldnotes constitute the raw documentation (Emerson, et al. 1995; Sanjek 1990). Sherry Ortner (1995:173) defines participant-observation as "the attempt to understand another life world using the self—as much of it as possible—as the instrument of knowing." She goes beyond defining ethnography as a "bodily process in space and time," however, to understand the method as also a method of "intellectual (and moral) positionality, a constructive and interpretive mode" (Ortner 1995:173).

My approach was guided by James Spradley's (1979:3-4) observation that "ethnography means *learning from people*" rather than studying people as research object. I think my method is best described as "conversational" participant-observation, borrowing from the characterization of the method developed by Rena Lederman (2007). I engaged in an informal discussion with respondents[64] and intersubjectively

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[64] I, like Rena Lederman (2007), prefer "respondent" to the conventional term, "informant." The term "respondent" captures my emphasis on the collaborative, intersubjective nature of learning from and with people. The term "informant" is used in law enforcement and, although not the connotation meant by anthropologists, it nonetheless carries with it such unsavory meanings as spy, mole, stool pigeon, or informer.

developed an understanding of the cultural processes I was immersed in bodily and intellectually.

This methodology has implications for ethics in practice, especially issues of informed consent because a written consent form modeled after biomedical research is unworkable (cf. Fluehr-Lobban 1994; Lincoln and Tierney 2004; Wax and Cassell 1979).[65] Although ethnographic fieldwork has less potential to cause harm than biomedical research, the potential for harm in social and behavioral research is, nonetheless, real and I took such potentiality seriously while doing my research. Our institutional structures for accountability in ethical research standards are one element in "a context of social commitments and community ties for assessing what is valuable" (Christians 2000:144).[66] Researchers operate as moral agents, responsible to the wider

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[65] Lederman (2007) describes the problems of the consent form in the context of the ethical imperative to protect human subjects when conducting research. The following is her suggestion for language that communicates effectively to Institutional Review Boards the unique quality of participant-observation without minimizing the importance of informed consent: "In order for (participant-observation) to be effective, researchers need to treat their consultants as experts from whom they are learning. Introducing a consent form inhibits this process by giving the researcher a false appearance of authority and expertise, and by giving the research a false appearance of narrow precision. In this kind of research, consent forms have a tendency to undermine respondents' ability to direct conversation by positioning them as subjects to be studied rather than experts who are contributing to scholarship. For these same reasons, introducing consent forms also tends to undermine the mutual trust which must be present in participant-observation. This approach is premised on the idea that respondents are empowered to determine their level of comfort in revealing information and that they may cease to participate at any time. Clearly communicating this basic premise, I will make certain that each respondent is fully aware of their right to discontinue participation in my research at any time. Finally, confidentiality is an important value in this research. Consequently, I will be using pseudonyms in my field-notes and all other documentation; if consent forms were to be collected in this research, these forms would be the only documents linking named individuals to my study. While I will not intentionally record illegal behavior in my notes, not having consent forms would provide an additional assurance both to my respondents and myself concerning preservation of confidentiality." I think Lederman's suggestion for "boilerplate" language is excellent.
[66]Clifford G. Christians (2000:141) is critical of Institutional Research Boards (IRB) because he believes IRBs do more to protect their home institutions than the human subjects (cf. Vanderpool 1996). Christians implicates Max Weber and his fact-value split as part of "value-neutral experimentalism" that has "come into its own" in the form of the IRBs, but which Christians (2000:141) considers deeply problematic, indeed in crisis. He (2000:144-145) suggests that a "feminist communitarian" model, following Norman K. Denzin (1997:274-287), can guide us out of the crisis. Although I am sympathetic to Christians' argument, I use part of his argument against him. He implies that the IRBs are somehow outside the "context of social commitments and community ties for assessing what is valuable" (Christians 2000:144), but I disagree. They are indeed part of a context of social commitments and community ties; I prefer to work with

community of human society as well as to particular disciplinary and academic

institutions that are powerful subsets (relative to other centers of power and authority)

of that wider community, not separated from it. Anthropologists are especially

positioned as moral agents whose actions could have far-reaching consequences,

whether intended or not, because we cross cultural boundaries deliberately as part of our

professional practice. Our methods as well as our findings have the potential to have

impact on our respondents in their local contexts (which may be invisible to us as

researchers, especially after we have left the field) as well as to have internationally

public ramifications beyond the scope of any particular incident tht may have taken place

in the context of fieldwork.

A second underlying assumption of my method is that the researcher is open to

changes that emerge during the course of the investigation; the shape and extent of the

study cannot be rigidly pre-determined, although research does proceed more effectively

if there is a well-conceived research plan. Given that our respondents are the "experts"

teaching us through their understanding of their cultures, I assume that the

anthropologist must make changes as we learn new things in the course of fieldwork.

Anthropologist Joy Hendry (1999:viii) notes the importance of new ideas suggested by

encountering the unexpected while doing fieldwork:

> Much is learned by chance, picked up suddenly and without warning, and
> moments of insight are often embedded in a mass of everyday activity. The long-
> term nature of anthropological study makes it possible to benefit from new ideas

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them as important, if flawed, formal attempts to hold members of their particular academic
communities accountable for practicing ethically sound research. Moreover, previous
formulations of Max Weber's contributions to the question of value-neutrality in the social
sciences are being challenged, and I believe he should not be dismissed as part of the problem but
rather valued as a classical theorist whose attempt to grapple with the question is useful, even as
contemporary discussions are taking us beyond his formulation (e.g.Antonio and Glassman 1985;
Ciaffa 1998; Gane 2002; Ringer 1997; Roth and Schluchter 1979; Weber 1978). Much
contemporary debate about methodology turns on the question of how to move beyond Weberian
Verstehen (understanding) to social action, i.e. research that makes recommendations for
meaningful action plans as an important political and ethical commitment (cf.,Denzin and
Lincoln 2000a:174), collapsing the fact-value split. .

which occur unexpectedly like this, and even to rewrite the whole project if the circumstances demand it. It is not always easy to explain to grant-giving bodies, and colleagues in other disciplines, why anthropologists feel they can be rather vague about their initial aims when setting out on a period of fieldwork. This book (on Hendry's fieldwork in Japan) not only documents a fairly radical change in purpose, but also aims to demonstrate the value of making that change.

While gathering data under fieldwork conditions means that any methodological tool kit needs to be flexible enough to deal with the unanticipated, a general research plan is essential.

If that research plan is developed in collaboration with those we are learning from, the more likely we are to deepen our effectiveness. Each subsequent research period can build on the previous to create a better, pre-arranged plan for the next research project. Hence, a long-term commitment to study of a particular culture is a critical part of the method of anthropology. To a lay person's eye, an anthropologist might not look much different than a journalist who describes a culture after a period of personal immersion; however, journalists rarely spend as much time immersed in another culture as an anthropologist, they usually work with interpretors rather than learning local languages, and often are globe-trotting to areas of the world that editors determine are "hot spots" for news reporting. Journalist accounts are valuable primary data for anthropologists and other researchers and, when analyzed critically, as eye-witness accounts from a given point of view; such accounts are regularly mined by historians, anthropologists, and other researchers as valuable sources of historical documentation. Where would we be without the Spanish chroniclers of the contacts between the conquerors and the peoples of the New World? They have been the critical to the development of ethnohistory (Barber and Berdan 1998; Carmack 1971; Fowler Jr. 1989).

Changes in my own research plan were inevitable, especially given that I am an anthropologist in training with little prior experience living in Nicaragua. My original

research plan was to explore changes in gender and family patterns in the coffee industry in the department of Masaya, comparing different class levels of rural families involved in coffee production from elite farms to small family farms to agricultural wage workers. The actual experience of doing participant observation transformed my research plan into one that focused on Catholic religious practices in the urban municipal center. Arriving at the beginning of the city of Masaya's three-month-long patron saint celebration, several respondents insisted that I participate in this celebration if I was to truly understand "their" Masaya. Perhaps one could say I was "captured" by the urban families of the cities, who were among the people I first met while trying to get my feet wet, and that is no doubt a somewhat fair assessment. Just trying to get my feet wet, I was already becoming obligated to the people on whose hospitality I depended for my own daily sustenance.[67] They were enthusiastic about the patron saint celebration and claimed that Masaya's festival was the longest and most elaborate of any such patron saint festival in the country. I also noted fascinating ethnic differences between the way "people of society" in the city center celebrated in comparison with Monimbosenos in the *barrio* (neighborhood) of Monimbó. The Indians spent enormous amounts of time

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[67] Russell Bernard (1994:167) notes that an ethnographer should be aware that "the first informants with whom you develop a working relationship in the field may be 'deviant' members of their culture." He does not think this is necessarily a problem because those who feel marginal to their culture often are people who are "observant, reflective, and articulate" due to intellectualizing skills that may cause them to have a critical or "disenchanted" view of their culture, and he cautions that a researcher should check on the status and role of people being considered as "key ethnographic informants" so that you do not inadvertently pick someone who causes too great a barrier to gaining access to others (Bernard 1994:168). Although generally speaking I think that many respondents helped me gain access to Catholics who participated in rival movements within the Roman Catholic Church and also had significantly open connections with Protestants, especially the mainstream Baptists and some neighbors who were in a small Pentecostal group, I did run into difficulty when trying to make connection with the *alcade de vara* (mayor of the staff) in Monimbó because my key respondents did not support the religiously conservative Catholic (who was not a Sandinista support) currently holding the position. I understood enough of the situation independent of their reports to realize that they made arrangements for me to see the Sandinista *alcalde de vara,* who felt that he was the rightful claimant to the position.

preparing for and participating in the festival, especially the street processions.[68] Yet, I

also observed that many indigenous people are participating in new forms of Catholic

religious practice as well as non-Catholic evangelical groups, such as Pentecostalism.

Borrowing Peter Metcalf's (2001:32) words, I "bowed to the inevitable and focused (my)

research on ritual continuity and change, so confirming the old saw that ethnographers

end up studying whatever their hosts want to talk about." For me, that is the beauty of

anthropology. If an anthropologist is too certain before arrival what is important to

study, it is possible that his or her eyes may not be opened.

Third, a value orientation is at the root of my methodology, which I derive from

the pragmatic tradition. Tim Clark (2002:122-123), writing about the policy process,

maintains that pragmatism sees the "purpose of science in human affairs as increasing

freedom through insights that bring more factors more reliably into conscious awareness

for purposes of decision-making." Policy issues related to Central America were my first

introduction to this region of the world. Before deciding to become an anthropologist, I

was an active grass-roots member of the Central America solidarity movement in the

1980s, which protested U.S. foreign policy in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

The most significant of these groups for me are Witness for Peace and Quest for Peace.[69]

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[68] This ethnographic fact has been observed and studied by other anthropologists, of course, and I
was certainly not the first anthropologist most of my respondents had met and/or worked with.
For example, they had copies of a recent ethnography of Monimbó written by a Spanish
anthropologist, Javier García Bresó (1992), which they shared with me. If they had not shared it
with me, I do not know how long it might have taken me to discover this important study through
library research, if at all!

[69] Witness for Peace (www.witnessforpeace.org) was formed as a non-violent, faith-based group
to protest nonviolently U.S. policy in Nicaragua during the administration of President Ronald
Reagan in the 1980's (Griffin-Nolan 1991; Smith 1996). After the end of the contra war (1990),
Witness for Peace changed its focus from witnessing against war to an analysis of the "silent"
economic violence that they believe is being imposed on the poor in Latin America and the
Caribbean through international economic policy. A publication just released when I was
beginning my field work was an "economic" Way of the Cross, using the ritual symbol of the
Catholic Stations of the Cross as a framework for educating about the moral dimension of
economic issues (The Religious Working Group on the World Bank and IMF, et al. 1999).
Building on ideas such as Johan Galtung's (1969:171) concept of "structural violence," Witness for
Peace has continued its concern for social justice from a time of war, repression, and human
rights violations to a time that is less bloody but which suffers from severe economic problems. A

My first methodological action for this dissertation was to obtain a macro-level view of

the country by taking part in a Witness for Peace tour, which included dialogue with

World Bank and IMF staffers in Washington, D.C. and in Nicaragua with various local

groups whose speakers reflected different perspectives, most critical of the political and

economic policies of the neoliberal post-Sandinista governments of Chamorro and

Alemán, but not all. Then, I settled down to begin my micro-level research immersed in

daily life in Masaya. It requires continued effort to link macro and micro levels, to

overcome the previous anthropological convention that we can find a community "small

enough and isolated enough that its political and religious life could be comprehended in

a year of residence" (Ireland 1991:8).[70]

variation of dependency theory, Galtung's notion is that the core capitalist countries have established structural relationships with the periphery such that direct political and military rule is not necessary to accomplish their dominance. Galtung (1969:173) writes that, unlike personal violence, "structural violence is silent, it does not show; ...structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the air around us." Drawing on analysis, such as Duncan Green's *Silent Revolution* (1995) written from a secular political economy perspective, Witness for Peace is a faith-based political action group whose aim is to call attention to international economic structures that make it difficult for the poor to survive. They project a prophetic analysis, using an ecumenical religious lens to heighten the urgency of their message. Quest for Peace is a project of the Catholic Quixote Center, which began as a dual project of humanitarian aid for Nicaragua and public policy instrument, criticizing then-President Ronald Reagan's covert funding of the counter-revolutionary war after the U.S. Congress had voted to stop aid in the 1980s. Quest for Peace continues its humanitarian aid projects, such as fostering community development through its partner organization in Nicaragua, the Institute of John XXIII. Like Witness for Peace, Quest activists speak out prophetically on political and economic policy issues. For example, in 2006, Quest for Peace protested U.S. diplomatic intervention in the Nicaraguan presidential election process: http://quest.quixote.org/handsoff/delegationreport.

[70] Rowan Ireland (1991:8-9) chose his research site in Brazil because he thought it was a town that was small and isolated enough to be understood in his first year of residence in 1977; however, he realized that "it was not so isolated that its citizens were cut off from the choices and dilemmas, the opportunities and constraints, the contests for hearts and minds that are integral to modern Brazilian social life. These citizens were marginal to power in Brazil as a structured political economy; but they were not disengaged from Brazil-under-construction." Before I left for Nicaragua, I had no illusions that Masaya was small and isolated enough to be understood in a year! Many of my respondents (but not all) were marginal to power but also, like Ireland's respondents, they were not disengaged from Nicaragua-under-construction. Ireland's (1991: 205) ethnographic and personal commitment to the town (to which he gave the pseudonym "Campo Alegre" to protect the privacy of his respondents) has continued for 20 years, disabusing him of his initial hope that the town could be a microcosm, a fact that proves the anthropological point that long-term commitment to on-the-ground immersion in a certain place can produce rich insights into change and complexity and can uncover limitations and errors, producing improvement in theory and method. The "Campo Alegre" and its people turned out to be better conceived as a "locus in which the political implications of the religious constructions of everyday

Lastly, a comparative approach is essential. The significance of a local, fine-grained ethnographic description becomes clear only through the perspective that comparison provides. John R. Bowen's (1999:136-151) "multistage comparative approach" is a great model. Comparison helps avoid overly broad typifications of culture as well as assumptions of greater local uniqueness or, conversely, greater top-down imposition of values and practices than actually exists. This is especially important where the cultural phenomena in view are religious practices of a world-religion.[71]

Choice of Research Site

Clifford Geertz (1973b:22) famously stated, "Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighborhoods...); they study *in* villages." Following Geertz but informed by the continuing effort in anthropology to rethink the "field" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a), I did not study the city of Masaya, Nicaragua but rather I studied *in* Masaya. I sought to understand "shifting locations rather than bounded fields" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b:38). Doing fieldwork helped me to become more "attentive to epistemological and political issues of location" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b:39). I left my country, the United States, a core country hegemonic in the Western Hemisphere, to live in Nicaragua, a peripheral country, whose self-determination and sovereignty have been compromised continuously by U.S. intervention. Nicaragua's 1979 revolution that

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life in Brazil could be grasped" (Ireland 1991:205). Although my research cannot provide the same time-depth of personal ethnographic experience as Ireland's study, I hope that it, nonetheless, contributes another example of studying the "political implications of the religious constructions of everyday life." Ireland's work is an excellent model and source of ideas for further research and comparative analysis. The use of historical methods and secondary sources goes a long way towards overcoming the problems of the lack of context and presentism, when researchers rely too heavily on ethnographic data alone. The historical turn in anthropology contributes to a correction of structural-functionalism, which eschewed history in favor of the direct observation of a "slice of life," although the inadequacy of contemporary speculative histories about social origins was a genuine problem that structural-functionalists were attempting to avoid.
[71]A growing body of new anthropological studies of Christianity is addressing these issues (cf.Badone 1990; Cannell 2006; Robbins 2007).

overthrew the dictator, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, was a local event that played out on an international political stage, a struggle that became caught up in an ideological battle between revolutionaries fighting for freedom, national self-determination, and a new form of democracy against those who saw them (the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, or FSLN) as a Marxist-Leninist totalitarian regime, threatening their freedoms and right to practice capitalism and liberal democracy.[72] I began my fieldwork nine years after the revolutionary Sandinista government had been voted out of power in 1990 and peacefully turned over its authority to Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the widow of Nicaraguan journalist and anti-Somoza political leader, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, who was assassinated during the effort to oust Anastasio Somoza Debayle. After Dona Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's six-year term,

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[72] Debate has raged about the revolution and the government that emerged after the Somoza family "dynasty" was overthrown in 1979. A sampling follows. Thomas Walker (1985:24) called Sandinismo "a blend of nationalist, pragmatic Marxism, and Catholic humanism." Doug Brown (1990:56) saw a Gramscian influence: "It is one of the first revolutions which has consistently attempted to ground a *socialist* strategy with what Claude Lefort (1986) has termed a 'politics of human rights.' The Nicaragua Revolution, as witnessed through its ideology of Sandinismo, is explicitly socialist but has not based its political strategy on the economistic view... This gives the Sandinista Revolution a unique post-Marxian flavor." The anti-Sandinista opposition criticized the Leninist vanguard approach of the FSLN whose mass organizations were anti-democratic, manipulated by the FSLN Party to create a homogeneous Sandinista ideology (Cruz Jr. 1988; Velázquez Pereira 1986). Humberto Belli (1983; 1985) cited evidence of Sandinista human rights abuses, while José Luis Velázquez Pereira (1986) showed that civil society was more diverse, democratic, and autonomously organizing itself under the Somozas than under the totalitarian Sandinistas. Donald Hodges (1986) finds more "economistic" Marxist orthodoxy in the intellectual foundation of the revolution than Walker or Brown (and questions the role of liberation theology in guiding the Sandinistas while in power), while Phil Ryan (1995) is highly critical of the mistakes the Sandinistas made because they used orthodox Marxism to guide their economic policy; e.g., assuming that the peasants were more proletarian than they actually were. Timothy Wickham-Crowley (1992:273) concludes, in his comparative analysis of guerrilla insurgencies, that the Sandinistas were intellectuals who started as Marxist-Leninists but moderated their ideology to develop broad "tactical alliances" with other non-Marxian opponents of the Somoza family dynasty (cf.Everingham 1996). James Dunkerley (1988:270-271) notes that, as the Sandinistas consolidated their leadership, they crushed those further to the left, while the proponents of liberal democracy withdrew but were not expelled from the revolutionary junta forming a new government. Journalist Raymond Bonner (1986) argued that, in El Salvador, human rights violations committed by government, military, and paramilitary forces during the 1980's where far worse than anything done by the Sandinistas. The United States having originally set up the National Guard in Nicaragua as a peace-keeping institution supported governments that can keep order. Political scientist Kirkpatrick (1979) was tapped by the Reagan administration to serve in his administration after her article making the case for authoritarian government in preference to totalitarian ones.

Arnoldo Alemán, former mayor of the capital city of Managua, was elected President in 1996, and he was the sitting President during the period of my fieldwork.

My choice of research site contains a value judgment in that I think Nicaragua is an important place to conduct an anthropological study. That this country experienced a revolution that captured international attention in the 1980's and became the focus of an ideologically polarized battle at the end of the Cold War is the first reason Nicaragua is important. Political violence and upheaval are critical issues for thinking about how human societies change and how social problems may be addressed. My research is inspired by a desire to understand what is happening on the ground in Nicaragua because the attention from all political perspectives on my side of the border dwindled after 1990. Nicaragua once again slipped into relative obscurity in the eyes of other countries in the world-system community, especially in the United States, where a small, peripheral country is not much valued.[73] We need to understand the people of Nicaragua in their own terms apart from this ideological struggle, which was more about East-West geopolitics than the local roots of the conflict, and to continue to pay attention to the on-going situation there. Even a cursory comparative analysis of the five Spanish-speaking countries of Central America (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Honduras) reveals an astonishing variety among countries that otherwise share a history of Spanish conquest and colonization, poverty due to a peripheral structural economic position in relation to the core of the capitalist world-system, and contemporary impacts as a region "tightly integrated into the United States political-economic system" (LaFeber 1993). In spite of these commonalities, they have unique historical trajectories,

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[73] The disrespect is revealed in the "crappy little country" remark made by Michael Ledeen during a speech before the conservative think tank, American Enterprise Institute: "Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some small crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business" (Goldberg 2002; Henwood 2003). McGeorge Bundy once remarked that "second-rate subjects attract second-rate minds," another example of extreme arrogance and disrespect shown to the peoples we dominate and seek to use for our own self-interested goals (Falcoff 1997:119).

which researchers have been exploring. In brief, these historical trajectories are built on a complex conjuncture of factors: cultural uniqueness that stems from pre-Hispanic times (Carmack 1996b; Newson 1987); colonial accretions that created local loyalties among elites instead of bonds of national unity (Woodward Jr. 1985); historical contingencies post-independence from Spain that resulted in "path dependence" (Mahoney 2001) in types of political regimes; patterns of public violence in state formation (Holden 2004); timing impacts from uneven development of coffee and other capitalist agrarian transformations (Paige 1997; Williams 1994); and different patterns related to military dictatorship and uneven displays of opposition to these authoritarian regimes from religious actors (Gill 1998). Although this study is a single case study, my previous fieldwork in Guatemala (in 1991, when I was contemplating becoming an anthropologist) and Costa Rica, from which resulted my Master's level research paper (Stanford 1998), plus the comparative research about this region helped to sharpen a comparative sensibility.

Although making my research choice from a conscious value orientation, I follow Max Weber (cf.Winckelmann 1973:183-184, 155) in affirming that my analysis is not meant to be purely subjective:

> Unquestionably, the value ideas (that make us decide what is worth investigating) are 'subjective.'...And of course they are historically changeable...But...it does *not* follow that research in the cultural sciences can only have results that are 'subjective' in the sense that they are valid for some people and not for others. What changes, rather, is the degree to which they *interest* some people and not others. In other words: what becomes an object of research, and how far the investigation extends into the infinity of causal connections, that is determined by the value ideas that dominate the researcher and...shape his constructs. In the use of these constructs, however, the research is bound...by the norms of thought. For only that is scientific truth which *wants* to be valid for all who *want* (to know) the truth.
>
> A methodically correct...demonstration in the social sciences, to attain its objective, must be acknowledged as correct by a Chinese as well...(and so must) the logical analysis of an ideal...even thought (the Chinese) may reject the ideal itself (Weber quoted and translated by Ringer 1997:125-126).

I believe that social scientists have a responsibility and a duty to seek the complexity of

"truths" that emerge from understanding other people's history and perspectives. My

culture is a science-dominated culture, and I believe science helps to foster an ethic of

responsibility through arguments about what constitutes methodological rigor, but

science alone cannot determine what decisions we make as a society (Roth and

Schluchter 1979:106-112). I hope that my ethnographic analysis of Nicaragua will add to

our collective knowledge in a way that promotes understanding and, thereby, to help

prevent violence, repression, and war, while also suggesting ways social justice[74] may be

achieved.

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[74]To explain what I mean by "social justice" would entail a lengthy discussion beyond the scope of
this dissertation. See Jackson (2005) for a critical analysis of the history of the emergence of the
concept of social justice, a distinctly modern enterprise in his view. To give a suggestion of the
context in which I am working, I offer a sampling of eclectic, multidisciplinary citations that have
influenced my thinking. I thank Robert McAfee Brown (1984) for writing *Unexpected News:
Reading the Bible through Third World Eyes,* which began to open my eyes and eventually led to
my reading Paulo Freire (1970) and Ernesto Cardenal's *Gospel in Solentiname* (1976-82).
Sociologist Alan Wolfe (1989:187) facilitated an understanding of my own culture in which
markets and states have become the "preferred moral codes for modern liberal democracies," but
that I was being influenced by the commutitarian trend against liberal individualism towards
developing a moral obligation to the larger society as necessary for democracy, including
constructing civil society "as a place where people pause to reflect on the moral dilemmas they
face." Anthropologists examining democracy (Paley 2002), human rights (Johnston 1997;
Sanford 2004; Sluka 2000; Wenzel 1991; Wilson 2004), and genocide (Hinton 1996; Hinton
2002a; Hinton 2002b) helped to clarify the limitations of its conceptualization within liberal
democracy, which has yet to come to terms with culture. The study of cultural rights and its
challenge to contemporary formulations of human rights has such a large body of literature that I
hesitate to suggest any starting point, but I bow to the work of the Annual Review of
Anthropology, which provides regular summaries of the state of the field, one of the most recent
for Latin America being Jean E. Jackson and Kay B. Warren's (2005) article on indigenous social
movements and cultural rights. The promise and limitation of the struggle for the "rule of law" are
being vigorously debated (Merry 2006; Nader 2007; Nader and Mattei forthcoming). Having
developed my original international or cross-cultural awareness in the Central America solidarity
movement of the 1980's where the activist mantra was the evil of intervention by the United
States in the internal affairs of these countries, I have had my thinking challenged by confronting
situations in which "humanitarian intervention" (Wheeler 2000) seems morally necessary, yet the
international community has failed to respond or responded in such a minimal fashion that brutal
dictators learn "the lesson of impunity" (Power 2002:506). This cry against impunity has been
raised in Guatemala (cf.Sanford 2004), and anthropologists who know the indigenous
communities well conclude that "the genocidal policies of the Guatemalan government have
viciously exacerbated the discriminatory characteristics of the ladino-Indian relationship"
(Carmack 1988:283:283). Studying the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 (e.g., Mamdani 2001) has
had a profound influence on my understanding of "social justice," a term meant to summarize a
positive vision of the future built on an eyes-wide-open analysis to horrendous violence and
repression. Recognizing and understanding the agency of human beings (responsible for their
individual actions but also understood in historical and cultural context) is the objective of

Following Florence Weber's Middle Ground

Florence Weber (2001) proposes that we adopt a "multi-integrative" approach to ethnographic research that combines the best elements of classical ethnography and post-modern narrative methodologies. She calls the classical style we have inherited from Bronislaw Malinowski an "integrative ethnography" because its strength is in the way it searches for coherence in a way of life. However, this classical approach also claimed to produce an objective description of a given culture without acknowledging the subjectivity of the ethnographer. The conventional view used to be that the professional expertise of the researcher systematically gathering data made objective analysis possible. Certainly, fieldwork was an advance in social science over an armchair researcher relying on accounts written by others, such as missionaries or travelers; however, Florence Weber notes the tendency towards reification of culture in the classical ethnography, reiterating a now-familiar critique that the Malinowskian approach that tends to produce a culturalist "hypostatizing" of the group of people under study (Weber 2001: 478). This critique emphasizes that culture is not a homogeneous thing that everyone shares in equal proportion but rather a fluid, conflict-ridden process of people interacting with each other.

The emphasis on "practice" in anthropology since the 1960's (Ortner 1984) has helped to re-conceptualize culture as a dynamic tool that people use to contest meanings and structures. Victor Turner (1985:154) writes that culture is "an endless series of negotiations among actors about the assignment of meaning to the acts in which they

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anthropological study. Anthropologists cannot be neutral in the struggle for social justice but must be committed to finding the deep roots of the problem. William O. Beeman's (1989) work is a fine example of how relevant anthropological understanding was to the solution of the Iranian hostage crisis during the Carter presidency. Beeman's discussion of the myths of foreign policy points toward a promising application of anthropology to resolve socio-cultural conflicts.

jointly participate." My fieldwork site is a good natural laboratory to experience culture as a dynamic tool of such "endless" negotiations about meanings in action, given that the country was polarized by the revolution. Nicaragua is a place where the struggle for power has been deadly and costly, but it has also been played out in an effervescence of changing cultural forms, chief among them Christian religious forms.

Florence Weber (2001) criticizes the classical approach for its tendency to assume that data gathered are transparent facts, observed and recorded by an objective researcher. Hence, she welcomes a greater appreciation of the role of interpretation in analysis and presentation of ethnographic findings, often attributed to the postmodern turn. Interpretation is inevitably informed by theories. The insight that the facts are theory-laden is a much-needed corrective to the assumption that facts "speak for themselves" (Schultz and Lavenda 2001). Postmodernists in their emphasis on writing ethnography (e.g.Clifford and Marcus 1986: Marcus, 1986 #3226; Geertz 1988) have emphasized its narrative quality as an account meant to tell a story;[75] however, Florence Weber objects to the way postmodern narrative ethnographies tend to lose the

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[75] Pauline Marie Rosenau (1992) describes the emphasis on narrative and story-telling in the postmodern turn in the social sciences. She (1992:88) cites Stephen Tyler (1984:329) who argues that anthropology "persuades by showing, reminding, hinting, and evoking" in a manner more like poetry than theory or trying to get at empirical truth (also see,Tyler 1986). She (1992:87) also cites Allan Hanson (1989) as an example of a post-modern anthropologist who believes that "anthropology creates the very phenomena it seeks to study." Hanson (1989) makes the case that early anthropologists wrote histories of the Maori people of New Zealand based on sources that are now considered doubtful as accurate historical documents, but these histories have been woven into Maori myths so that neither truth nor invention can be distinguished. As an example of the "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), this may be a good illustration, pointing up ethical dilemmas as well as complexity of interaction between what anthropologists do and what it means to people who are the subject of research. Yet, I counter: Sorting out what is true has indeed become more difficult, but is it impossible? Hanson recognizes that earlier anthropologists used documents now considered of dubious accuracy. Moreover, native peoples struggling for power under adverse conditions often need an "essential" identity to fight against those that would undercut their authority in contemporary struggles. The distinction between critical history and mythical history remains, even if debates continue on where, why, and how the distinction is being drawn.

description of another culture in a story about the actions and moral quandaries of the scholar in the field.[76]

I aim to achieve Florence Weber's "multi-integrative ethnography" by balancing self-reflexivity and robust ethnography in this monograph. I am visible as researcher, yet my personal quandaries do not overpower the text. Malinowski's split between research descriptions of the Trobriand Islanders and his private diary never meant for publication (Malinowski 1967) is too radical a division for my method. I did not separate my fieldnotes into objective data and personal journaling; the two went hand-in-hand as I puzzled over experiences in participant-observation, observations of events (social dramas), and smaller scale social interactions, informal conversations or loosely-structured interviews, archival data, newspaper articles, and books by Nicaraguans. My dissertation is a "confessional tale" situated beside "realist" descriptions (Van Maanen 1988). I continue in the tradition that seeks to demystify the practice of anthropology while, nonetheless, producing a recognizable and accurate description of sociocultural reality, one that can be challenged and argued about but not one that is dismissed as a

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[76] Florence Weber's (2001) article, which is a discussion of the recent ethnographic turn in French sociology, does not cite any examples of ethnographies in which the writer is lost in his or her own moral quandaries. Geertz (1988:87), however, recognized a trend toward "highly 'author-saturated,' supersaturated" ethnographies of which he discusses four at some length. He begins with the classic work, "brilliantly realized, if somewhat overwrought set pieces," (Geertz 1988:86), written by Kenneth Read (1965) about the Gahuku people of Papuan New Guinea. He compares three more in juxtaposition: Vincent Crapanzano's *Tuhami* (1980), a psychoanalytic life history of a Moroccan man who believes he is married to a she-demon in which Crapanzano refuses to efface himself as researcher because this would be an act of "bad faith;" Kevin Dwyer's *Moroccan Dialogues* (1982) in which Geertz (1988:97) writes that he paints a self-portrait of an "almost unbearably earnest field worker, burdened with a murderously severe conscience, and possessed of a passionate sense of mission;" and Rabinow's *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977), which is a "sequence of encounters with informants," each encounter gaining meaning through the next, yet in the end, appearing to be merely "an interlude, a chapter of happenings, diffuse and episodic" (Geertz 1988:93). The Rabinow, Crapanzano, and Dwyer accounts question the efficacy of ethnography to such an extent that Geertz (1988:96) wonders "how anyone who believes all this can write anything at all." In contrast, Geertz (1988:101, n.15) praises Barbara Meyerhoff's *Number Our Days* (1978) as an exemplar of positive "I-witnessing" because she does a better job of connecting the confessional and the ethnographic; I personally think hers is one of the finest ethnographies ever written.

mere story.[77]

My formation as an anthropologist has been caught in the extreme tensions between positivism and postmodernism that were raging in anthropology in the 1990s. While studying and preparing for fieldwork, I became nearly paralyzed by the epistemological questions raised by postmodernism but, like Peter Metcalf (2001), the fieldwork experience itself helped me to get on with the business of doing anthropology.

Three Nicaraguan Host Families in Masaya

My participant-observation took place by triangulating between three host families who live in the city of Masaya, creating a comparative triangle of class, ethnic, and religious dimensions between the city center and Monimbó. Two of my host families were Catholic, and the other was Protestant, being members of the mainstream Baptist Church in Masaya. By class, my host families represented a wealthy elite family, a middle-class professional family (both living in the city center on the same street), and a lower middle-class family upwardly mobile through education, who live in a small barrio adjacent to the indigenous barrio of Monimbó. Ethnically, the lower middle-class family considered themselves Indian and had the closest connections to indigenous life through relatives and friends living in Monimbó, while the middle class and elite families were non-Indian. I rented a room from the elite family in the center of town and often took my

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[77] Van Maanen (1988:75) argues that a confessional tale rarely replaces a realist account; however, with the development of postmodernism, some ethnographers have been accused of writing about little more than their own trials and tribulations in the field, of being self-absorbed (see footnote 9 in this chapter). For me personally, confessional tales have been some of the most illuminating accounts of other cultures as well as exemplars of the benefits of self-reflexive, intersubjective ways of learning about another culture. One of the best examples (among many) of a confessional tale is Renato Rosaldo's (1993:1-21) essay on grief and anger, comparing his own experience when his wife, anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo, died with that of the Ilongot headhunter's rage. As Renato Rosaldo (1993:11) writes, his essay is "an act of mourning, a personal report, *and* a critical analysis of anthropological method…no one of which cancels out the others." Such personal and anthropological insight requires time and maturity; I value those anthropologists who attempt to combine the two.

noon meals with that family. Knowing these three families set up a natural comparative

framework for understanding life in Masaya.

Knowing these three families was the beginning of being open to changes in my

research plan. My original research plan had been to stay in the city center temporarily,

while I surveyed the coffee sector and determined which families to contact there.

However, my participant observation with these families in Masaya increased my

comparative opportunities to such an extent that I realized that my original research

design had never adequately imagined the rich source of ethnographic data available in

the city center. I had met these three families during a brief preliminary period of

fieldwork in 1995, but I realized once I was in the field for an extended period of time

that I had a mistaken view of these host families as mere launching pads in the city

before going out into the countryside. While getting adjusted to life in Masaya, I quickly

began to notice the many varieties of Catholic religious practice, evident even within my

host families. This came as a surprise, given that I had understood Nicaragua as being

primarily composed of Christian base community groups. As I learned more about the

diversity [78] within the Roman Catholic Church, the task quickly became a comparative

analysis of Christian religion practices and how they were intertwined with other aspects

of life. The heightened sense of the political due to revolution created considerable

scholarly and activist attention on liberation theology and the Christian Base

Communities, but it became obvious to me that, in 1999, the Christian Base Community

[78] Cf. Fredrik Barth's (1999) discussion of the comparative method where his description of discovering diversity in Bali mirrors by own experience in Masaya, except Masaya is predominantly Christian, whereas Bali has Hindu, Muslim and Bali Aga religious practices—and not nearly as "riotous" in variation as Bali. Barth (1999:85) writes: "The interesting contrasts across North Bali seemed desperately diverse: urban and rural; all degrees of modern and traditional; Hindu and Muslim and Bali Aga; expert and lay; villages with constitutions and custom law specific to each village community; a number of profoundly different conceptual frameworks of knowledge and belief that even a single individual could juggle and shift between (Barth 1989). It took some considerable fortitude to welcome and embrace this riotous field of variation, rather than try to fight it. The outcome after long gestation was the monograph *Balinese Worlds"* (Barth 1993).

movement was only one religious option and it by no means held a monopoly on Catholic religious life. I moved back and forth between two major spatial locations in Masaya—the city center and the indigenous barrio of Monimbó. In the process, I found myself crossing multiple lines of class, gender, age, and ethnicity as well as political perspective and religious belief and behavior—definitely a "riotous field of variation" (Barth 1999:85), although not as "riotous" as Bali.

One host family is socially and economically elite. The household head is a widow who is a long-time active member of the Christian Base Community. Her home is located next door to the main office of the Christian Base Community, located in the center of the city.[79] The household is composed of an extended family, consisting of the widow living with two of her married sons, their wives and children. They provided me a private room in the front part of the house, while welcoming me into the household daily activities and holiday celebrations. I usually ate the noon meal with this family.

Of Spanish heritage but born in the New World, my hostess told me that her grandfather became wealthy through coffee production,[80] while her father had been trained as a doctor. Her father rarely charged for his medical services and was much admired by the community for his charity. When her father died, she told me she felt great pride to see the outpouring of sympathy as hundreds, rich and poor alike, walked behind his casket to the cemetery. This noblesse oblige was shown to me in that my hostess would only accept a nominal amount of rent ($50/month) for my room, laundry, and meals, expressing her desire to show me hospitality rather than treat me as a paying guest.

Her recently-deceased husband had been radicalized as a young law student in León in the 1950s, being an early opponent of the Somoza dictatorship, which was

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[79] The family gave the property to the Christian Base Community of Masaya.
[80] The family continues to make some of their income from coffee; they own a *finca* (farm) and hire *campesino* managers, while they hold professional jobs in the city.

established through shrewd political maneuvering by Anastasio Somoza Garcia. Her husband became an ardent supporter of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), although he did not take up arms or go to the mountains to be a guerrilla fighter. My hostess related a story about a time when her husband's activities led the National Guard to become suspicious of him. One day, when he realized that the National Guard soldiers were searching for him, he hid in a crawl space in the front of the house. That space was transformed into a closet, when they renovated that part of the house for my guest room. During the Sandinista decade, the family lived in Managua, while he worked as a judge in the Sandinista government until the FSLN lost the 1990 election. Then the family returned to their hometown of Masaya, he (in partnership with a Spanish woman who came to Masaya to work with the Christian Base Community) founded a *bufete popular* (people's law office) to assist the poor. Since his death in the mid-1990s, his widow works as a secretary in the *bufete*. Although the household still relies on income from the coffee farm, they are very busy working as professionals. One of her married sons living in the household also is a lawyer and works at the *bufete*. The other son is attending university in Managua, while his wife earns money as a seamstress and he supplements their income by selling ready-made clothing purchased in Managua.

My hostess attended high school in the United States, so she speaks excellent English. I had conversations with her at breakfast or lunch, when the whole family came together to eat a meal prepared with the help of a hired cook, a young Indian woman from Monimbó. An older woman came in twice a week to do laundry; she was also from Monimbó and had been employed as a domestic servant with the family from many years. My hostess had a strong cultural affinity for Spain, telling me that she prefers Spanish art, music, and dance to their Nicaraguan counterparts. She traveled to Spain and found that the only thing she did not like about Spain was the food. Her palate

preferred the familiar Nicaraguan foods she had grown up eating.[81] Her customary

breakfast of bread and a cup of coffee with milk and sugar was more typically Spanish,

whereas *campesinos* or artisan families in Monimbó eat a more substantial breakfast,

usually rice and beans, frequently combining the two staples in the well-known dish

called *gallo pinto*.[82]

Another family became my second host family, when I made arrangements with

their son to become my research assistant. I paid this young man $100 a month and

occasionally bought things for the family, as I began to eat more meals with them and

relied on their assistance for my research. I also provided assistance for the young man

when he began to study at university in Managua. The family is nuclear in form,

consisting of the son in his early twenties and his parents. The family has its roots in

Monimbó, the parents having been born and raised there. Other members of the family,

such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings still lived in Monimbó. This family

currently lives in a small barrio contiguous to Monimbó called Países Bajos. They told

me that people argue about whether this *barrio* should be considered part of Monimbó,

since many residents are a "spillover" population of Monimboseños.

The family earns a small income from artisan craft products made and sold in the

local market. The father is a musician, which had earned him a good living until he was

unable to perform in his guitar trio due to a leg amputation. Since his operation, her

husband has helped her by making craft items in Nicaraguan folk styles and being a

merchant at their booth in the municipal market. Both husband and wife are active

participants in the Christian Base Community, especially the family pastoral group. Her

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[81] Jaime Wheelock (1998:177), the former Minister of agrarian reform under the Sandinistas, has written a political economy of Nicaraguan food.

[82] *Gallo pinto* means "painted rooster" referring to the red beans set against the white rice. This dish is widespread across Central and South America and, although it may be more Costa Rican in origin, Nicaraguans have claimed it as their own. As a tourist item, they sell shirts in local markets with the recipe printed on them. When I found *gallo pinto* more nutritious than the Spanish tradition of *pan dulce* (white sweet bread) and coffee, my second host family began providing breakfast for me.

husband played guitar in the mass and other religious celebrations. He was elected to serve for a time on the *Equipo de Servicio* (the Service Team) of the Christian Base Community, for which he received a salary.

I met this second family while doing preliminary research in July of 1995. I bought a ticket to ride the bus hired by the Christian Base Community to León to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution. This family befriended me during that long bus trip, sharing food and conversation. Although not active in the fighting under the insurrection, the mother became a strong Sandinista supporter, being a member in the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as a *militante* (official member) of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, when the FSLN transformed itself into a ruling political party after the triumph of the revolution. She served as a leader in the Sandinista Neighborhood Defense Committee in the 1980's, working with women, like herself, who work in the market. In the late 1990's, she had become disappointed and disillusioned by the Sandinista Party, but she remains proud of the achievements of the revolution.

This second family gave generously of their time in my research, helping me arrange interviews, occasionally accompanying me when I observed religious activities, brought me into their family religious celebrations where I was able to do participant-observation, discussed with me what I was learning about their life and gave me insights into how my questions were being perceived by others.

My third host family is a middle class family originally from León. They were my first host family when I stayed in Masaya for a few months doing preliminary fieldwork in 1995. The husband works as a pharmacist, while she is currently a housewife with two children, preparing to enter university. Formerly, she worked as a religious school teacher in the Baptist elementary school. She is proud of her service as a teacher during the 1980 National Literacy Crusade, the famous effort to mobilize the young people of

the country to teach campesinos in the countryside to read (Baracco 2004; Hirshon 1983), She remembers with sadness having to work as a coffee harvester when her husband abandoned the family for several months, early in their marriage when the children were small.

In 1995, when I first met this Baptist family, my hostess seemed isolated from the community. This isolation appeared to stem from three factors: she is not native to Masaya (having moved from León), being Baptist in a predominantly Catholic country, and not supporting the Sandinistas. She explained that she had not adjusted to life in Masaya. She spoke disparagingly of Catholic practices. In particular, she perceived an overly strong external influence from Spaniards in the Christian Base Community. Although proud of having been a teacher during the 1980 National Literacy Campaign, she had become disillusioned about the FSLN and did not know whom to support politically. She was extremely judgmental of her neighbors who were Sandinista supporters. She often made jokes about foreigners—Spaniards, Cubans, and Russians— who assisted the Sandinista government in the 1980's. While being glad to see this set of foreigners leave after the 1990 election, she welcomed another set: Peace Corps volunteers from the United States.[83]

Her husband was even more conservative than she. One day he took me aside, saying in a cryptic, authoritarian tone: *Sandino mató yankis* ("Sandino killed Yankees"). With a menacing tone, he warned me to stay away from Sandinistas because they are dangerous. I realized that he must have seen me talking in the street with someone from the Christian Base Community because they lived just down the street from the main building of that group.

[83] The Sandinistas expelled the Peace Corps, considering the organization to be an arm of U.S. foreign policy. When looking for a local family with whom to live during this preliminary period of fieldwork in 1995, I was introduced to this Baptist family through a woman from the United States (married to a Nicaraguan) who works for the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) in Managua. She told me she and her husband met in the United States where her husband had moved to avoid the Sandinista-imposed military draft in the mid-1980s.

Later, when I returned to do fieldwork in 1999-2000, she appeared to be more integrated into community life and happier living in Masaya. She explained that she and her two college-attending children supported Sergio Ramirez and the MRS Party (Movimiento Renovadora Sandinista) that broke away from the FSLN Party, a political split that was first becoming evident in the summer of 1995. In addition, she had stopped attending the Baptist church, citing disappointment with favoritism within the church. She perceived slights against her children, who needed support to attend university but did not receive it from the Baptist church. During the Catholic patron saint celebration, she opened her home as a site for the performance of one of the folkloric dances. I expressed surprise to hear that she allowed a dance troop to perform in her home. Although evangelical religions generally say that dancing is sinful, she shrugged her shoulders and said that the dance is a custom in Masaya.

I found triangulating between these three families yielded opportunities for comparisons across ethnicity, class, gender, and religion. Although the three host families are not a good sample of political variation in Masaya, they were aware of other viewpoints and often helped me begin to find people with other political and religious perspectives. Moreover, among the extended family members of each of my host families, I discovered considerable diversity in political orientation and religious expression (although all were some variant of Christianity). María Bertha, as I have already mentioned, did not see eye-to-eye with her sisters who did not support the Sandinista Revolution and were critical of the Christian Base Community. The divisions within families caused by the polarization of the revolution that were evident in former President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's family—two children active in support of the revolution and two opposed (Kampwirth 1993)[84]—were not hard to find among most

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[84] Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal had four children. Cristina, married to Antonio Lacayo who served as Minister to the President during her mother's term, works at the family newspaper, *La Prensa*, making clear her criticism of Sandinismo in

families in Masaya. Starting with a few preliminary questions, the conversations evolved into open-ended discussions of religion and politics, covering the time period from the revolutionary period (~1970-1990) through the post-revolutionary period (1990-2000).

In addition, I observed Catholic religious rituals, including the patron saint celebration, the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (known as "La Purísima"), Christmas, Three Kings Day, and Holy Week as well as observations of several Protestant and Pentecostal worship services. Observation of daily life, marriage, and funerals provided further insights. What I observed sparked comparisons: how did the ritual performances differ among themselves? How did different peoples' interpretations and accounts of ritual compare and contrast? (cf.Barth 1999:82-83). Participant-observation of ritual was stimulated by theoretical reflections, such as comparing Geertz's (1973b) semiotic view and Talal Asad's (1993) critique of Geertz.[85] It was an unexpected observation of a ritual (the patron saint celebration in Masaya) that prompted me to change my research focus. I have already mentioned this unexpected incident; it is the subject of Chapter 4. Being in the crowd in front of the mayor's office during the patron street procession, I witnessed a struggle among the men who carry the image of San Jerónimo and the elite leaders of the religious brotherhood (*cofradía*) over essentially partisan political sympathies but expressed using elements of religious material culture. What I observed I came to understand as an example of ritual as a "principal site for new history being made" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:141). A different direction for my research began to take shape after I unexpectedly witnessed this social drama, just as Joy Hendry (1999:viii) would have predicted.

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frequent editorials; Pedro Joaquín was a director of the contra in Costa Rica and has served as editor-in-chief of *La Prensa*; Claudia held many diplomatic posts under the Sandinista government, including ambassador to Costa Rica and other lesser responsibilities in Cuba and Spain; and Carlos Fernando served as the editor-in-chief of the Sandinista newspaper, the *Barricada* (Chamorro 1997:358-359; Kampwirth 1993:179). Violeta's ability to reconcile her children within the family, in spite of their political differences, was part of her successful presidential campaign (Kampwirth 1993:180).

[85] See chapter 1 on theory for more on Geertz (1973) and Asad (1993) on religion.

Qualitative Research Rationale

This study is qualitative research in the cultural anthropological tradition of participant-observation and ethnography (Creswell 1998). My method relies on a few cases and many variables as opposed to a more quantitatively designed study, which focuses on a few variables and many cases (Creswell 1998:15-16).

Following Creswell's (1998:17-18) suggestions for articulating a strong rationale for choosing a qualitative approach, Nicaraguan culture needed anthropological exploration because the variables could not easily be identified and a detailed, descriptive view of Masaya was needed. Moreover, I opted for a qualitative research design because I wanted to highlight my researching role as an active learner bringing myself and my respondents together to show intersubjective understanding being discovered together in an ethnographic encounter. The characteristics of qualitative research identified by Creswell (1998:16) will be evident as the reader proceeds through the chapters that follow: the "natural setting" (i.e., field-focused) is the source of primary data; the researcher is a "key instrument of data collection"; the data is collected as words and pictures; the outcome of my study is as much about process as product; my analysis is inductive, yet deeply informed by theory; much attention is paid to empirical particulars to produce a rich description; my focus is on finding participants' perspectives, yet aware that the final product is intersubjective; and my mode of persuasion is by reason as I develop my interpretative analysis.

Saying my research strategy is qualitative means that I set out to study "processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000b:8). Yet, profoundly challenged by Anthony Gill's research finding that the emergence of "progressive" Catholicism is strongly correlated with the growth of religious competition,

his quantitative, cross-national study shaped my descriptive and interpretive analysis of three movements with the Roman Catholic Church that are impacting life in Masaya, Nicaragua. Gill's work clearly demonstrates the power of quantitative social science to open our eyes to other explanations for behavior. Gill's thesis is that the emergence of liberation theology and Christian Base Communities may not be an awakening to the seriousness of the plight of the poor suffering from political repression and economic exploitation but a more self-interested, institutional reaction to challenges to its cultural monopoly by rapid growth of Protestant and Pentecostal religious competitors. As Gill (1999) has written, the Roman Catholic Church is indeed struggling to be "soul provider" (pun intended)—yet, my ethnographic observations led me to explore other forms of worship and theology within the Roman Catholic Church and to note the religious competition. I was able to see that some Sandinista supporters are not drawing on liberation theology for their challenge to the church hierarchy but an older form of organization, the religious brotherhood. I was able to see that Catholic Charismatic movement and Neocatechumenal Way are other pastoral responses that are speaking to the poor, while not radically ("prophetically") questioning the political and capitalist economic structures as liberation theology does. I was able to see that the traditional power of the Virgin Mary to move a people is deeply rooted in Nicaraguan culture and that the liberation theology theme of a humble indigenous Mary, a peasant woman, does not have the spiritual power of the traditional Mary with her intercessory prayer.

The Historical Method in Anthropology

Max Weber's historical method underlies this dissertation and is especially relevant for understanding themes of religion and politics. Charles Keyes (2002:238) argues that Weber's concern with "sympathetic participation" (Weber 1978:6) prefigures

ethnography, especially participant-observation as method. Although Max Weber did not utilize proto-ethnographic or professional ethnographic data in his research, his concern with "historical processes in the great civilizations of the world" (Keyes 2002:234) is rich in concepts for understanding variation within the Christian religion and for thinking about who the "ideal carriers" of this variation are. Although Weber did not focus on the New World, historical anthropologist Robert Carmack's (e.g.Carmack 1995; 1996a; Carmack 1998b; Carmack 2002; Carmack, et al. 1996) use of Weberian theory has been an inspiration for me.

Historical methodology was also an important factor in my ability to move beyond the postmodern crisis that threatened to paralyze my ability to become an anthropologist. Marshall Sahlins (1993:1) writes that

> In the midst of all the hoopla about the new reflexive anthropology, with its celebration of the impossibility of systematically understanding the elusive Other, a different kind of ethnographic prose has been developing, more quietly, almost without our knowing we were speaking it, and certainly without so much epistemological angst. I mean the numerous works of historical ethnography whose aim is to synthesize the field experience of a community with an investigation of its archival past...an ethnography with time and transformation built into it is a distinct way of knowing the anthropological object, with a possibility of changing the way culture is thought.

Ethnography is an excellent way to observe human agency in action, but an exclusive reliance on ethnography means that we may miss historically contingent, structural constraints and patterns in which that agency operates. Seeking to transcend the limitations of the functionalist approach (McGee and Warms 1996:156), historical anthropologists acknowledge that events observed in the present are shaped by events in the past, making earlier conceptions of the ethnographic "face-to-face localized encounter" problematic (Des Chene 1997:70).

Choosing Masaya as the primary locale for my study frequently brought up questions about the anthropological idea of locale as a "bounded" site. Mary Des Chene's (1997:73) explains the limitations of this conception for her research with Nepali men

who had served as Gurkha soldiers in the colonial Indian and British armies. In one way it made sense to situate her study in Nepal, but she also wondered why privileging those soldiers who returned home after their service should be considered "ethnographically prior" to those men who do not return:

> This bounded locale, while an obvious and *necessary* site for speaking to such men about their pasts, was in no sense a *sufficient* vantage point from which to understand how past army careers informed the present. I made some effort to follow paths of migration, visiting urban sites to which some former soldiers had relocated. I interviewed former British officers while doing archival research in England. And I brought archival materials and published accounts of Gurkhas to Nepal, and translated and read them to former soldiers. All these were ways in which I worked to overcome limitations of the bounded field site when the object of study radiated in so many directions beyond it.

Focusing on the interplay of religion and politics in Nicaragua also was an object of study that radiated in many directions beyond the city of Masaya. Planting my feet in a particular locale is a necessary methodological move in order to have a specific community in which to become immersed in another culture. Yet, I could not assume that the physical boundaries of Masaya as municipality (i.e., political/jurisdictional space) indicated any social, cultural, political or economic isolation or separateness from the region in which it is located or the many external influences that have impacted the people living in Nicaragua. My next chapter on the history of Masaya situates my research site in a larger context of economic, political and religious history.

Conclusion

My experience doing fieldwork affirmed George Marcus and Michael Fischer's (1986:18) whimsical statement that anthropology is "the most disorderly and interdisciplinary of disciplines." Following David Spain (1995:9), my methodology assisted me in studying "selected current trends in the changing cultures" of Nicaragua. Although coming from an activist background and concerned with social justice, the goal of my research is to listen and understand. This process is uniquely facilitated by

anthropology's institutionalization of the experience of culture shock as a method for shaking the researcher out of ways of thinking and being that are shaped by taken-for-granted cultural assumptions (Schultz and Lavenda 2001:258). From initial disorientation and confusion, new insights and clarity begin to emerge. One of the sources of my confusion was precisely the complexity of the many sides to any question about revolution, politics, or religion that became immediately evident from the first few days of my immersion. The comparative method reveals that there is an element of objectivity (if defined as "standing back" to gain perspective rather than "lack of bias") to be obtained through observing, describing, and juxtaposing different cultural activities.[86] Ignorance of other people's way of life and social conditions may lead to disastrous interventions—and intervention is a weakness of my country's foreign policy. My methodology is historical in order to broaden understanding of the "intellectual (and moral) positionality" (Ortner 1995:173) of my research as an ethnographer.

Adopting Florence Weber's (2001) "multi-integrative" ethnography, I take the best from traditional ethnography and postmodern narrative methodology. I situate myself as a visible researcher discovering cultural knowledge intersubjectively through "conversational" participant-observation with my respondents (Lederman 2007). The challenge and value of qualitative research is precisely in being open to opportunities to experience dynamic, living culture (Scott 1992; Spradley and McCurdy 1972) and being willing to change the research plan in response to that experience (Hendry 1999). Triangulating between three families living in Masaya and interviewing broadly across sectors, I discovered ethnographic complexities of religion and politics in this case that are just beginning to receive scholarly attention.

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[86] Sensitive to the importance of self-reflexive analysis during and after the fieldwork experience, I do not assume that my experience in the field is a fully objective and transparent analysis of the "essence" of another culture (cf. Scott 1992).

I work with Anthony Gill's stimulating hypothesis on the intersection of religion and politics in the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, using his findings to shed light on my ethnographic description of a single case and my description, in turn, fleshes out Gill's assumptions about the Nicaraguan case about which he paints with too broad a brush. Thus, for the purposes of this chapter on method, the point I am making is that I found Gill's quantitative social scientific study "good to think with" and my qualitative field-focused data also "good to think with," but it took both together to push me beyond my "partisan" sympathies with one narrow sector of the Roman Catholic Church to truly conduct research that expands knowledge.

The presentist orientation of social science research methods are corrected through historical anthropology, in which I combine ethnographic data, archival research, and secondary historical sources to situate the ethnographic present in its recent and distant past (Carmack 1996a). Historical analysis extends the "thickness" of ethnographic description advocated by Clifford Geertz (1973b) to include the way in which the field site is embedded within the history of "global processes of the world system" (Kaplan and Kelly 1994; Marcus 1986; Ortner 1995:174). What follows is a historical ethnography about religion and politics that aims to have "time and transformation built into it as a distinct way of knowing the anthropological object" (Sahlins 1993:1).

Chapter 3

A Brief History of the City of Masaya, Nicaragua

Preface

The bulk of the time I spent doing fieldwork for this dissertation was spent in

Masaya, Nicaragua.[87] What follows is a brief history of Nicaragua from the point of view

of this city in the Geertzian (1973b:22) spirit of not studying *the* city but studying *in* the

city. I learned about religion and politics from the vantage point of people living in this

particular place at a particular point of time, 1999-2000, understood in historical

context. Events and conversations with respondents that take place in the present are

shaped by events in the past, making "problematic the face-to-face localized encounter

central" to an ethnographic approach in anthropology (Des Chene 1997:70); however,

the turn to history in anthropology has opened up historical methodologies that improve

our ability to understand the ethnographic "present" we encounter during fieldwork.

Historical anthropology interrogates the relationship of past to present, the local to

global, "leaving no place pristine, no society innocent of context or unimplicated in larger

political processes" (Des Chene 1997:67). Masaya, Nicaragua is especially rich in

linkages to larger political processes from pre-Hispanic times to the present.

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[87] My experience in Nicaragua was not confined to fieldwork in Masaya. In addition to the
Witness for Peace delegation, mentioned in the previous chapter on methods, I also did archival
work in Granada and Managua. While doing my master's in Social Ecology at Goddard College in
1989, I did fieldwork in the city of Estelí, the village of San Juan de Limay, and a Sandinista
cooperative in the remote countryside near the Honduran border—all communities in the
northwestern zone on the Pacific side of Nicaragua.

Masaya, Nicaragua: Introduction

Masaya, Nicaragua is a municipality of approximately 100,000 inhabitants
(García Bresó 1992:52)[88], an urbanized nucleation embedded in an agrarian economy.[89]
Located inland on the western or Pacific Coast of Nicaragua about 28 kilometers (17
miles) south of the capital of Managua, Masaya is the municipal center of its department
(also called Masaya), which has nine other municipalities: Tisma, Nindirí, Ticuantepe, La
Concepción, Masatepe, Nandasmo, Niquinohomo, Catarina y San Juan de Oriente
(García Bresó 1992:44). The department of Masaya is the smallest department (581 km²)
in the country, yet the most densely populated. One reason for this concentration of
population is that the region has fertile, volcanic soils in a dry tropical forest zone[90] and
access to water from lakes and lagoons.

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[88] Ethnographer Javier García Bresó (1992:52) reports that the population of the city of Masaya
was 100,000 in 1992 and indicated that it was a growing city because the 1987 census of the
Ministry of Interior Commerce had reported 80,000 inhabitants.

[89] Anthony Leeds (Sanjek 1994:53-54) defines urban as the "interacting confluence" of three
specializations—localities, technology, and institutions. An urban area is a nodal point that
facilitates communication, exchange, and transfer. "By definition, then," Leeds (Sanjek 1994:54)
"that which is urban is *always* a matter of degree, and a degree of urbanness is measured not by
the size of the nucleations (which may be profoundly affected by ecology, institutional structures,
and policies), nor by density (which may be profoundly affected by locality and technical
specializations, as well as by policy), nor *generally*, by the classical measures of 'urbanization'
effectively derived from recent Western experience, but rather, by an interaction index of the
three forms of specialization." Leeds (Sanjek 1994:55-56) emphasizes that any locality is linked in
a network of localities (none are completely self-sufficient or isolated) and it is the entire society
that should be characterized as having some degree of urbanization. "A peasant is an urban man,"
declares Leeds (Sanjek 1994:56). See also Michael Kearney (1996) who argues that the sharp
distinction between city and country is being dismantled as anthropologists re-conceptualize the
peasantry.

[90] The tropical dry forest in Central America is on the western or Pacific side of the isthmus and is
a distinctly different ecological region than the rainforest of the east side. During the long, 6-
month dry season, deciduous trees shed their leaves but roots extend deeply into the soil to
absorb moisture. They often flower in the dry season due to this moisture and can respond
quickly near the end of the dry season, when brief, heavy rain showers allow rehydration (Reich
and Borchert 1984). When the Spaniards arrived, the tropical dry forest of the Pacific coastal
lowlands stretching from Mexico to Panama was abundant; thus, because this also meant that the
land was fertile, volcanic and alluvial soils and relatively flat, it was ideal for agriculture and cattle
pastures (Edgar 1989:1). Deforestation reached massive levels in the early 1900s and today only a
few patches of tropical dry forest remain. They are actually much more rare than tropical
rainforests, which are now also endangered; conservation of the tropical dry forest is underway in

A wide variety of agricultural crops are produced in three ecological zones in the department of Masaya (García Bresó 1992:45-46). One ecological zone, which comprises parts of Tisma and Nindirí, has a long history of being a cattle and dairy region, while cotton became an important agro-export crop in this zone when the cotton boom (in the 1950's) encouraged its expansion beyond those areas most ecologically suited for cotton cultivation (i.e., the northern coastal plains near the municipalities of León and Chinandega). Another ecological zone is a mountainous region where coffee has been successful, which comprises the municipalities of San Juan de la Concepción, Masatepe, Catarina, Niquinohomo, and Nandasmo.[91] Parts of Nindirí and Tisma along with the municipality of Masaya are in a third ecological zone where yucca and tobacco are produced. Throughout the department, small farmers produce corn, beans, rice, vegetables, and fruits as well as maintain stands of trees and bamboo (García Bresó 1992:45-46).

The aboriginal cultures of the western region of Nicaragua were part of Mesoamerica, a civilization with its center in Mexico and stretching south to the region now known as Central America. Mesoamerica had a dynamic history of change and continuity prior to the arrival of the Spaniards and, during and after the colonial period, the region has continued to change and adapt through interactions and conflict between peoples of aboriginal, mestizo, African and European heritage (Carmack, et al. 1996:6). Today, the Indian population of Masaya is concentrated in (but not limited to) the *barrio* (neighborhood) called Monimbó. Scholars (e.g.,Cuadra 1968; García Bresó 1992; Gould 1995b; 1997; 1998; Membreño Idiáquez 1992; Membreño Idiáquez 1994; Membreño Idiáquez and Martínez Vega 1993; Romero Vargas 1987) have documented that contemporary residents of Monimbó (called *Monimboseños*) demonstrate significant

Costa Rica in the province of Guanacaste (Edgar 1989), which once was part of Nicaragua, but conservation efforts are minimal in Nicaragua.
[91] This coffee-growing region of the department of Masaya makes it more like the Carazo department, which borders it on its southern side (Wolfe 2007:82).

elements of continuity with their pre-Hispanic culture, even though the traditional anthropological indicators of Indian identity—language and distinctive dress—are no longer present.

Nicaragua is one of five Central American countries (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Honduras) whose dominant language is Spanish as distinct from the country of Belize, which is an English-speaking country on the Atlantic coast.[92] Nicaragua's eastern region (as other countries of Central America who have borders on the Atlantic side of the isthmus) has been oriented towards the Caribbean and influenced more by contact with the British during the colonial period and, later, the United States. Political scientist Ronald Ebel (1972) argues that understanding politics in the circum-Caribbean region is facilitated by the realization that the small countries of this region [93] are actually better understood as city-states than nation-states. Nicaragua has a history of extreme city-state rivalry, which slowed its transition from colonial status to nation-state, in spite of the vision that its patriarchal elites first began to articulate in the late 1700s (Burns 1991:2; Radell 1969).[94] City-state socio-political formation has had a

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[92] Belize was a region of Central America that was somewhat less impacted by the Spanish conquest: "The Maya of the resource-poor Yucatán peninsula were spared the heavy colonial hand that held fast to central Mexico and its riches. In addition, the dense forests of the peninsula served as a haven for refugees fleeing oppressive conditions in colonial towns" (Graham, et al. 1989:1254), but also consult Grant D. Jones (1989; 1998).

[93] Ronald Ebel compares Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, Cuba, and Belize in his analysis of the circum-Caribbean region. Nicaragua has an area of 57,143 square miles (Ebel 1972:326).

[94] Following Max Weber, I define a modern state as a political entity in which the rulers create a centralized unity on a territory by state dominance throughout a particular region and having a monopoly on the use of violence (Gerth and Mills 1946). In the history of the early period of nation-state building projects in Europe, the idea of a "nation" came to mean a political entity that also has cultural and linguistic unity. This idea of nationalism as internal cultural and linguistic homogeneity developed in the nineteenth century and was a departure from ancient or medieval states or empires, in which states were multi-cultural and did not attempt to impose homogeneity on their subjects. There is a vast literature on the history and theoretical debate on nation, nationalism, and notions of ethnic or cultural homogeneity as basis for the modern nation-state. The sources that have been most important for my thinking include: Benedict Anderson (1991), Ernest Gellner (1983), John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Hutchinson and Smith 1994), and Anthony D. Smith (1998) for general theory. For Nicaragua and Latin America generally, Jeffrey L. Gould (Gould 1995a; 1993; Gould 1995b; Gould 1997; Gould 1998). I subscribe to Ronald Cohen's (1993:242) conclusion to Judith Toland's edited volume, *Ethnicity and the State*

profound impact on Masaya as a strategically located city at an intermediate point between the dominant rival city-states of Granada and León, and later Managua, when that city became a compromise capital city.

Masaya is laid out in a pattern similar to other Spanish cities or towns dating from the colonial period (Newson 1987:93). The center of town is the center of power, authority, and status. In the colonial period, administration —whether secular and/or ecclesiastical—was the main function of a town. Political domination, not economics, was the driving force behind town formation. The central square is typically a park next to the Roman Catholic Church and close to the mayor's office. The contemporary town center of Masaya retains this pattern. The Church of the Our Lady of the Assumption, located on the central square, is the oldest church building in the city (built in 1750). The current mayor's office in Masaya was originally the private home of Cornelio Hüeck, an important Liberal politician who was President of the Nicaraguan Congress during the 1970's, who ended his term in disgrace.[95] The Sandinistas expropriated his house, turning it into the mayor's office for the municipality of Masaya, and it was being used as the mayor's office during 1999-2000 when I conducted my fieldwork.

(1993): "The European perception of concomitance between ethnicity and the state has been one of history's more serious mistakes. As we have noted statehood is inherently multiethnic. Ethnic homogeneity within autonomous states is a rarity. In general and throughout social evolution, ethnic conflict and competition helps make states, and therefore most states are and always have been plural...What makes this point important, however, is the deep-rooted European belief that states are or somehow ought to be correlated with uniethnicity." State-builders in Nicaragua have imagined their nation-state as ethnically homogeneous, in which the native populations no longer exist as indigenous peoples but are "mixed" (*mestizo*) or "Indo-Hispanic." Gould (1998) has studied the Nicaraguan myth of *mestizaje*.

[95] As the political crisis worsened within Nicaragua in the 1970's, which eventually resulted in the overthrow of the Somoza family dynasty, Cornelio Hüeck was often criticized for corruption and his close association with the Somozas (Booth 1982:158-159). See chapter 4 of this dissertation for more details about Cornelio Hüeck. The political influence of the Hüeck family remains viable in Nicaragua; e.g., Cornelio's son, Carlos Iván Hüeck Nuñez, returned from exile in Miami after the Sandinista decade and ran for mayor of Masaya, winning that election in 2001.

Monimbó is the largest neighborhood in the city, taking up close to half the physical space. In 1993, a research team[96] from the Central American University (UCA) in Managua conducted a census of the neighborhood, reporting that the total population at that time was 14,125 inhabitants living in 2,149 households (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993). This census covered the urban area, but not the *comarcas* (rural villages)[97] that form the rural periphery of the neighborhood (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:1). Few Monimboseños rent their dwellings; 91.7% own the houses in which they live. The census also found that there were 1.4 *jefes de familia* (heads of family) in each household, 1.4 families per household, with an average of 6.57 people living in each household (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:5). The population of Nicaragua is a young one with a high birth rate, and this demographic pattern was mirrored in Monimbó with 64.3% of its population being 25 years old and younger; grouping all the other neighborhoods of the city of Masaya together, the research team found that they were also within this same age range but at a somewhat lower rate of 57.3% (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:6). In terms of religion, 85.4% of Monimboseños identified themselves as Catholic, while only 7.7% said they were Protestants; 4.5% said they did not profess any religion (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:7).

The primary purpose of this census was to ascertain whether or not people living in Monimbó identified themselves as indigenous. The results show that the neighborhood is overwhelmingly self-identified as Indian: 83.3% of heads of household interviewed said they are Indian, and 84% of those who were head of their families also so identified (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:15). More people who

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[96] The research team was a collaborative effort between the *Consejo de Ancianos* (Council of Elders) of the indigenous community of Monimbó, the Urban Team of Nitlapán-UCA, and UCA sociology students (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993).
[97] Some of these rural villages are El Calvario, El Mojón, and Nandayure (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:1).

identified as Indians belonged to local associations, such as *cajas* (which help members with funeral expenses)[98] or Catholic religious brotherhoods (*cofradías*). The census data show that 83.0% of Indians belonged to one of the previously mentioned associations, while only 16.9 of non-indigenous people living in Monimbó did (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:18).

In terms of family structure, Monimbó has more two-parent families than Nicaragua as a whole; 76.8% of families in Monimbó in 1993 were two-parent families, while only 16.2% were single women head of household in contrast to the national rate of 28.1%.[99]

Economically, the neighborhood is sustained primarily by artisan economic activity. Artisans account for 39% of the economically active population and they tend to be young between the ages of 15-35. Leather working and shoemaking make up 33.8% of this sector, while15.6% make furniture or other wood working crafts, and 9.7% make clothing. Only 6.7 % of the people work in agriculture (called *agricultores-campesinos,* i.e. farmer-peasants, in this census); most of the people in this economic group (65%) are 45 years old or older. Professionals represent only 2% of the economically active population. Of those who are employed, 47.4% have their own business and another 23.3% work in a small business, while 9% are government employees (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:28). In 1993, Indians did not show higher rates of unemployment than the non-indigenous population living in Monimbó. Unlike the result of a census (referenced in this census report by Nitlapán-UCA) for Managua in the same

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[98] In the colonial period, the *caja de la comunidad* held cash from payments received for forced labor by Indians and from earnings of the sale of tribute crops (Hatton 1998:31; Romero Vargas 1987:98). Wolfe (2007:94) finds evidence that, in 1819, Masaya's Indians had a *caja de comunidad* of 11,645 pesos, a sum that was considerably larger than most other indigenous community treasuries (with the exception of Sutiava and Matagalpa); this sum did not include the value of their communal lands.

[99] Although most single heads of household in Monimbó were female (16.2%), 6% were male single head of household for a combined total of 22.2%. The prevalence of the two-parent family in Monimbó runs counter to the national trend toward single female heads of household in which the father figure is absent or whose presence is "almost invisible" in 28.1% of households, according to a 1993 study (UNICEF-Nicaragua 1999:36).

year, merchants (*comerciantes*) did not represent a large number of working people in Monimbó, being only 7.5% of the population; the commercial activities of the informal economy are more important for economic survival in Managua than Monimbó. Like the artisans, merchants in Monimbó are a relatively young group, given that 74.5% of those working in the informal sector in Monimbó are between the ages of 15 and 45 (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:24-25).

Pre-Hispanic and Conquest History of Masaya

The department of Masaya is situated in the tropical dry forest region on the Pacific coast and was already the most populated region in Nicaragua at first contact with Europeans. It is separated from the east coast by a string of volcanoes (Fowler Jr. 1989:73-76), a geographical and ecological factor that has had an important influence in the development of settled patterns and socio-political organization between the eastern and western zones. In the less densely settle rainforests on the east coast, the people were organized into chiefdoms or tribes. On the west coast of Nicaragua, the Indians lived on the periphery of the Mesoamerican world, while on the east coast the natives were more closely affiliated with the South American culture area (Carmack 1998b; Incer Barquero 1985; Incer Barquero 1993; Newson 1987). The western coastal region had fertile soil well suited for agriculture. The Indian communities grew beans, corn, cacao, tobacco, coca, and cotton, but they also hunted wild game. They were close to in-land bodies of water, such as the Lagoon of Masaya (Newson 1987:49-56).[100] In contrast, the peoples on the east coast engaged in hunting, gathering, and riverine fishing, while also

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[100] The steep cliffs down to the water level of the Lagoon of Masaya have always made it difficult for women to collect drinking water or to carry clothing down to be washed (García Bresó 1992:39-44). In the 1940's, wells were constructed at central locations and water was delivered door-to-door and, in the 1970's, a municipal piped water system was begun (Borland 1994:93-94).

farming. Their ecological system, however, was better suited to root crops and palm trees than the corn or beans typical of the Mesoamerican culture area (Newson 1987:68).

The ecological conditions and the existing cultural patterns at first contact influenced the way in which the Europeans interacted with the native populations during the colonial period. The east coast groups were harder to dominate because they were more dispersed and less accustomed to state domination; they fought fiercely or fled the invaders. The west coast groups were more accustomed to state-level social formation and acquainted with domination. They probably migrated to Nicaragua from central Mexico in order to escape from domination at the hands of this state, which was at the center of the Mesoamerican world system (Carmack 1996b).[101]

Spanish chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés[102] (Esgueva Gómez 1996; Werner 2000) reported that the indigenous people living in Masaya at the time of first Spanish contact were Chorotegas who spoke Mangue (Carmack 2002). Early linguistic scholars, Daniel Brinton (1883), and Samuel Lathrop (1926) found evidence that the Chorotega adopted a Nahua-Spanish pidgin language soon after the conquest (Fowler Jr. 1989: 67). Although no longer a living language, this Mesoamerican language

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[101] These cultural differences rooted in ecology and history persist today and are among the factors that have made it difficult for nation-state building elites to unify across the territory called Nicaragua, even though they have tried by means of legal decrees, politically drawn boundaries, or economic development programs. My discussion of the Atlantic Coast is necessarily brief. For more complete discussion in addition to Linda Newson (1987), see Diskin (1991); Sollis (1989); Hale (1994); Vilas (1989b); Gordon (1998); Helms (1971); Gamio de Alba (1957); Conzemius (1932); Nietschmann (1973); Incer Barquero (1985); Offen (2002); Membreño Idiáquez (1994); Decker (1998); Jamieson (1998); and Jamieson (2000).

[102] William R. Fowler, Jr. (1989:20) describes Oviedo's history as "by far the most extensive and most valuable primary ethnohistoric source" available on the Indians of western Central America. Oviedo first came to the New World in 1514, accompanying conquistador Pedrarias Dávila, the first governor of the territory of southern Central America. He traveled to Nicaragua in 1528 and 1529, recording his quasi-ethnographic descriptions of the Indians of western Nicaragua, the Chorotega and Nicarao. He became the official chronicler of the Indies from 1532-1537, producing the massive *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (Oviedo y Valdés 1851-55). Any such ethnohistoric source must be read carefully to discern the biases, interests, and perspectives of the writer or creator of the document, illustration, or map as well as to consider the context and/or reason for its creation (Barber and Berdan 1998), but on balance, Fowler (1989:20) finds that, given an understanding of his ethnocentric biases, Oviedo is, nonetheless, a good historian and ethnologist (also seeFowler Jr. 1985).

is evident in some place names. "Monimbó" is probably of Chorotegan origin, meaning the place "near" (*mu*) "water" (*nimbu*) (Incer Barquero 1985:437). The Chorotegas migrated from the central valley of Mexico about 800 C.E., while the Nicaraos arrived and displaced a portion of the Chorotega people in the Rivas region (south of Masaya and Granada) about 1200 C.E. (Fowler Jr. 1989:32-49; Healy 1980; Newson 1987:26-29). Both Mesoamerican Indian groups are thought to have sought the frontier region of Nicaragua in order to escape (at different historical epochs) the political domination of more powerful groups in the central valley of Mexico (Fowler Jr. 1989:35). The Nicaraos brought later Mesoamerican cultural influences to the region, including the Nahuat or Pipil languages (Justeson and Broadwell 1996). One of these later elements may have been brought by the Nicarao is the worship of the war god, Xipe Totec ("Our Lord the Flayed One"), who is depicted in statutes as wearing the skin of an enemy (Fowler Jr. 1989:234-235).[103]

Although the Chorotega Indians shared many elements of the Mesoamerican civilization with the later arriving Nicaraos, they were less urbanized than the Nicaraos; they depended more on subsistence hunting and fishing than agriculture; their form of government was more egalitarian, having *consejos de ancianos*, or councils of (male) elders, rather than autocratic leaders; and gender relations were more favorable for women, although it was not a matrilineal society (Chapman 1960; Fowler Jr. 1989). Their religion shared a great deal with their Mesoamerican neighbors to the north, including human sacrifice and a similar pantheon of gods, but the data available are largely about the Nicarao. Given that the Nicarao fought with the Chorotega and took over part of their territory, the politico-religious domination of a more powerful group probably displaced prior Chorotega practices. The Chorotega Indians, unlike the

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[103] Although Oviedo did not record that the Nicarao worshiped Xipe Totec (Fowler Jr. 1989:234), an effigy of this god was excavated in Rivas, the region south of Masaya, where the Nicarao settled (Healy 1980).

Nicarao, did not have a writing system (Carmack 1998). The Chortegas inherited from Mesoamerica militarism and strong commercial activities (Ibarra Rojas 1995). The Chorotega and the Nicarao peoples were part of a Mesoamerican world system that was market-based with extensive trading networks throughout the region and extending also into South America (Carmack 1998b; Fowler Jr. 1989; Salgado González 1996:35).

After their first encounter with the conquistadors, the Chorotegas began to resist, attacking Gil González Dávila and his men in 1523 (Carmack 1998b:25; Incer Barquero 1990:81-82). Later, when Francisco Hernández de Córdoba entered Chorotega territory in 1524, chronicler Pascual de Andagoya (Incer Barquero 1990:158) reported that they faced *muchas escaramuzas y guerra* ("many skirmishes and war"). Priests accompanied Córdoba, planting crosses wherever they went. Antonio de Herrera (Incer Barquero 1990:162) related that the Indians were astonished when they could not readily burn them down. The historical record shows that the conquest of the Chorotegas was a bloody, prolonged process (Carmack 1998b:25; Ibarra Rojas 1995:161).

Colonial History of Masaya and Monimbó

Indian towns on the western side of Nicaragua were incipient city-states at first contact (Carmack 1996b; Carmack 1998b:16; Fowler Jr. 1989).[104] The Spaniards advanced their colonization of the New World through the founding of cities near these

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[104] Linda Newson (1987:56-60) thinks the principal sociopolitical organization on the west coast of Nicaragua at first contact was the chiefdom, but William Fowler (1989) has made a decent argument for understanding them as small city-states on the periphery of Mesoamerica, influenced by the Pipils to the north (present-day El Salvador) and the large state-level civilization of the central Mexican plateau. Although their migration was likely an attempt to escape domination in the north, they brought with them knowledge of the sociopolitical formation of the state and sought autonomy in smaller groups in this frontier region of southern Mesoamerica (Carmack 1996b; Carmack 1998b:16).

Indian towns and villages. Linda Newson (1987:93) explains the importance of these cities to the Spanish:

> The difficult task of conquest was consolidated by the establishment of urban centers. Towns and cities were the primary instruments of colonization, serving as symbols of territorial possession and centers from which the surrounding countryside could be colonized and administered.

Thus, a city-centric bias was established with Spanish domination, but it was imposed on a culture that was already semi-urbanized and politically accustomed to city-state organization.

The Spanish conquistador, Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, accompanied by Franciscan friars (Zúñiga C. 1996:2), founded the first Spanish town, Granada, in 1524 near the Indian village of Xalteba (or Jalteba) and, a few months later, León near the Indian community of Sutiaba (Rizo Zeledón 1999). When Córdoba's forces marched through Masaya, Spanish chronicler, Antonio de Herrera (Incer Barquero 1990:161), described the area as *grande y bien poblada* ("large and well populated"). The eyes of the conquerors were on the Indians as a source of labor to be exploited, either as slaves, who were needed in other parts of the New World, principally Peru, or as conquered subjects required to produce tribute. León was designated the first capital of the Nicaraguan province in 1527, and this decision led to resentment among the Spanish residents of Granada who thought their city should have been given this honor (Newson 1987:93-94).

Colonial Masaya, known as San Fernando de Masaya, was established near three Indian villages. Patrick S. Werner (2000:98) indicates that these Indian villages were known as Diriega, Masaya, and Monimbó. Father Francisco de Bobadilla[105] traveled in Nicaragua for five months from September 1528-March 1529, converting Indians to the

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[105] Francisco de Bobadilla, a Mercedarian friar, was commissioned by Pedrarias Dávila in 1528 to gather data on Indian religious beliefs and practices (Fowler 1989:20-22). Since Bobadilla's work was lost, it is fortunate that Oviedo (1851-55) included a great deal of this material in his *Historia General.*

Catholic faith; he reportedly baptized 937 Indians in Masaya (Arellano 1986:16; Werner 2000:48). Bobadilla recorded considerable proto-ethnographic data about Indian life and religious practices. The beliefs about the volcanoes located near Masaya captured the attention of Bobadilla and other Spanish chronicles, especially because men, women, and children were given in ritualized sacrifices to the god of the volcano (Esgueva Gómez 1996:181-185; Kinloch Tijerino 2005:23).[106]

The conquest caused the Indian population of western Nicaragua to suffer a disastrous demographic collapse[107] due to violence, disease[108], and the slave trade (Newson 1987; Radell 1976). Not being a region rich in gold or silver, the slave trade was more profitable for the conquering Spaniards than precious metals, Indian labor, or tribute (Newton 1987:101-106). Nonetheless, the goods produced by the Indians were important in the "tributary" mode of production the Spaniards imposed on the New World. The Spaniards were "surplus-takers" who extracted goods and services from primary producers by politico-military means, thus coercively driving the colonial economy by power and authority rather than economic innovation (Amin 1973; Wolf 1982:79-88).

In 1542, the "plaza of Monimbó" was included in an *encomienda* (royal grant of Indians to work and provide tribute to the Spaniards) that Rodrigo de Contreras, one of the most notoriously abusive Spanish governors of Nicaragua, gave to his son (Werner

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[106] This Santiago volcano in the volcanic complex near Masaya continues to smolder (Rymer, et al. 1998). The volcanoes were designated a national park and developed as a tourist destination by the Sandinista government in the 1980's. I visited this national park in 2000, which has a cross standing at the top of the summit, symbolic of the cross planted by the first conquering Spaniards.
[107] E.g., Oviedo reported that Managua (located in the present location of the city of Managua) had 10,000 warriors and 40,000 inhabitants, but only three years later, he said it had become one of the most depopulated area, with only about 1,000 inhabitants (Werner 2000:50-51).
[108] The Spanish invaders introduced diseases against which the native populations of the New World had no immunity; physically weakened and psychologically demoralized by unknown illnesses that killed over half the population, their ability to resist was greatly diminished (Kinloch Tijerino 2005:49). Cf. the following for the impact of European-introduced diseases: Dobyns (1983), Verano (1992), Ramenofsky (1987), Thornton (1987), and Diamond (1997).

2000:48).[109] In 1548, a *tasación* (official tribute assessment) showed Monimbó being

assessed as an encomienda of 140 tribute-paying Indians, that is, 140 married male

Indians, who were obligated to pay tribute in goods or labor to the Spanish authorities;

while the total population in Monimbó was recorded as 650 inhabitants (Werner

2000:48). Among the tribute goods they were expected to produce were cotton and

cotton cloth, hammocks, chickens, honey, beans, and corn (Radell 1969: Appendix IX;

Werner 2000:266, 285). Werner (2000:285) comments that, in 1548, the tribute

assessed against the Indians in Monimbó was very high in comparison with other

encomiendas, even when taking into account the larger size of its population.

Indian communities in the department of Masaya maintained some of their own

internal organization through *parcialidades,* which were understood by the Spaniards as

kinship groups who lived together in a certain area of a town or village under leaders

called *caciques*[110] (Newson 1987:346). Later, these residential areas became the basis for

barrios (neighborhoods). In 1542, Monimbó had a Chorotegan *cacique* whose surname

was Botoy[111] (Carmack 1998b). The present-day barrio of Monimbó has been known by

this name continuously throughout its history.[112]

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[109] Most probably Contreras' issuance of the encomienda was fraudulent because it appears to
have been backdated, so that the action would have taken place before the passage of the New
Laws of 1542, which forbid the making of new grants of encomienda and required that
encomiendas that fell vacant be turned over to the Spanish Crown (Werner 2000:15). The New
Laws of 1542 were passed at the insistence of the Catholic bishop Bartolomé de las Casas (and
others) because of abuses (e.g, slavery and encomienda) being perpetrated against the Indians,
but they were widely abrogated until 1550 (Newson 1987:105-106; 150-153).
[110] The word *cacique* is a corruption of a word for "chief" that the Spaniards heard from the
Arawaks of the West Indies and, subsequently, applied throughout the areas they conquered and
colonized (Burkhart and Gasco 1996a:177).
[111] Respondents in Masaya explained that the ending "-oy" is a common ending for many names
that are Indian (Chorotegan) in origin; examples given were Hondoy, Metoy, Moritoy, and Putoy.
Other indigenous surnames include: Arley, Matey, Urey, Ñamendi, Ñoriongue, Ñurinda, Ambota,
Macanche, Namoyure, Natiquimo, Potosome, Pupiro, and Sabogal. In contrast, some of the
surnames that my respondents called *gente de sociedad* ("people of society," i.e., those who are
upper class) include Bolaños, Abaunza, Vega, Jarquín, Geyer, Noguera, Pasquier, Sánchez,
Brenes, or Hüeck.
[112] The parcialidades of Masaya in the eighteenth century were called don Sebastían and don
Guillén (both possibly names of caciques), Diriega, and Monimbó. The name Monimbó has
persisted through time, while the names of the other barrios have been changed. In 1870, when

As the colonial period proceeded, during the years 1550-1720, the decimated

Indian population began to recover. Nicaraguan historian Tomás Ayón[113] (1977

(1882):403-405) describes Masaya in 1750 as a community of four *parcialidades*:

Diriega, Monimbó, Don Sebastián, and Guillén with a total population of 6,024 people of

all ages. The community had seven churches; the Church of the Virgin of the Assumption

located in Diriega along with two hermitages; Monimbó had two churches, Magdalena

and San Sebastián; in Don Sebastián, San Juan; and in Guillén, three churches, el

Calvario, Veracruz, and San Jerónimo. Two priests (*curas*) and two native-born clerics

(*clérigos naturales*) served the community, each receiving 600 pesos per year, besides

being entitled to the personal services of the Indians. San Jerónimo was the patron saint

of this "villa" (small town) of San Fernando de Masaya (Ayón 1977 (1882):404).

Economically, the region around Masaya was dominated by fourteen cattle

haciendas; ten small farms growing plantains, corn, and cotton; and 5 sugar mills. Ayón

(1977 (1882):404) noted that the tribute Indians were expected to produce was excessive,

remarking that the economic base on which the tribute was assessed was "deficient." He

also thought that the number of local government officials overseeing the community

was excessive and, in addition, he noted that in both Nindirí and Masaya, a company of

mulatos was stationed, each under the command of a Spanish captain. Ayón does not

draw an explicit connection between the injustices under which the Indians lived and the

excessive political and military oversight, but the implication is that the Spanish

authorities felt that coercive control over the Indians was necessary. Domination

certainly did not prevent the Indians from expressing their grievances. In 1779, the

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these neighborhood divisions were legislatively ratified, don Sebastían became San Juan and don Guillén was changed to San Jerónimo. Later, Diriega became San Miguel (García Bresó 1992:61).
[113] Ayón was one of Nicaragua's first historians, whose partisan perspective was Conservative and pro-Roman Catholic Church. Although this is not a scientific sampling, I noted that, when families showed me a history of Nicaragua, it was always a very old copy of Ayón's work (Ayón 1977 (1882)).

Indians of Masaya complained that the value of the tribute they were being forced to pay in-kind was being assessed at lower than its market value (Newson 1987:276).

The *encomienda* fitfully gave way to a new institution of control called the *repartimiento*, which was a variation on the forced labor scheme of the earlier period. The repartimiento was a "draft labor system whereby each Indian village provided a quota of its tributary Indians to work in approved tasks for specific periods" (Newson 1987:346-347). However, even under the modified institution, the burden was onerous and the Indians preferred to work their own lands (Newson 1987:128). Indians complained, rebelled against these demands, sought ways to escape, and suffered punishment for refusing to comply with orders. Historians have documented the long history of abuses and labor exploitation (Carmack 1998b:27; Newson 1987; Romero Vargas 1987:51ff; Sherman 1979; Wheelock Román 1976).

In an investigation conducted in 1619 by agents of the Spanish crown, a *juez de milpa* (an inspector who was charged with making sure Indians grew corn as tribute) was accused of beating over 200 Indians in Masaya, including their leaders, who refused to sow a *milpa* (plot) of corn demanded of them (Newson 1987:166). The Spanish crown outlawed the position of *juez de milpa* in 1585 because abuses against the Indians were so egregious, but the practice continued. Even after the investigation referred to above, the abuses continued into the late 1660's despite repeated orders from Spain to stop (Newson 1987:166). Germán Romero Vargas (1987:302) indicates that the Indian population far outnumbered the Spaniards in Masaya; in 1776, there were 1,200 Indians but only 25 Spaniards; in addition, there were 200 mulattoes and 800 mestizos. The presence of the company of mulattoes (also called *pardos*)[114] soldiers began to produce tensions (Romero Vargas 1988: 302-303; García Bresó 1992:61-62). In 1791, Indians in

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[114] P*ardo* is a term used in Nicaragua (among many other terms) in the eighteen century that refers to dark-skinned people of mixed African and Indian heritage (Lokken 2004; Newson 1987). The usage of this term *pardo* was somewhat less pejorative than *mulato* due to the greater ambiguity of the ethnic source of the darker skin (Wolfe per. com. 2007).

Masaya protested that the Spanish authorities were giving preferences to the *pardos* in the buying and selling of *mejoras* (improvements) on the land (Romero Vargas 1988:302-303), which included hedgerows, fruit trees, crops, and cattle.[115]

During the colonial period, the *mestizo* (mixed Indian and European) population grew. Also, Indians migrated away from their home towns, attempting to avoid identification as ethnic Indians. A significant portion of the Indian population sought ways to escape the stigma of being Indian and the harsh burden of *repartimiento* (Newson 1987:172). Sometimes Indians moved into towns the colonists established, and some Spaniards moved into Indian areas. In the seventeenth century, authorities tried to establish residential segregation by establishing *barrios* for mestizos, mulattoes, and blacks that explicitly set them apart as distinct from Indians, further intensifying the stigma of being Indian (Newson 1987:131; 173).

In the final years of the colonial period before independence from Spain, the Roman Catholic Church was a poor institution sometimes felt unable to have much influence on society, although many priests were involved in the liberal reform efforts. The Bishop of León, Juan Cruz Ruiz de Cabañas, lamented in 1795 that the "solitude of the haciendas, ranches, and farms" made it difficult for priests to provide education (Burns 1991:13). The Indians living in Masaya, however, were living in a nucleated population with considerable exposure to Catholic priests; they were not living in rural isolation and were likely exposed to liberal priests advocating for social reforms.

The lay religious brotherhoods (*cofradías*) that the Roman Catholic priests had encouraged in the Indian communities were flourishing, but the problem for Spanish

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[115] Elizabeth Dore (2006) explains the slow transition from precapitalist to capitalist social relations in this region of Nicaragua, focusing on Diriomo, an Indian community near Masaya but closer to Granada. Land was not yet privately owned, i.e. a capitalist market in selling and buying landed property had not developed. Dore (2006:57) lists typical *mejoras*, or improvements to the land, as hedgerows, fruit trees, crops, and cattle. Dore (2006:192, n.21) found archival evidence of property transactions in Diriomo that involved the buying and selling of improvements to the land until the 1860's, when the emergence of a capitalist market in land can be detected.

church authorities was that they were often not under the control of the priests (Peña

Torres and Castillo 1995; Peña Torres 2002). Not simply religious organizations,

cofradías produced income for the Indian community, buttressing their economic and

political autonomy. Linda Newson (1987:192) finds that *cofradías* began to emerge in

the seventeenth century as a defense against the breakdown of Indian communities.[116]

Newson (1987:177) states that, in 1655, each Indian parish in Nicaragua had at least two

cofradías, the overwhelming majority of them owning cattle. Indians who belonged to a

cofradía had responsibilities to work their communal land, which gave them an

exemption from *repartimiento* and other obligations imposed on them by the colonial

authorities; consequently, the formation of these lay religious brotherhoods proliferated,

even after the Spanish Crown began to restrict their formation after 1637 (Newson

1987:177-178). The income derived from the agricultural activities provided Indian

communities some economic independence, while also benefiting the parish priests as an

alternate source of income for the Church (Newson 1987:192). The functioning of the

cofradías inevitably contained elements of pre-Hispanic religious beliefs, even as they

were increasingly mediated through Christian symbols, i.e., street processions with the

saints.[117] Given that the church had permitted the Indians to administer these religious

brotherhoods with considerable autonomy, the arrangement of power and authority was

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[116] John K. Chance and William B. Taylor (1985:1-2) argue that the Mesoamerican civil-religious *cofradías* that anthropologists such as Eric Wolf (1959) and Manning Nash (1958) defined as the "closed, corporate community" lacked historical depth in their interpretation. Chance and Taylor (1985:2) marshal archival evidence for Mexico and Guatemala that the form anthropologists observed was "mainly a post-Independence development of the 19th century," a communal defense mechanism with more recent roots rather than a traditional form unchanged since the colonial period. However, Linda Newson (1989) finds evidence of the development of the cofradía in 17th century Nicaragua; her research is superb and specific to Nicaragua, so I have greater confidence in her conclusion than Chance and Taylor (1985).

[117] I understand syncretism in the development of the religious brotherhoods "as part of the strategic social negotiation of religious synthesis" (Stewart 1995:37), i.e., a historically situated power struggle in which the institution is adapted and transformed, not merely blended by the subaltern population. My chapter on the *cofradía* of San Jerónimo in the contemporary period is still an important site for social negotiation and new forms of religious synthesis.

bound to cause tensions between the Indians and the priests (Peña Torres and Castillo

1995; Peña Torres 2002).

Natural disasters were frequently responded to through ritual events in which

religious symbols were used to seek protection and calm the nerves of the community. In

1772, a volcano near Masaya erupted. Father Castrillo took the image of the Virgin of the

Assumption out of the church into the street, leading the Indians in procession to the

edge of the Masaya Lagoon, then to the village of Nindirí, and back to the barrio of

Guillén (now known as San Jerónimo) to place the image back in her place (Zúñiga C.

1996:217). The lava that was headed toward Nindirí reportedly changed direction

towards Managua, ending the crisis for the Indians in Monimbó and Nindirí. The event

is commemorated by an annual street procession and two blue crosses that stand on the

main street leading from Masaya into Monimbó near the municipal cemeteries.[118]

Contemporary members of the *cofradía* that annually re-enacts this street procession

told me about a controversy related to the toe of the sacred image being burned by hot

cinders from the volcano. They related that, after the volcanic eruption subsided in 1772,

the priests wanted to repair the image, but the Indians thought that it should remain as it

was as a reminder of the miracle.

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[118] I observed this ritual procession; other contemporary observations of this religious procession
are described by Borland (1994:71-72); García Bresó (1992), and Hatton (1998:36). Respondents
told me in 2000 that this Marian miracle of protection from volcanic eruption is celebrated every
year on March 15 by a *cofradía* whose members pull a wheeled platform holding the image of the
Virgin down to the edge of the Lagoon. Their commemoration of this historically-rooted miracle
is only celebrated in Monimbó, not by the population of Masaya at large. The tradition has been
passed down through generations, although new elements had been added, such as the
accompaniment with *chichero* brass band. I noted that historical sources also informed the
community's understanding of the event. An observer of the procession had a typed description of
the origins of the observance excerpted from the historical work of Jerónimo Pérez, a non-Indian
native-son of Masaya (Pérez and Chamorro 1975). Jerónimo Pérez published a journal called *La
Tertulia* from Masaya, a vehicle for broadcasting elite view points about society and politics in the
1850's and 1860's. Pérez was son-in-law and supporter of Tomás Martínez (President of
Nicaragua, 1857-1866), the first President of the 30-Year Epoch. Among the accomplishments of
the Martínez administration was the signing a Concordat with the Vatican in 1861-1862 and re-
invigorating in 1865 the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary as part of his efforts to
build the fledgling nation through a restoration of Catholicism (Zúñiga C.1996:358).

Masaya during the Struggle for Independence from Spain

Nicaragua and the other Central American countries were less involved in fighting for independence from Spain than people in New Spain (colonial Mexico) in 1810. A notable exception was Indian priest Tomás Ruiz (Arellano 1987), who was among a small group of leaders in León, Nicaragua to attempt a call to arms. Ruiz was the first Indian in Nicaragua to become a Catholic priest. Although he was competent and had influential supporters within the Church, he was repeatedly passed over for advancement (Arellano 1987). While "el Padre Indio" Ruiz was fighting for independence from Spain in León, however, the Indians of Monimbó were preoccupied with local concerns: forced labor and heavy tribute demands.

Romero Vargas (1988:303) reports that one uprising in Monimbó in 1812 was rapidly put down by the *pardo* militia from Managua and Masaya. This uprising had its roots in social tensions between Indians and *pardos* that had been simmering since the late 1790's. The Indians protested a discriminatory practice in which *pardo* meat sellers refused to sell better cuts of meat to Indians. The Indians staged a boycott of these venders and relied on fishing in the lagoon instead, but the Spanish authorities forbid them to do this. In another uprising, Indians armed with sticks, spears, knives, and machetes attacked the residences of judges living in the *parcialidades* of Monimbó and Diriega (Wheelock Román 1976).

At this time, Elizabeth Dore (2006:42-43) describes a case in which Indians used legal means to prevent the appropriation of their communal lands. In 1807, Francisco Alvarado, a landowner and merchant from Granada, wanted to expand the land he owned to grow more cacao. He proposed to the Indians in Masaya that they exchange their common lands located in Tisma with other land he could give them in another area, but they refused his offer. Alvarado filed suit in royal court in Guatemala, arguing that

the Spanish Crown should expropriate the land because it was not being cultivated. The

Indians sent a document to the court which read in part:

> Although (Alvarado) says that our lands are uncultivated, they are of great use to us and are necessary for this community (*este común*) because our principal commercial activity is making straw hats and mats...We gather the materials for this activity on our common lands in Tisma, and in addition people cut wood from this part of the commons (*los ejidos del común*) to construct houses...The land Don Francisco offers us in exchange might well be useful for individual cultivation, but it is entirely useless for our collective purpose. We request that this gentleman leave us in peace with what we have. We are completely satisfied with our common land (quoted in Dore 2006:42-43).[119]

Alvarado continued to press his case, arguing that Indian communal lands were an

obstacle to the production of cacao and that the land he wanted was a small part of the

acreage belonging to the Indians, for which he was prepared to pay double the value.

Although his petition was endorsed by members of the oligarchy in Granada in 1811, the

Crown decided that it was not the right time to expropriate the Indian land. Dore notes

that, at the same time this case was being adjudicated, the Crown was aware of on-going

trials related to the Indian uprisings in Masaya. The investigators concluded that, since

the Indians seemed to have a tendency to rebelliousness, they preferred not to provoke

them further on the land issue (Dore 2006:189, n.35).

In 1839, the town (*villa*) of San Fernando de Masaya was officially elevated by

state authorities to the position of city and called simply Masaya. Carmen Rojas,[120] a

folklorist who lives in Masaya and publishes the folklore journal called *Tata Chambo*,

reports that at this same time, leaders of the local city government decided that they

would change the patron saint from Saint Jerome (San Jerónimo) to the Virgin of the

Assumption; however, the Indians objected to this elite effort to abandon the patron

saint. Monimboseños worked together to acquire their own image of San Jerónimo

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[119] Dore (2006:188, n.33, 34, and 35) located documents about this litigation in Archivo General de Centro América in Guatemala City, Guatemala: *Entre los indios principales de Masaya y Don Francisco Alvarado*, 28 May 1807, A1.45.7, leg. 446, exp. 2939; 18 July 1810, A1.15, leg.171, exp. 1226; 28 March 1811, A1.57, leg.468, exp. 3353; and 30 April 1811, A1.57, leg. 468, exp. 3353.
[120] I interviewed Carmen Rojas, who lives in Masaya, in 1999.

(whom they affectionately call "Tata Chambo."[121]) On September 30, 1841, Carmen Rojas

related, they carried this image in a massive street procession accompanied by marimba

music and the Indian *alcalde de vara* (mayor of the staff)[122] beating his drum. Carmen

Rojas (1993) maintains that this is when the tradition of Masaya having the longest

running patron saint celebration in Nicaragua began. The patron saint celebration

involves many different activities over a three-month period, starting on September 20

and ending in early December, which is just in time to begun the week-long celebration

of the Immaculate Conception, known as La Purísima.

When Nicaragua emerged as a republic in 1838, Masaya was a predominantly

Indian community located on the road between the two main city-states, vulnerable to

disruption from the back-and-forth fighting between its powerful neighbors. The fertile

agricultural lands around Masaya were dominated by the oligarchs of Granada, the

leading merchant city in this region of Nicaragua at the time of independence from Spain

(Burns 1991:8). Elites had considerable mobility and family connections throughout the

western region, moving between the two dominant city-states, Granada and León, as

well as living in Masaya (Burns 1991:22). Without the centralizing authority of the

Spanish Crown and also with the failure of the countries in Central America to form a

federation of states,[123] local *caudillos* (political "strong men") organized militias, using

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[121] Chambo is a common nickname for anyone named Jerónimo, and *tata* means dad or daddy. Nicaraguans like nicknames. Some of my Monimbó respondents did not know the formal names of many friends, knowing them only by their nicknames. They do not hesitate to extend this nicknaming practice to their religious symbols, which they said was evidence of their warm affection for the saints.

[122] See Joshua Hatton (1998) for an anthropological ethnography of the recent history of this institution of *alcalde de vara* in Monimbó. Its roots are in the colonial period when the *alcalde de vara* was required to organize laborers for the Spanish *repartimientos* (labor draft); however, in the contemporary period, its authority includes organizing communal work parties (*fajinas*) several times a year to clean the cemeteries that are on communal lands maintained by the Indians of Monimbó (García Bresó 1992; Hatton 1998:22). The leadership of the institution of the *alcalde de vara* was hotly contested within the neighborhood throughout the 1990s. Hatton (1998:16-22) describes the history of a controversy as it was influenced by the Sandinista revolutionary period and its aftermath from 1979-1990's.

[123] This federation of states, United Provinces of Central America, completely collapsed by 1838, when one by one Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua seceded. Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr.

patron-client relationships and coercive methods to recruit poor mestizos and Indians to fight on their behalf (Burns 1991; Holden 2004).[124] Indeed, factional battles broke out between city-state elites from the time of Nicaragua's emergence as a republic in 1838 until the U.S. Marines left the National Guard under the leadership of Anastasio Somoza Garcia in 1933 (Burns 1991; Radell 1969; Woodward Jr. 1985).[125]

Masaya's status as a city raised its profile in elite political efforts to deal with city-state rivalry. Consequently, Masaya served as the national capital in the mid-1840's,[126] when the location of the capital was being moved around in a desperate search for compromise (Burns 1991:42). Managua, located about mid-way between León and Granada, was finally settled upon as a compromise capital in 1852.[127] In 1853, Fruto Chamorro[128] unsuccessfully tried to pull elites together, rhetorically projecting a patriarchal vision of his rule as "a loving but rigid father of the family who through

(1985:93) sums up the situation: "The Constitution (of the United Provinces of Central America) established the structure of the federation. It provided for a single-chamber Congress and reserved considerable autonomy to the states. Yet it offered an adequate framework for a strong union, and it was not constitutional deficiencies, but the failure or inability of federal leaders to enforce its provisions which allowed the states to continue their drift toward absolute sovereignty. Plagued from the outset by political and economic difficulties, in the two decades of their existence the United Provinces never achieved nationhood. The seeds of their disunity were already present in the provincial jealousies and ideological differences of the late colonial period."

[124] The institution of the regular militia was established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Lokken 2004). Indians had an incentive to enlist because they could be granted an exemption from paying tribute, one of the *fueros* (privileges) that soldiers could claim (Newson 1987:275).

[125] Most scholars have placed the origins of the rivalry in the colonial period (Bermann 1986; Buitrago Buitrago 1989; Burns 1991:20; Burns 1998; Radell 1969); however, Pablo Levy (1965) cites evidence that two Indian factions in the region just prior to the Spanish conquest had fought a bitter war. Dan Stanislawki (1983) supports this argument that there is a pre-Hispanic origin of the city-state rivalry between León and Granada. Werner (2000:8-9) argues that Ephraim Squier (1990 (1853)) claimed a pre-Hispanic Dirian and Nagrandan split that has not been substantiated. Werner (2000:8-9) argues that Squier should have designated the people as Chorotegans who spoke Mangue; see Lehman (1920) for more linguistic evidence on this point.

[126] One of the first actions of José León Sandoval, when he won the election to head the executive branch (called Supreme Director) in 1845, was to move the capital to Masaya, even though he was from Granada. Rafael Casanova Fuertes (1995:285) cites this action as an example of an early attempt to resolve Nicaragua's factional problems by finding a place that was roughly equidistant from the two major rival cities.

[127] Radell (1969) concludes that establishing the capital in Managua was an important factor in ending the ruinous factional rivalry between León and Granada, but history does not bear this out. Factionalism continued for many decades beyond Managua's designation as the capital.

[128] The Chamorro family has been a "notable" aristocratic family accustomed to ruling the country since the conquest (Balmori, et al. 1984; Stone 1993; Stone 1990).

pleasure and obligation always seeks the welfare of his children and only by necessity

and with a heavy heart punishes them when they require it" (from Chamorro's inaugural

address quoted in Burns 1991:80). The Roman Catholic Church was not able to offer

much assistance in legitimating a centralized national government. Only a few priests

served in Nicaragua. Concentrated in the major cities, these church leaders tended to

become caught up in partisan factionalism rather offering a neutral mechanism for

reconciling differences (Arellano 1986; Burns 1991; Burns 1998).

Masaya During and After the William Walker Crisis

Farmers in Nicaragua, including German and British immigrants, decided to

follow Costa Rica's lead in the production of coffee, a new agro-export that promised

prosperity for the region. By the 1850's, Masaya shared (along with its closest

neighboring areas in Managua and Carazo) in the production of this new commodity

(Charlip 2003), but this economic fact did not bring political stability. Instead,

factionalism led to a historically-significant crisis for Nicaraguan sovereignty that

disrupted economic production.

In 1855, a Liberal faction in León recruited mercenary William Walker to assist

them in their struggle against their conservative rivals in Granada. Walker,[129] a lawyer-

journalist from Tennessee, had distinguished himself as a leader of private military

adventures (often called "filibustering"). Political factionalism divided the church, as it

did secular political leaders. In Granada, a priest, Agustín Vijil, and the vicar of the

bishopric in Granada, José Hilario Herdocia, supported Walker, while priest Rafael

Villavicencio vigorously opposed him. Villavicencio risked his life to save the sacred

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[129] Some of the most relevant sources specifically focused on William Walker include: Bolaños
Geyer (1992); Rosengarten Jr. (1997); Bruns (1989); Scroggs (1916); Greene (1937). Michel
Gobat's (2005:21-41) brief account is exceptionally insightful.

elements of the Eucharist when Walker's men set fire to the church during the general sacking of the city (Arellano 1986:58-59). Walker declared himself President of Nicaragua in 1856, betraying his Liberal allies, who had asked for his assistance, not his domination (Gobat 2005:21-37). Since Walker's ambitions clearly threatened not only the sovereignty of Nicaragua but all the nascent Central America countries, military forces from the region united under President Juan Rafael Mora Porras of Costa Rica and defeated him. This war, which came to be known as the National War of 1856-1857, resulted in greater political stability throughout the region, even in Nicaragua.

In the aftermath of the Walker crisis, Nicaraguan political leaders began to work together more cohesively as never before to build "intra-elite trust" that allowed the peaceful transfer of authority through elections (Cruz Jr. 2002:31-45), resulting in a period of stability not known before called the "30-Years Epoch" (Belli Cortés 1998:17; Cruz Jr. 2002). Often called the Conservative Republic, the political labels of "liberal" and "conservative" do not accurately reflect the political process, which was more about gaining power than any ideological content that could be summarized under either term. No organized political party structures had yet emerged that could develop ideologically-defined platforms or impose party coherence, let alone discipline. The so-called "conservatives" embraced many liberal economic and political programs. During the 30-Year Epoch, a pattern of political pacts developed in which discredited individual Liberals gave up the possibility of gaining the presidency, while they were granted smaller "quotas" of power in subordinate positions in government ministries (Gobat 2005:49). In the relative peace that prevailed, Nicaraguan governments pursued moderate liberal economic development projects and projected a "cosmopolitan" vision of nationalism (Gobat 2005:42-71). The famous poet and diplomat, Rubén Darío (1867-1916), argued that the secret to finding a Nicaraguan national spirit was through being

inwardly nationalistic but outwardly cosmopolitan (Gobat 2005:42).[130] The hope of a canal across Nicaragua fueled this dream—it was a dream of a cosmopolitan, modern, and secular Nicaragua that would be "the world's greatest emporium and a center of foreign immigration" (Gobat 2005:46).

In the period immediately after the National War against William Walker, Masaya attracted considerable attention as foreign travelers passed through the area. In 1857, one such traveler, Carl Scherzer (1857:Vol I, 70), an Austrian physician, described the contrast between the houses of well-to-do creoles (Spaniards born in the New World) and the Indians in Masaya. Burns (1991:91), quoting from Scherzer (1857), provides the following description: the Indian inhabitants live "in 'poor cottages' surrounding the town, and the large church 'stands in the middle of the square that serves as a market place,' and the comfortable homes of the creoles compose the center of Masaya. 'The walls of the houses here are thick and solid; the roofs of tile; and many have verandahs and balconies towards the street. Those of the opulent creoles frequently possess spacious courts and galleries supported on pillars, and many remind you of those in Andalusia.'"

Another traveler was Frederick Boyle (1868:Vol II, 6-7), who described the Masaya of 1865 as an Indian community:

> Masaya is said to have eighteen-thousand inhabitants...Nine-tenths are Indians of pure blood, and still live, if not in the identical huts of their forefathers, at least in buildings precisely similar. The walls consist of an open framework of bamboos, which allow air to pass freely, while a heavy roof of palm thatch excludes the sun. In all cases the huts stand in a swept yard, planted with *coyol* palms and flowering shrubs. Each family thus occupies a great deal of ground, far behind the yard extends a grove of orange trees or *jicaras*: some huts of a single room will monopolize an area of land (Boyle quoted in Burns 1991:125).

Travelers also frequently mentioned Masaya's abundant artisan production (Burns 1991:61), a type of economic activity that remains important in the contemporary period

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[130] Gobat (2005:42) cites Barcia's (1968) volume of Rubén Darío's work.

(as the 1993 census mentioned earlier in this chapter makes clear). The agrarian economy showed an integration of town and country in which elite landowners and peasants alike went out to the fields during the day and returned to their homes in town in the evening (Burns 1991:60).

Masaya at the end of the nineteenth century was a semi-urbanized nucleation of Indians with a small population of *mestizos* (those of "mixed blood" Indian and Spanish heritage) and *creoles* (Spanish-heritage elites born in the New World but not of "mixed blood") (Romero Vargas 1987). Ethnic tensions between the growing poor ladino (or *mestizo*)[131] population and the Indians were evident:

> Most (ladinos) earned very modest incomes, and their status differed little from that of the Indian. Nonetheless, hostility often characterized their relations. The Indians had their pride, feeling 'themselves to be quite equal in intelligence with the mestizo population, and superior to them in civilization.' For their part, the ladinos looked upon the Indians as a conquered race to be exploited in every possible way (Burns 1991:120).[132]

Although relations between Indians, mestizos, and elite patriarchs were strained, the relative stability of the period after Walker's defeat meant that the government was able to begin developing infrastructure that promoted coffee as an agroexport crop. By 1867, the department of Masaya had 21 coffee farms with ladinos from Granada, Rivas, and Managua having many land claims in the area (Williams 1994:83). The history of the loss

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[131] The terms *ladino* and *mestizo* are used interchangeably as ethnic terms indicating mixed ancestry of Indian and Spanish. While conducting fieldwork in Masaya, I noticed that these terms were not commonly used in everyday conversation; instead, the terms used tended to be either rich or poor; or even more common for describing people in Masaya, the terms were *gente del centro* (people of the "center," meaning those who lived in the center of the city) or *gente de la sociedad* ("people of society") as opposed to the people of Monimbó or Monimboseños. *Monimboseño* was considered synonymous with Indian, although there were people who lived in the barrio of Monimbó who did not claim Indian heritage. Respondents said people were becoming a little less reluctant to explicitly identify as Indian. See Gould (1995b) for a historical study of western Nicaragua from 1920-1954, which focuses on this epoch as a period when the myth of Nicaraguan *mestizaje* was created through armed repression, expropriation of communal lands, eliminating traditional Indian dress (i.e., forbidding the growing of cotton in Matagalpa), and the Roman Catholic Church (i.e., through the work of the new organization Catholic Action) removing the sacred symbols from Indian religious brotherhoods.
[132] Burns draws on three sources for this description of social relations between the three ethnic groups in Nicaragua at this time: Jorge Eduardo Arellano (1984:43), Frederick Boyle (1868:Vol II, 179), and Juan M. Mendoza (1920:47, 82-83).

of land rights for Monimbó as an Indian community is still largely unexplored;

unfortunately, they appear not to have been able to preserve documents from the

colonial period on which to base land claims, unlike the Indians of Sutiava near León

whose records have recently been studied by Nicaraguan anthropologists (Membreño

Idiáquez 1994:146; Rizo Zeledón 1999).

A portrait of Masaya based on census documents from 1873[133] shows a

fascinating pattern of occupation and economic conditions. Comparing the three

neighborhoods of Monimbó, San Jerónimo, and Diriega reveals that those living in

Monimbó declared property in terms of houses and land for subsistence production as

their capital, while in San Jerónimo, a few people listed a hacienda, while the vast

majority in this barrio declared no capital at all. In Diriega, in contrast, a significant

number of people declared cash as their capital in addition to houses and plots of land,

while none was claimed in Monimbó.

In 1873, Monimbó had the largest population of 2,595 men, women, and children

of all ages, while San Jerónimo reported 1541 and Diriega 970. These data do not

indicate household members[134] or ethnicity;[135] however, they are rich in detail about

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[133] I located these census documents in the municipal archives for Granada, Archivo de la
Municipalidad y de la Prefectura de Granada (AMPG), caja 96, legajo número 288, "Estadísticas
de Masaya 1873."

[134] The census raises many questions about gender and family relations that cannot be answered
from these data. More than three times as many men as women owned a house, but women did
claim a house as capital. Of the women who owned a house, 60% were widows, either middle aged
or elderly. The census did not provide information to interpret what the status of "single" and
"married" meant. Did "married" mean married by Roman Catholic Church sacrament, or could it
have included women living with a man in a non-formalized marital union ("common law"
marriage)? This census was taken before President José Santos Zelaya established secular
marriage in 1894 (Cobo del Arco 2000:82); thus, in 1873, civil marital status did not yet exist.
However, men and women were often in conjugal relationships that were akin to marriage but
without benefit of sacrament or secular state law. When doing my fieldwork, respondents called
such a relationship *union* or *union libre* (a man and woman living together in a "free" union) or
living in *pareja* (couple). Could "single" in 1873 have meant that the woman was not married by
the church but silent about whether or not she was in *pareja*, or did it mean she was a single
mother not living with a man presumably the father of the children? The social pattern of
"common law" marriages had already been established in the colonial period; especially prevalent
in *mestiza* families, single mothers were often de facto heads of household, i.e. mothers not living

occupation, capital, and *fueros*.[136] Historian Justin Wolfe (per. com. 2007) says that the

term "capital" means "how much wealth the individual claimed to possess." He explains

that what is claimed was "often contested since they could be used for taxation purposes

or forced loans during war time. On the other hand, they could also be used to show

sufficient wealth (100 pesos) to possess voting rights (or what was called *ciudadanía*)."

In Monimbó, people listing a house as capital sometimes had a record that

contained only the single word *casa* (house); other records included an additional

descriptor about the type of roof, either *paja* (thatched) or *tejas* (tile).[137] Some also

owned land, such as a *huerta* (vegetable plot), *potrero* (pasture), or *chahuite* (land for

producing hay or animal fodder). Only nine (9) men, representing 2% of people listing a

house, had a house with a tile roof and land. Generally, they owned either a *huerta*

(vegetable plot) or *potrero* (pasture).[138] These men, who ranged in age from 30-70, may

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with the man who procreated their illegitimate children and who may or may not be receiving any
support from him (Cobo del Arco 2000:43).

[135] Justin Wolfe (2007:154) notes that, although the national government began collecting census
data in 1845 under Supreme Director José León Sandoval, the census-takers did not begin asking
systematic questions about ethnicity until 1883, when they relied on colonial era racial categories;
i.e., Indian, mestizo, mulatto, zambo. Sandoval used the census forms developed by Catholic
religious authorities (Casanova Fuertes 1995:287) since this was the institution that had
historically taken care of such matters. The 1920 census dropped the colonial caste terminology in
favor of terms denoting skin color: white, black, wheat-colored (*trigueño*), copper-colored
(*cobrizo*), and yellow (Wolfe 2007:158).

[136] *Fueros* were privileges granted by state government based on certain types of service, such as
priestly (*fuero eclesiástico*) or military (*fuero militar*) services, which included exemption from
tithe payments, trial in civil courts, and, for Indians, exemptions from having to pay tribute
(Newson 1987:275, 345). In this 1873 census, many men were listed under the *fuero* category as
paisano (countryman). Historian Justin Wolfe (per. com. 2007) of Tulane University says that
trying to find a good interpretation of *paisano* is difficult. He thinks that it may mean "no special
fuero" or "civilian." A person with the status would be "liable for military (or militia) service," but
not able to claim the *fuero militar*. Wolfe said that he recently located a usage of *paisano* from the
1850's, which described an important politician being publicly whipped "like he was just a
paisano." Wolfe characterized this usage in mid-19th century Nicaragua as "derisive."

[137] Of the 449 individuals who declared a house as capital, 284 people claimed a *casa de paja*
(thatched roof house) but no land, while 34 people claimed a house with a tile roof but had no
land. Of those people who had a thatched roof house (n=371), 23% also listed land (n=86).

[138] The 1873 census did not indicate the size of these lands, only the use of land, e.g. pasture land,
growing vegetables, or hay. None were listed as *milpa* (subsistence plot of corn and beans), which
causes me to speculate that "capital" did not include the Indian communal lands. Elizabeth Dore
(2006:74) notes that in the early process of land becoming privatized in Diriomo (an Indian
village near Granada), both ladino elite and Indians described land in terms of what it produced,
not in terms of its size. Wolfe (Wolfe 2007:113-114) located six terms in the land registry

have been the most economically prosperous residents living in Monimbó in 1873. Not having indication of ethnicity makes it difficult to know whether or not these men considered themselves Indian. The surnames include only one that is known to be an Indian name, while the others are Spanish in origin; Aragon, Espinoza, Gaitan, Gonzales, Ramirez, Romero, and Vivas (two men were listed with the same last name) are Spanish, while Potoy is the only Indian name. Yet, surname alone is not a reliable indicator of ethnicity. Of these nine men, 7 of them gave their occupation as farmer (*agricultor*); the other two said they worked as a merchant and a carpenter. Julie Charlip (2003:9) notes that *agricultor* means "farmer," not peasant, and she found in her study of Carazo that no document used the term *campesino* (peasant). The term *campesino* also is not present in these 1873 census documents for Masaya. Almost 66% of those who claimed land and a house with a thatched roof as their capital also listed their occupation as *agricultor*. The significance of this term *agricultor* will become clear for understanding the class structure of Masaya as the country enters the period of the so-called Liberal Revolution under José Santos Zelaya, twenty years later.

The interpretive value of this census information begins to widen when we compare Monimbó with the other two barrios. In 1873, Diriega had only 14 records in which someone claimed a house of any sort. Three of those claiming a house were men who listed a *hacienda* (landed estate) as their capital, a type of property that did not appear in any record for Monimbó. One of the three men was a married man, 42 years old, named Cuadra, who listed his occupation as merchant. He was the only one to describe his capital as a *hacienda de café* (coffee-growing hacienda). Another was a 62-year-old married man named Aléman, who listed his occupation as *hacendado*. The third man was a 50-year-old married man with the surname of Cortéz, who listed his

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documents from1868 to1897: *huerta*, *terreno*, *finca*, *tierra*, *hacienda*, and *sitio*. The *huerta* is the smallest property, averaging 9 manzanas in Masaya. *Hacienda* did not turn up in the land registration documents, but he notes that the land registry as source of primary documents does not indicate total actual holdings, only land transactions.

occupation as doctor.[139] One man listed a vegetable garden (*huerta*) with coffee trees; he was a 45-year-old married man (surname Tejada) who was one of very few in the Diriega barrio who had a military *fuero*. Most adults in Diriega did not list either house or land of any kind as capital. It is possible, then, that Diriega was a neighborhood of the city of Masaya with a few of the richest landowners of Spanish heritage, residents who own landed estates. This neighborhood roughly coincides with what is considered the center of the city in the contemporary period, the part of town where respondents told me many people who are considered part of "high society" live. Interesting contrasts continue to multiple when juxtaposing this information with the data for the San Jerónimo barrio. In addition to houses and/or land being listed as capital, San Jerónimo is the only one of the three neighborhoods in which people listed a sum of money as capital. No one claimed any money as capital on the census for Monimbó and only one man in Diriega, who said he worked as a lawyer's clerk, listed a small sum of money, in addition to a house.

The occupations in Monimbó, recorded in the 1873 census, show that men worked predominantly in agricultural occupations: *agricultores* (farmers),[140] *jornaleros* (day laborers), or *operarios* (contracted agricultural laborers),[141] whose combined total represented 61% of the economically active males 13 years old and older. The largest group of farm workers were *jornaleros* at 54% (n=255), while the next largest group were those who worked as farmers (n=176, or 37%) and last, at a very low rate, were the

[139] Although the census does not make it easy to make assumptions about household, occasionally the information could lead one to speculate that the family arrived for the census together, father and mother with children all listed in row. This pattern may be evident in the listing for the doctor Cortéz and his family. The 50-year old doctor's name is followed by a woman's name whose surname is Bolaños, and then nine children with the surname of Cortéz. One of the boys is a young, unmarried man of 26 who listed his occupation as doctor. Four girls ranging in age from 16 to 30 were listed as single and working as seamstresses. One other unmarried son was listed as 23 years old with no occupation. The youngest children are 10, 13, and 15—but no information is given, not even that they may be school children.
[140] Agricultural work was a predominantly male occupation. Only two women were listed as *agricultores*; both were young married women.
[141] See Wolfe (2007) for a discussion of these occupation terms in the context of the history of Nicaragua's coercive labor laws in the nineteenth century.

operarios (contracted laborers) at 9% (n=44). This occupational structure would be significantly impacted by President José Santos Zelaya's vagrancy laws after 1893. The rest of the male population worked at various artisan crafts, including weavers of grass sleeping mats, other weavers, hat makers, tailors, and shoe makers. The community also had several carpenters, blacksmiths, a couple of printers, a few musicians (marimba band players), and one 15-year-old firefighter. Women's work was well represented in terms of various domestic services being listed as an *oficio* (occupation). Since a few women listed their *oficio* as *ama de casa* (housewife), it seems likely that women who listed a particular domestic *oficio* (starcher, ironer, cook, etc.) were earning a living in those occupations.

During the 30-Year Epoch, education began to receive some government assistance, and in 1873, a majority of children in Monimbó were receiving a basic education because 57% were listed as students, while 43% of the children between the ages of 5 and 13 listed an *oficio*, instead of saying they were students. This subset of working children was fairly evenly divided by gender with 81 girls and 88 boys working. The majority of the girls worked as *trenzeras* (weavers), and even a few boys worked at this trade. Girls also worked in various domestic services, such as corn grinding, washing, ironing, starching, hat making and seamstress. Boys generally worked as agricultural laborers (*jornaleros*); however, one was a carpenter and three were marimba musicians. Three school teachers lived in the barrio of Monimbó. One school teacher, a young married man, 26 years old, listed a house with a tile roof as his capital; the other two teachers were a young married man (22 years old) and a young single woman (18 years old), neither of whom claimed any capital.

In the other two barrios, there were high numbers of people listing the same types of occupations as in Monimbó; women working at domestic service occupations, artisans (such as shoe makers), or *jornaleros* (day laborers). In fact, in Diriega, the

community appears to be a veritable army of domestic workers and day laborers living in close proximity to the landed estates. Were a significant number of them working for these large landowners? This is a strong possibility, but more documentation is needed to make an adequate assessment. Also in Diriega, one man listed his occupation as lawyer;[142] he was a 55-year-old widower, whose surname was Bolaños, an important family name from the department of Masaya and in Nicaragua's history.[143] Three priests lived in Diriega but none in Monimbó, although in this Indian neighborhood, there were two sacristans charged with taking care of the sacred vestments, vessels, and other furnishings of the Church.

The census data does not indicate if the priests were members of a religious order or secular priests under the jurisdiction of the local diocese. Although the census data cannot tell us much about the Roman Catholic Church in Masaya, it nonetheless provides a socio-economic portrait of Masaya a few years before a major controversy erupts concerning the Jesuits. Indians in Monimbó protested against an order given by President Joaquín Javier Zavala (1879-1883) to expel the Jesuits from Nicaragua in 1881 (Konrad 1995).[144] Zavala charged the Jesuits with fomenting an Indian rebellion in northern region of Matagalpa. Although the national government

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[142] Two men listed their occupations as lawyer's clerk.
[143] Enrique Bolaños, for example, owned a cotton-growing and processing agroindustrial operation called SAIMSA, Inc. in Tisma in the department of Masaya, which was expropriated by the Sandinistas under the agrarian reform of Plan Masaya in 1985 (Enríquez 1997:94). The business was returned to Bolaños when Violeta Chamorro became president in 1990. He served as the president of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP). This organization took the unprecedented action in 1978 of protesting Somoza's rule with a general business strike, but later also became a powerful critic of the FSLN in the 1980's (Spalding 1997). Bolaños was a contender for the presidential ticket, when Violeta Chamorro was chosen in 1990, and later was elected president of Nicaragua (2001-2006).
[144] This protest may have been one of the factors leading the government to separate the department of Masaya from Granada in 1883, according to Robert Williams (1994:89); however, this was a time when the national government was establishing official boundaries and jurisdictions for departments and towns or cities throughout Nicaragua. Elizabeth Dore (2006:195, n.31) notes that the national government established the boundary between the Indian community of Diriomo and the city of Granada in 1882, but this Indian community was not rebellious but rather sought to minimize the disadvantages of the economic and political changes with which they were confronted, adapting to the new concept of private property, while also accepting the myth of a mestizo nation (Dore 2006:2).

tried to blame the unrest on the Jesuits, the roots of the rebellion in Matagalpa were actually in Indian resistance to forced labor (Gould 1993; Gould 1998:33-38; Téllez 1999).

This Indian uprising was at root a protest against state intervention in the local Indian community because national authorities were forcing men and women to work on government-directed projects, erecting telegraph lines, building roads, and rumors of taking women out of the community to work in coffee processing (Gould 1998; Gobat 2005:51). Jeffrey Gould (1998:32) believes the Jesuits helped stimulate Indian ethnic pride and unity—which contributed to their efforts to resist government modernizing projects. The religious component of the rebellion in Matagalpa, including the parallel protests in Masaya's Indian neighborhood as well as in León, was a protest against the sudden removal of an important religious presence that had been devoting considerable missionary effort in Indian communities.

In addition to urban-based Indians in Masaya and León protesting state encroachment on their religious lives, dissident elites formed a faction called the *Iglesieros* in protest against the expulsion (Cruz Jr. 2002:19; Gould 1998:34-35). Although they were economic innovators as actively involved in coffee as the dominant faction, they felt that Catholicism was the "nation's spiritual core" and the Jesuit expulsion and secularizing trends were detrimental to the country. On the elite level, then, the controversy was about competing nationalist projects (Gobat 2005:52). With the defeat of the 1881 Indian rebellions, dominant elites claimed a victory for "civilization" and began describing the country as ethnically homogeneous—"la Nicaragua Mestiza" (Gould 1997:16)—and setting in motion repressive policies that deliberately undermined Indian autonomy. The dissident elite group, although sharing in the belief that Nicaragua was a mestizo nation, added an emphasis on the country as a Catholic nation.

Hence, I believe that the Roman Catholic Church is an important, yet often overlooked, cultural element in the development of the Nicaraguan nationalism—its identity or "imagined" community (Anderson 1991) in which faith is a fundamental way in which the people were bound together across ethnic and class lines.[145] With the cosmopolitans, the myth of mestizaje may have been the primary rhetorical image of choice, but in competition with this myth was an image of the Nicaraguan nation-state as a Catholic Christian community resting on the ideal social order of the *hacienda* (Gobat 2005).[146] Gobat shines light on this Catholic social charter for the formation of the Nicaraguan nation-state, which envisioned a "modern" nation-state from an "anti-modern" cultural angle, while adopting the economic modernism of coffee production. Gobat highlights that their rhetorical image of choice was the cattle hacienda, a nostalgic ideal not in keeping with the actual economic social formation taking place with the adoption of coffee production, yet nonetheless a powerful alternative social myth to the secular, cosmopolitan vision.

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[145] I am, of course, referring to the influential theory on nation-building by Benedict Anderson (1991:4) in which he argues that nationalism is a historically-constituted "cultural artefact." While the emergence of nationalism in Western Europe in the eighteenth century took place at "the dusk of religious modes of thought," creating the model of a secular nation-state based on the ideal of Enlightenment secular rationalism (Anderson 1991:11), Nicaragua's search for national unity, in contrast, has drawn on its predominantly Catholic religious heritage, but secular ideologies, such as socialism, were beginning to gain ground. This may be part of the reason that liberation theology—a modern radical engagement of Catholicism with Marxian social theory—could gain as much ground as it did—rather than developing a wholly secular national myth, Nicaragua needed something that would build on its Catholic cultural base. Anderson assumes that nationalism as cultural artifact is secular. Thus, Anthony D. Smith's (1998:138) critique of Anderson's culturalist view of nationalism is important because Smith notes that "the individualistic and voluntarist character of his (Anderson's) definition of the nation has no room for other criteria like ethnicity, religion or colour." A history of Nicaragua's search for national identity cannot leave religion out; it has been central to the struggle, a pivot point around which much of the controversy has swirled since the turn of the twentieth century. During and after the Sandinista decade, the struggle included a cultural fight over which vision of Christianity should prevail—the vision of Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo or liberation theology. Neither vision can be easily summarized without being unduly reductive; they are discussed at length in other chapters in this dissertation.
[146] Michel Gobat's (2005) study is a fascinating corrective to the historiography of Nicaragua that has tended to take a Liberal, anti-clerical view (e.g.Mahoney 2001; Paige 1997; Williams 1994) without exploring the cultural elements that remained firmly Catholic.

Masaya at the time of Zelaya's Liberal Revolution

In 1889, Roberto Sacasa, coming to power at the death of Evaristo Carazo,

opened a serious breach in the relative stability of the "30 Years Epoch," claiming the

right (which went against the Nicaraguan constitution) to run for office because he had

not come to power through the mechanism of an election. This action, and other abuses

of power, caused his Conservative allies to become political opponents and rebel against

his authority. In the confused jockeying and fighting for power, José Santos Zelaya, who

had a history of switching back and forth between Conservative and Liberal factions,

joined the rebellion against Sacasa, then switched to the Liberal side and, eventually,

became the dominant leader (Gobat 2005; Stansifer 1977; Teplitz 1974).

Most of the principal battles of the factional fighting in this so-called Liberal

Revolution of 1893 took place in and around Masaya (Belli Cortés 1998:170).

Conservative forces from Granada attacked Masaya on April 29, 1893, in an attempt to

take the city from Sacasa's supporters. The troops took the city but, being a non-

professional army without training or discipline, they became so disorderly from

drinking in celebration of their victory, that the leaders ordered them to return to

Granada; they regrouped and attacked Masaya again under new leadership (Belli Cortés

1998:164-165). Eventually, the fighting came to an end with a revolutionary junta formed

in Masaya, but the official installation of José Santos Zelaya as the new President took

place in Granada in 1893 (Belli Cortés 1998:173).

Zelaya created greater centralization of power in the national government and

pushed his country decisively in the direction of a secular nation-state, especially in

terms of social policy (Stansifer 1977). He formalized the constitutional basis of the

separation of church and state, abolished the 1862 Concordat with the Vatican,

strengthened the government's role in developing secular public education, established

secular cemeteries, and authorized the state to recognize marriages without regard to the

church sacrament—all areas of education and the family that had long been under the

control of the church (Cobo del Arco 2000). Zelaya, inspired by the liberal thinking to

which he was exposed while studying in France, was—in typical nineteenth-century

fashion—more anti-clerical than anti-religious; he sought to reduce the political

authority and economic control exercised by the Catholic Church in order to adopt in

Nicaragua the model of a modern secular nation-state developing in Western Europe.

Although he ruled for 16 years, Zelaya did not achieve a unification of elites into a

ruling class that could unite around a common focus on national and economic

development; during his regime, there was a return to intense factionalism (Cruz Jr.

2002). Several revolts against his rule finally resulted in success under Juan José

Estrada's leadership with the assistance of the United States government.[147] Unlike the

intervention of William Walker in the 1850's, this action to depose Zelaya in 1909 had

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[147] Benjamin Teplitz (1974:397-403) maintains that José Santos Zelaya was actually "a pawn in Nicaragua's political structure," citing several instances in which Zelaya tried to resign the Presidency during his 16-year reign, but elites in the Nicaraguan Congress repeatedly rejected his resignation. Cronyism in politics meant that this faction of the elite depended on the arrangement of authority made possible by Zelaya's victory; a new faction coming to power meant the end of their access to "booty" government (Teplitz 1973:401). They did not turn away from him until he lost control of the economically important Mosquito Coast. In 1909, a rebellion started in the city of Bluefields, fueled by Blacks angered by being disempowered under Zelaya's efforts to incorporate the Mosquitia into the Nicaraguan state and disaffected elites, such as Juan José Estrada, a former Zelaya ally, who felt banished when assigned to this eastern post (Teplitz 1973:385). Moreover, Zelaya's efforts to form a Central American Union may have been more threatening to his Nicaraguan elite supporters than to forces external to Nicaragua. Teplitz (1972:398-399) argues that Zelaya sought distance from internal political pressures: "The usual interpretation is that Zelaya sought union to benefit Nicaragua, in a manner comparable to Napoleon. Both, that is, wanted to dominate surrounding countries to spread their own national influence and to gain allies and buffers. However, the significance of the United States of Central America is not in the regional union so much as in its independent capital. That district could free Zelaya from many pressures and controls by the elite in older, established municipalities where historically they demanded, plotted, and rebelled. The task of ruling would be easier if the President were detached from contentious influence emanating, for example, from Granada and León." This view reveals that Zelaya's rule was despotic, but he actually had little legitimate authority and rebellion constantly threatened his ability to rule. Zelaya did not utilize religion to legitimate his power but rather alienated the Roman Catholic Church and its elite supporters through his anti-clerical policies and support of Protestant missionaries.

official U.S. approval. U.S. Marines arrived to guard the U.S. legation in Managua[148] but

stayed with only one interruption until 1934; they enforced the peace by occupying

Nicaragua as a semi-colony for over two decades (Cruz Jr. 2002; Holden 2004:87).

Under Zelaya, the notion of politics as "booty" for those in political alliance with

him rather than ideology was intensified—a strong element of political culture in

Nicaragua that continues today, although ideology as a cultural force has gained in

significance. As mentioned previously, before Zelaya came to power, the so-called

conservatives had adopted liberal policies, including efforts to change land rights,

dispossess Indians of their communal property, and promote coffee as an export crop

(Gudmundson and Lindo-Fuentes 1995; Konrad 1995). The ruling elite, whether

nominally liberal or conservative, coercively demanded that Indians and poor mestizos

work for them, often in construction projects to build the infrastructure needed for coffee

production. Zelaya continued to take actions similar to those that were at the root of the

grievances that led to the 1881 Indian revolt in Matagalpa and parallel protests in

Masaya. Justin Wolfe (2007:140) describes the situation:

> In the new nation-state the laborer occupied a place on the political spectrum at
> the opposite end from the landholder. Where the landowner was the ideal citizen,
> the laborer became the marker for the "non-citizen," truly a "mozo," a boy,
> socially immature and unable to exercise the rights of the national citizen.

> This politicization of the discourse on labor proved immediately problematic.
> Although the elite had historically equated Indians with laborers, the definition of
> laborer as landless (or at least land poor) butted up against the (landed) reality of
> the indigenous community, the prevalence of subsistence agriculture, and the
> indigenous self-identification as farmers (*agricultores*).

Wolfe (2007:140-144) describes a case from 1868 in Masatepe (a municipality that is a

short distance south of Masaya) in which the indigenous mayor argued that the 1862

agriculture law could only force those Indians to work as laborers who had contracted

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[148] The United States encouraged dissident factions to overthrow Zelaya, but direct U.S.
intervention did not come until Zelaya executed two U.S. citizens arrested fighting with the rebel
forces headed by Juan José Estrada and Emiliano Chamorro (Gobat 2005:69-70;
Berman1986:145-147; Stansifer 1977:484).

themselves for such work on a *hacienda*. Since the Indians had land, they were not

laborers (*operarios,* i.e., contracted laborers); the agriculture judge disagreed because he

defined all Indians as laborers. The same issues were taken up by subsequent Indian

mayors of Masatepe in the 1870's, who petitioned the local authorities in Granada and

the national President with grievances that recognized the constitution and laws of

Nicaragua. "The members of Masatepe's indigenous community clearly grasped," Wolfe

(2007:143-144) writes, "that their access to land placed them and the rest of Nicaragua's

Indians at the edge of a new relationship with the emerging national community. Their

landholding meant membership in that community, despite the efforts of local ladino

authorities to deny it to them." Indeed, the state government agent, representing the

president in 1871, reprimanded the local rural magistrate, saying that farmers

(*agricultores*) with productive lands cannot be "placed in the lineage of those that live by

the work of their hands," using as part of his argument an 1853 executive decree that

exempted farmers (defined as "cultivators of the land," not people who "live by the work

of their hands") from the militia, if they produced three *medios* of beans or half a *fanega*

of corn[149] (Wolfe 2007:144). Zelaya's Liberal Revolution (1893-1909) aggressively sought

to undermine the equation between small landholding and citizenship, moving the

national government to a position in which it no longer defended the rights of farmers

against the injustice of being forced to work as *operarios,* or contracted laborers (Teplitz

1974:203; Wolfe 2007:144).

President José Santos Zelaya (1893-1909) passed coercive labor law forcing

laborers to carry a work pass or be charged with vagrancy (Dore 2006:117-120). This

labor law, passed in 1901, required laborers to carry a work pass showing the place of

employment and, even most significantly, this law defined a laborer as anyone who

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[149] Both *medios* and *fanegas* are extremely small amounts for measuring dry agricultural products, such as beans and corn. A *fanega* is about 1-1/2 bushels; a *medio* is one half of an *almud,* which is a term that meant one-twelfth of a *fanega* (Newson 1989:343-345, terms defined in her glossary). Dore (2006:215) defines a *medio* as a "boxful."

owned less than 500 pesos in capital or property. If a person could not prove that he was gainfully employed, he could be arrested as a "vagrant" and forced to work. Previously, the threshold had been 100 pesos; if someone owned this amount, he could both vote in elections and be free to make his own decisions about where to work (Wolfe 2007:129). This law effectively made smallholding farmers (*agricultores*) subject to forced labor as contracted laborers (*operarios*), denying them citizenship rights (Wolfe 2007:129).

Monimbó's majority population of men working as *agricultores* was significantly impacted by this state-imposed reduction in status. Protests in several regions of western Nicaragua led the Nicaraguan Congress in 1903 to abolish the work pass, which Zelaya vetoed; the protests continued and were not limited to Indians. Indigenous groups, smallholders, and regional elites brought enough pressure to bear that the legislators overrode Zelaya's veto (Gould 1998:41-42; Radell 1969:195-212; Wolfe 2007:130). Although this was a reprieve from one repressive aspect of Zelaya's government, the assault on Indian communal lands continued aggressively, and thus Indians joined other Nicaraguans in the anti-Zelaya counterrevolution that led to his overthrow in 1909 (Gould 1998:43) with U.S. assistance.[150]

A coffee production census taken in 1909 showed that 41 percentage of the farm area in the department of Masaya was devoted to coffee (Williams 1994:86).[151] In

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[150] President William Howard Taft came to office in 1909 with a much greater tendency than his predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt, to be sympathetic to internal political complaints against Zelaya's rule; Karl Bermann (1986:143-149) argues that the Taft administration had strategic and U.S. investment goals for the region that prompted a stronger anti-Zelaya foreign policy position which was much broader than a concern with Zelaya's attempt to interest other investors in building a canal across Nicaragua, after Theodore Roosevelt had opted to build a canal in Panama and helped local agents seize control of that territory from Colombia. The overthrow of Zelaya "marked the first instance in Latin America—perhaps anywhere—in which the United States intervened to remove an established government" (Bermann 1986:292). Bermann's study is part of the advocacy movement in the United States during the 1980's in which the role of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua is given far greater weight than an analysis of forces on the ground within the country; however, the forces of opposition most likely would not have been able to accomplish the ouster of Zelaya without U.S. assistance.
[151] This 41% figure for Masaya compares favorably with the newer coffee producing region of the northern highlands around Matagalpa which was then only producing 29%. The department of Carazo had 68% of the coffee trees (Williams 1994:86).

contrast to Managua and Granada, Masaya had fewer capitalist coffee farms, if defined as farms hiring wage laborers (*operarios*) for year-round tending of the trees and additional seasonal help during the harvest (Williams 1994).[152] In Managua, 40% of the trees were on large capitalist farms (only 6% non-capitalist), and Granada had the second highest number of capitalist farms (37%), while non-capitalist farms represented only 16% of the trees. In contrast, Masaya had only 9 capitalist farms out of 129; thus, fully 64% of the coffee farms in the department of Masaya were <u>non</u>-capitalist farms (Williams 1994:86-87). Transportation was easier on the Carazo Plateau giving this region an advantage over the Matagalpa highlands in participating in this emerging cash crop; both large holding and small holder farmers in Masaya and Carazo used ox carts to carry the ripe berries to central processing facilities.

One of Zelaya's major achievements was to successfully promote the building of railroad lines, owned by U.S. investors. The first line linked Managua to the northern port of Corinto in 1903, and then, the line was extended south through Masaya, Diriamba, and Jinotepe on the Carazo Plateau (Williams 1994:82). This new means of

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[152] Julie Charlip (2003:11-12) is critical of the definition of "capitalist" farm that Williams (1994) uses. He categorizes anyone who hires labor as a capitalist, but Charlip (2003:99) suggests that a significant portion of Nicaraguan coffee growers hired kinfolk and neighbors at harvest time, making them "self-working" farmers, i.e. they worked the land along side hired help rather than supervised contracted laborers. She also notes that Williams' study relies on data that is skewed towards the perspective of large coffee growers. The data set was gathered by U.S. Consul Harold Playter in the 1920s, whose model of labor patterns and requirements came from working with a large coffee grower. Charlip (2003:11) also questions Williams' decision to measure the size of operations based on the number of coffee trees because the focus on trees tends to overlook other uses of the land, e.g. other crops or rental of the land. Her criticism strengthens Williams' conclusion that, for Masaya, small holders predominated; they were commercial operations in that they sold their coffee beans for export production, but the pattern of land concentration in the hands of a few large *latifundio* owners was not as prevalent as Sandinistas, such as Jaime Wheelock Román (1979), argued. Laura Enríquez (1991) notes that, as Sandinista minister for agrarian reform (1979-1990), Wheelock argued that the Nicaraguan rural labor force was fully proletarianized, so that offering higher wages on the collectivized state farms would be an effective incentive for them to work longer; however, an opposite incentive was born out in practice. Earning more encouraged them to leave the state farm earlier because they could earn more in a shorter amount of time and could, therefore, get back to work on their own lands sooner. The agrarian reform project in Masaya was initiated late in the Sandinista decade precisely because small holders were clamoring for land, not the formation of Sandinista cooperatives or better wages as rural wage workers (Enríquez 1997).

transportation became an important economic opportunity for the local Indian economies in urbanized areas, such as Masaya. The increased flow of people through the city meant more customers for the food and craft items produced by the artisans of Monimbó.

Vital Ñoriongue led Monimbó from the time of Jose Santos Zelaya's presidency (1893-1909) into the 1920's (Gould 1998:147-155). Ñoriongue's leadership reveals an indigenous community capable of autonomous action. He led protests in 1919 and again in 1922 against the construction of a wall around the train station. The protest was in support of market vendors whose livelihoods were threatened by blocking their access to passengers riding the train. Although Ñoriongue framed the grievances as a citizen's protest rather than as an indigenous revolt, historian Jeffrey Gould (1998:147-149) concludes that the data show Indians exercising significant local leadership. He (1998:149-150) quotes a *ladino* (*mestizo*) poet who mocks Ñoriongue's authoritarian style of leadership but, in spite of the tone, the poem paints a portrait of an indigenous leader of considerable stature. He (1998:154) further argues that these protests in Masaya indicate early resistance against the impacts of U.S. intervention, clearly a rebelliousness fomented by Monimbó as an indigenous community. Yet, rather than being a "backward" people who resist modernization as elite Nicaraguan patriarchs argued, the Indian community of Monimbó defended their rights as citizens to benefit from the new opportunities opening up.

In keeping with his stance as a liberal who was more anti-Catholic institutional power than anti-religious, Zelaya allowed Protestant religious groups into the country; it was a modern effort influenced by Euro-American notions of the nation-state to support religious freedom. The founding of the first Protestant churches on the Pacific coast of

Nicaragua[153] took place during the reign of President José Santos Zelaya. Although

Zelaya's government made religious freedom a formal part of the constitutional basis of

the state, the freedom to evangelize was hindered by violent local reactions from

Catholics. Although no longer facing legal restrictions by the state, religious dissenters

were entering a Catholic cultural milieu that was extremely hostile.[154]

Masaya during the U.S. Marine Occupation

When Zelaya was overthrown, the U.S. Marines permitted a partial restoration of

privileges for the Catholic Church, but the formal guarantee of religious freedom was

supported by this Protestant occupying force. The separation of church and state was

maintained as a formal principle in the 1911 Constitution (Esgueva Gómez 1994).

In 1917, a Baptist mission was established in Masaya (Gobat 2005:180; Pixley

1999). Missionary Manuel Ledesma gathered together a few ladino converts and began

preparations to build a church in Masaya. A local priest, Father Ignacio Arias, organized

a "Heart of Jesus" street procession in front of the building where the Baptists were

meeting. The procession turned into an armed mob, causing property damage but no

injuries or deaths (Pixley 1999:86). Archbishop José Antonio Lezcano of Managua spoke

out against the violence, but he did not welcome the new religious group. In 1918, he

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[153] Protestant influence on the East Coast had already began much earlier. The first Baptist Church in Nicaragua was formed in 1852 on Corn Island, off the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua near the port city of Bluefields. The parishioners were mulattos, descendents of English colonists who came from Jamaica with enslaved Africans to grow cotton (Pixley 1999:43). However, the Moravian Church (a Protestant denomination of German origin) had an even earlier and greater influence than the Baptists, established itself among Miskito Indians and African-Caribbean peoples in Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon in 1849 on Nicaragua's eastern coast (Hawley 1997; Jenkins Molieri 1986:90-95).
[154] An example of this hostile climate in western Nicaragua is the story of a Baptist preacher named Salvador Avilés who moved to Managua in 1900, after facing opposition from the local Catholic priest in Rivas, a community south of Granada. He continued his practice of preaching on the streets and in the marketplace in Managua. The city police in Managua restrained him, placing an order that prevented him from preaching anywhere in public, although they allowed him to preach in private houses. President Zelaya intervened, lifted the order, and allowed Avilés to preach wherever he liked (Pixley 1999).

172

issued a pastoral letter that said Protestantism was the source of all modern evils. Pixley

(1999:88) quotes from Lezcano's document:

> we declare that from Protestantism flows all the socio-political errors that
> currently disturb the nations, including European wars, communism, socialism,
> nihilism, and anarchy.[155]

Historically, when facing the Protestant challenge, the Catholic Church turned to the

state to make legal arrangements to exclude religious rivals (Bastian 1994), but President

Zelaya's Liberal Revolution did not support a Roman Catholic religious monopoly and

the U.S. Marine occupation promoted the separation of church and state as an important

principle of liberal democracy.

The long period of U.S. intervention created political conditions that have been

characterized as "aborted" liberalism:

> Through a Marine landing, the United States established a form of neocolonial
> control over the Nicaragua political system, using previously defunct conservative
> elites to govern on its behalf. Business interests from the United States followed
> on the heels of the U.S. invasion, ultimately establishing control over the key
> financial sectors of the Nicaraguan economy. The ultimate consequence was that
> liberal policy programs were not fully implemented in Nicaragua, and preliberal
> state and class structures carried over to the postliberal period (Mahoney
> 2001:166).

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[155] The translation is mine. The excerpt from this 1918 pastoral letter, published in a newspaper
called *El Comercio,* said: "...declaramos, que del protestantismo han dimanado todos los errores
politico-sociales que actualmente perturban las naciones, puesto que la llamada Reforma, cuyos
caudillos hicieron cruda guerra, con sus nuevas doctrinas, a los poderes eclesiásticos y civiles e
inundaron de sangre fraternal el suelo de casi toda la Europa, nacieron, en el siglo antipasto, el
derecho que llaman nuevo, la soberanía popular independiente de Dios, todo lo que dio por
resultado el comunismo, el socialismo, el nihilismo y el anarquismo, que ponen a las sociedades
modernas al borde de su completa ruina" (Pixley 1999:88). Anderson (1991:24ff) argues that the
novel and the newspaper were important ways in which people began to imagine their nations in
eighteenth century Europe. Newspaper and novels have had an impact in Nicaragua and,
although certainly elite nation-state builders were influenced by these new media more than the
poorer classes, their impact for the country as a whole continue to be limited by high rates of
illiteracy and concentration of availability in urban areas. Yet, where newspapers have had an
impact, it is their ability to promote Catholic perspectives that has had a strong influence on the
imagining of a Nicaraguan nation-state, especially the newspaper, *La Prensa*, owned by the
Chamorro family, a conservative elite family with its roots in Granada. Radio is the media of
choice for the poor at the time; the first radio station to operate in Masaya was licensed in 1940,
while earliest ones were in Managua by 1933 (Whisnant 1995:113).

However, the promotion of democratic elections and Protestant freedom to evangelize were elements of liberalism that were not aborted. The promotion of these practices by the occupying forces caused some Nicaraguan elites, who initially supported U.S. intervention, to dislike and to resist the "Americanization" of their culture (Gobat 2005). In 1912, Catholic Bishop Simeón Pereira y Castellón wrote to U.S. Cardinal James Gibbons, asking for U.S. Catholic political action to protest the injustice of the Marine occupation (Mulligan S. J. 1991).[156] The Bishop also expressed to his counterpart in the United States a deep concern about the "spiritual" conquest of his country by Protestant missionaries, coming largely from the United States (Mulligan 1991:66-68).

The early Baptist movement in Masaya operated in high polemical mode, preaching that its reformed theology was true and Biblically based, while Catholicism was a false, superstitious faith based on teachings that had no basis in the Bible. Among the doctrines they exhorted Catholics to reject were the Immaculate Conception and the perpetual virginity of the Mary. Demystifying the Mother of Jesus, they preached Mary as mother (rather than focusing on her virginity) as the proper spiritual support for Christian married life, objecting strenuously to celibacy for ministers (Pixley 1999:164). Nicaraguan Catholics of all classes celebrate the Immaculate Conception with greater activity and enthusiasm than Christmas, a practice that is not unique to Nicaragua, given that the Roman Catholic Church liturgical calendar has historically placed greater emphasis on the Virgin Mary and the Passion than the birth of Jesus (Ekern 1995).

Although the oligarchs admired U.S. economic prosperity, the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua eventually pushed them into a cultural anti-American stance (Gobat 2005). The factors that contributed to this turn against the United States, in addition to Protestant religious competition, were changes in gender and class. The effort of the

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[156] Bishop Gibbons did not start a campaign to protest U.S. policy but, by the 1970's, Catholics in the United States were actively responding to this type of appeal and challenging U.S. foreign policy (Brett 2003; Smith 1996).

United States to reform Nicaragua's political culture through imposition of liberal democratic elections also focused on ending the *caudillo*–style political process. This democratization project sought to transform patron-client relationships between local elite leaders and non-elite farmers and peasants into a liberal democratic political process modeled on the U.S. system (Gobat 2005:207-214). Elites, who initially thought U.S. intervention was necessary, felt humiliated as the occupation wore on and increasingly alarmed at unforeseen cultural influences. When artisans, workers, peasants, and farmers exploited the democratic opening to gain some advantages against local caudillos and large landowners, these powerful elites sensed that they were losing control over the lower classes.

A segment of the elite class also began to abandon their initial support of a cosmopolitan sense of nationalism, expressing dismay at Nicaraguan women who adopted the "liberated" behavior of North American women. Among the cultural changes that threatened these patriarchal oligarchs were the women of their own social class and status learning to play sports (such as basketball), watching Hollywood movies, and wearing modern clothing styles (Gobat 2005:190-192). In 1918, Granada's Conservative oligarchs established an all-male League of Catholic *Caballeros* (Knights) espousing a reactionary Catholic antibourgeois nationalism that moralized against the modern woman and modern vices (Gobat 2005:177). They formed Catholic lay groups for women such as the *Hijas de María* (Daughters of Mary) to involve elite women in charity to assist the poor (Gobat 2005:178).

The Catholic Knights projected an image of their country as a community of cattle *haciendas* in which the traditional patron-client relations are built on Christian values of social justice:

> The families (of large cattle ranchers) used to live in contact with the people who came to farm the land; they did not stress class differences, nor did they interpose the profound chasm that separates people and at times turns them into enemies.

175

They all came to form one large family that gave a patriarchal color to the social life then prevailing in the countryside. The patrons (*amos*) lived by honestly and peacefully enjoying what was theirs…and those who worked for them, after earning their just salary, went home blessing the name of the good patron and giving thanks to God…" (Chamorro Zelaya 1927:36).

They saw peasants as the poor being hurt by capitalism and exploited by socialist and communist forces that encouraged class conflict. They promoted a Catholic corporatist sense of charity and harmony between social groups.[157] Michel Gobat (2005:195-198) notes that this "myth of rural sanctity" hardly conformed to economic reality because the Granadian oligarchs were among the "most dynamic coffee producers" who participated in economic sectors associated with capitalism and modernity.

One negative consequence of the 1881 expulsion of the Jesuits was that Nicaraguan Catholic education suffered from the lack of educators; this lack was keenly felt by Catholics in Granada. Concerned that their children were not able to obtain a proper Catholic education in Nicaragua, elites in Granada sought the assistance of the Salesian religious order based in Italy but with a world-wide mission promoting Catholic education (Rodríguez 1994). In 1922, the Salesians expanded their base of operations to Masaya, building a private secondary school (*colegio*) with the enthusiastic and voluntary assistance of Indian labor as well as government funds.[158] They built the high

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[157] One Catholic *Caballero* was the priest-poet, Azarías Pallais (b. 1884-d.1954), who has been cited as a precursor for liberation theology (Beverley and Zimmerman 1990). Although Pallais preached a version of the Catholic gospel inspired by the Franciscan view of poverty and service to the poor, he also admired the fascism of Franco and Mussolini (similar to other elite leaders, such as Pablo Antonio Cuadra and José Coronel Urtecho) and preached against communism in a way that shows he did not envision Christian theology bringing Christianity and Marxism together in dialogue (Arguello 1987:236-237). Pallais was an urban bourgeois priest from León who promoted the Catholic Knights and its associated organization for lay women, Hijas de María (Arguello 1987:227-233). He was a member of the Catholic dissident faction that opposed U.S. occupation for cultural reasons rooted in Catholicism, espousing an anti-modern critique of capitalism (Gobat 2005:222). It is this "antibourgeois" conservative sector of Nicaraguan society from which elite defenders of the "preferential option for the poor" at the center of liberation theology would later arise, such as poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal, who became the Minister of Culture under the Sandinistas (Gobat 2005:276). Pablo Antonio Cuadra of this second generation of Catholic dissidents opposed the Somozas but did not support the Sandinistas, but José Cornel Urtecho did.

[158] The most famous Salesian priest in Nicaragua is the now-retired Cardinal-Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, who was appointed Archbishop of Managua in 1970 and elevated to Cardinal by

176

school on the main street that links Monimbó with the rest of the city of Masaya (García

Bresó 1992:82-85), where it still stands today.

Respondents often told me the story of Monimboseños who willingly gave their

labor to help the Salesians build the school. They spoke about the hard work of

transporting building materials to the work site. Men from Monimbó and surrounding

rural villages drove their ox carts to the plain of *Piedra Quemada* (Burnt Rock) to gather

lava rocks from past eruptions of Volcano Santiago (García Bresó 1992:83; Somarriba

2001). Because tuition was expensive, only a few Indian children could afford to attend.

An annex was added across the street, where primary school classes continue to be held

for the poor children of Monimbó.[159]

A prominent citizen from Monimbó, Augusto Flores Zeta, was one of the people

responsible for establishing the Salesian *colegio* in Masaya. His son, Enrique Alemán

Flores, attended the school and became the first Monimboseño to be a lawyer. He

celebrated the 50th anniversary of his professional career in 1999, a celebration covered

in *La Prensa* newspaper published in Managua with a picture and recap of his career

(Trejos Maldonado 1999). In an interview I conducted with Enrique Alemán Flores, he

emphasized the importance of the Salesians to Masaya, especially their efforts to

"civilize" the Indians.[160]

Many Monimboseños, especially those whose children have been or are being

educated at the Salesian annex or the *colegio*, speak up in appreciation of the Salesian

Pope John II in 1985. He was critical of the Somoza dictatorship as was the Salesian order as a whole, but he rejected the Sandinista revolutionary project, eventually leading the counter-revolutionary effort inside the country, giving considerable symbolic support to the military counterrevolutionaries ("contras"), guided and funded by the United States (Obando y Bravo 1990; Rodríguez 1994; Selser 1989). Born in La Libertad in the department of Chontales, Obando is described as being of "mixed Indian and mulatto background" (Kirk 1992:59).

[159] Among some of the most notable pupils who studied at the private Salesian *colegio* in Masaya (not the annex) were the Ortega brothers, Camilo, Humberto and Daniel, whose family is from La Libertad in Chontales; they later became Sandinista leaders (Vilas 1992; Whisnant 1995:197). This is the same town in which Obando y Bravo was born.

[160] Some of my respondents told me that they feel that some Monimboseños, such as don Enrique Alemán Flores, who obtain higher education, move to the center of town and abandon their ethnic roots.

educational ministry. The Salesian *oratorios* (celebratory prayer services) are a long

standing tradition in Masaya; many older people attended as children and remember

them with pleasure, especially the rewards they received for attendance—gifts of clothing

and other necessary items. While conducting my fieldwork, while some Monimboseños

spoke with pride about the devotion of the Indians to the Salesian order and also the

Salesian resistance against the Somoza dictatorship, secularized or liberation theology

Sandinistas, however, spoke bitterly of their fellow Monimboseños whom they said acted

like religious "slaves," doing whatever the Salesians wanted them to do. This anti-

Salesian tendency was sometimes expressed in a strong show of resistance to showing

devotion to the Salesian image of the Virgin Mary, Maria Auxiliadora (Mary the Helper).

They emphasized that the Maria Auxiliadora version of the Virgin Mary is an image

under the proprietary control of the Salesian order, in contrast to the Purísima (the

Immaculate Conception of Mary) celebration, a devotion they say is embraced by the

people of Nicaragua and celebrated in individual homes, free of control by any segment

of the Catholic Church as an institution.[161] Salesian influence was an important bulwark

against the Baptist element gaining some ground in Masaya in the early twentieth

century.

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[161] One respondent, a devotee of la Purísima who leans toward the Sandinistas, although critical of Daniel Ortega's dominance within the Sandinista party, dismissed the image of the Virgin Mary of the Salesian order as a recently imported image peculiar to this religious order. The fact that the current members of the Salesian order in Masaya are from Costa Rica may also have figured in his negative view point. Tensions between Nicaragua and Costa Rica were running high in 1999-2000, as Nicaraguans sought work in Costa Rica. This respondent, one of those migrants, complained bitterly of the superior attitude Costa Ricans take towards Nicaraguans. While the flow of refugees due to the contra war has ended (Pacheco 1989), the economic necessity of finding work in the late 1990's has pushed the poorest Nicaraguans south into Costa Rica. My respondent complained bitterly about the discrimination he experienced in Costa Rica. One researcher (Falla SJ 2000) has determined that the poorest workers in Central America are migrating to Costa Rica for work, while those with more money or connections to family already established in the United States are able to afford the arduous trip north.

Masaya during the Time of Sandino

The Marines kept the peace in Nicaragua; however, when they withdrew in 1925, Conservative *caudillo,* Emiliano Chamorro, immediately took advantage of the situation to usurp power. The deposed Liberal president, Juan Bautista Sacasa, sought aid from the United States but when none was forthcoming, he undertook to fight against Chamorro without external assistance. Hearing of the fighting while he was working in Mexico, Augusto César Sandino[162] returned to Nicaragua in 1926 to join the struggle. As the fighting intensified, the U.S. Marines returned to broker a peace agreement, which some Liberal leaders accepted. Sandino and his men, however, refused to lay down their arms and continued to fight from 1927 through 1933, transforming the conflict into a more ideologically-defined struggle against Yankee imperialism—a struggle for sovereignty and self-determination with the goal of driving the Marines out of the country.[163]

Augusto César Sandino's program was expressed in modern class terms influenced by his exposure to socialism and communism in Mexico. He sought to unite peasants and workers against the "Yankee oppressor" and against the elite "country-sellers" (*vendepatrias*) who had collaborated with them. In addition to a class analysis, Sandino also imagined Nicaragua as an ethnically homogeneous nation—a mixed, Indo-Hispanic race (Gould 1998:155-161). Sandino was *mestizo*, born in the village of Niquinohomo, near Masaya, an illegitimate son of a poor Indian woman and a coffee-

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[162] The literature on Sandino is extensive. Some of the most important works include Wünderich (1995b), Dospital (1996), Vargas (1995), Ramírez (1990), Selser (1966), Ramírez (1989), Selser (1981, Macaulay [, 1967 #3735), Bendaña (1994), and (Wünderich 1995a).
[163] In the 1960's, Carlos Fonseca began studying Sandino's fight to rid Nicaragua of Yankee domination and persuaded a small band of revolutionaries to name themselves after Sandino. This was the beginning of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), which framed their struggle against the Somoza dictatorship as an effort to finish what Sandino had begun (Zimmermann 2000:143-161).

growing ladino father.[164] In spite of his geographical origins, Sandino's base of operations centered in the Nueva Segovia region in the northwestern Nicaragua rather than Masaya. The Catholic Knights in the Masaya-Granada region, however, were impressed with Sandino's resistance to U.S. occupation. An accountant, son of a Conservative Party ideologue in Granada, Daniel Ortega Cerda wrote to Sandino in 1933, saying "I ardently desire to be at your side and fight for...liberty and the nation's honor" (Gobat 2005:260, 319, n.117).[165]

From a distance, the dissident Catholic oligarchs in Granada thought that Sandino might offer political hope for getting rid of the domination of the United States, increasingly seen as the source of undesirable cultural influences as well as causing national humiliation. Sandino, however, rejected their overtures because he was suspicious of elites and, when they learned more about his blend of non-Catholic spiritualism and class struggle, the elites became disenchanted (Gobat 2005:232-266).

Masaya during the Time of the Somoza Family Dynasty

While Sandino was fighting to get the Marines out of his country, the United States was working to establish a new institution to replace them: the National Guard. Modeled on the U.S. National Guard, which is a civil militia maintained in subordination to the armed forces of the nation-state as a federated system, the Nicaraguan *Guardia*

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[164] This humble social origin was the reason that the ruling elite, including Liberal generals, such as Moncada, tended to look down on him as "an upstart nobody" (Bermann 1986:193). Sandino's father, Gregorio Sandino, was a ladino who owned a 70-acre coffee farm with 18,000 trees (Williams 1994:310, n.118). The size of his farm and the number of coffee trees places him as the owner of a "family-sized" farm (not a capitalist farm), using Williams' (1994:309, n. 112) terminology because he had under 20,000 trees but more than 5,000, the smaller number of trees being a "peasant" farm. Lynn Horton's (1998:45) index (developed for her study of the Matagalpa region) would identify someone like Gregorio Sandino as a "peasant" with a middle-sized operation rather than a "*finquero*" (rich peasant). In Julie Charlip's (2003) terminology, don Gregorio would be a farmer, not a peasant.
[165] His sons, Daniel and Humberto Ortega Saavedra, would later become leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), president and head of the army respectively

Nacional was envisioned as a constabulary to prevent the resurgence of destabilizing, internal political violence rather than an army for self-defense of a sovereign nation-state. Anastasio Somoza Garcia was selected to head the new institution, meant to be a non-political peace-keeping force (Mahon 1983; Millett 1977; Stentiford 2002). Although Sandino fought valiantly to remove the Marines, he was outmaneuvered by the establishment of the National Guard. Contrary to the U.S. plan for the *Guardia* in Nicaragua, Somoza utilized his position for his political advancement. He controlled a modernized armed force that allowed him to achieve a monopoly on the use of force (Perez Jr 1987). Although the United States could not control the man it put in charge, they decided that they would no longer intervene through military occupation (Walter 1993). Semi-colonial occupation ended and indirect rule began, as Somoza pledged to look to the United States as his most important ally.

Even though a peace agreement had been signed, Somoza ordered the National Guard to kill Sandino and his followers in 1934, eliminating this potential rival for political power. Then, in 1936, Somoza usurped political authority and, although his actions caused discontent, nonetheless, he did maintain the peace. In other words, Nicaragua was finally becoming a "state" in the modern sense, i.e. having a state apparatus that had an effective monopoly on the means of violence; however, the form the state took under Somoza was patrimonial, i.e., Somoza saw the state as a means to "spoils" for the Somoza family business and, eventually, becoming so greedy that there was no room for other capitalists, let alone economic development for the common good (Wickham-Crowley 1992:263). The National Guard has its roots in strategic and military alliance with the United States rather than being the core of a state that represents the economic interests of the traditional landed oligarchy, the modernizing bourgeoisie, or even allowing some access to government resources for poorer farmers and workers (Wickham-Crowley 1992:264). The ruinous factional political violence was under

control, but the state did not become the liberal democracy that the United States claimed to be fostering. Somoza and later his two sons were called "the last Yankee Marines" (Gobat 2005:267). When Somoza the father usurped authority, newly elected President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, did not want to intervene again. He had already established a "Good Neighbor" policy with Latin America and sought to avoid direct intervention (Pike 1995). Since Somoza's role was to keep the peace and his repressive measures appeared to be effective in maintaining stability, Roosevelt embraced the dictator.[166]

The National Guard was only one mainstay of the Somoza regime, however; another important factor was Somoza's astute populist strategy in dealing politically with the emerging urban-based artisan movement, the *obreristas* (Gould 1990:15 and passim). The artisans of Monimbó were among those who benefited from Somoza's efforts to craft a labor policy that took some of their interests into account. Although the historical roots of divisions within the neighborhood of Monimbó between "arriba" (upper or eastern section) and "abajo" (lower or western section) await further research, several respondents attributed the conflicts in the Indian community to differential responses to Somoza's efforts to co-op local artisan leaders. This time period in the history of Masaya remains under-explored, overshadowed by the city's role in the insurrection that ended in the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty.

Although he was a Liberal, Somoza adopted a conciliatory relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and, after World War II, developed an anti-communist policy. Rather than harking back to nineteenth-century Liberal anti-clericalism, the Somoza regime looked to the dictatorships in Spain (Primero de Rivera's rule from 1923-1930;

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[166] President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) welcomed Somoza García for a state visit in 1939 with lavish and elaborate ceremonies. Facing some criticism for this legitimation of Somoza's rule, FDR reportedly said, "He's a sonofabitch, but he's ours" (Bermann 1986:228).

Franco from 1939-1975) and Portugal (Salazar, 1932-1968), which offered inspiration for imagining a Catholic corporatist nation-state rather than a secular one:

> Nicaragua's Conservative oligarchs readily embraced Catholic, authoritarian corporatism largely because its principles of organizing state-society relations closely corresponded to those that underpinned their own antimodern vision of nation and society. Not only did they valorize the organic view of a hierarchically ordered, harmonious, morally correct society that defined most contemporary versions of authoritarian corporatism, they also shared the social reformist and anticapitalist bent of Catholic corporatism (Gobat 2005:224).

The Nicaraguan Roman Catholic Church legitimated Somoza's rule, with priests, bishops, and archbishops making official appearances at presidential inaugurations and official government ceremonies (Kirk 1992:36).[167] Since the Nicaraguan Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Vatican, and the United States strongly opposed the spread of communism, Somoza's anti-communism was an important internal and external legitimating strategy.

The oldest son, Luis Somoza Debayle, trained as an agronomist ruled for 10 years after the death of their father (assassinated in 1956). His brother, Anastasio Somoza Debayle, trained at West Point, was in charge of the National Guard. When Anastasio ("Tachito") came to power after his brother Luis's death in 1966, he proved to be less adept at the liberal populist strategy pioneered by his father; corruption abounded and his rule became increasingly brutal. In spite of the professional training he reached at West Point, he ran the National Guard on the basis of personal loyalty to him as a supreme *caudillo* rather than as a professional militia. Continuing the tradition of his father, elections were manipulated to keep him in power, either directly or through an

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[167] Legitimation from the Church was not monolithic; a minority of priests expressed opposition to Somoza's rule from the beginning. Monsignor Octavio José Calderón y Padilla was the most well-known on the national stage for his principled opposition to Somoza's manipulation of the political process and repressive policies during 1936-1966 (Kirk 1992:37-38), which included the rule of Somoza (the father) and his successor, his oldest son Luis, who assumed power after his father was assassinated in 1956. Miguel Obando y Bravo, who was appointed archbishop of Managua in 1970, had served as an assistant to Monsignor Octavio Calderón y Padilla (Kirk 1992:59) before coming to the archbishopric in the capital city. Upon assuming this position, Obando began to distance himself from the dictatorship (Kirk 1992).

associate whom he controlled (Millett 1977). Nicaragua under the Somoza family dynasty has been described as a "patrimonial police state" (Falcoff 1987). It was patrimonial due to the extensive use of personal-familial relationships without making a distinction between their personal affairs and the public responsibility of running the government for the common good. The men recruited to serve in the National Guard were responsible only to the Somozas rather than to a professional command structure. The Somozas used their control over the coercive authority of the National Guard to intimide and repress the population (Wickham-Crowley 1992: 270).

Criticism of the Somoza family dynasty came from Conservative political leaders. Among the most prominent were the editor of *La Prensa* newspaper, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, and his literary colleague, Pablo Antonio Cuadra. During the Somoza era, the Chamorro family[168] and other traditional ruling elites were shut out of national political power because they refused to engage in crony capitalism due to its corruption. They poured their political energies into the newspaper based in Managua, distinguishing themselves as vocal bourgeois opponents of the Somoza regime (Chamorro 1997). Feeling that Somoza the father was an upstart without proper cultural background or social status, they saw Somoza's efforts to develop Nicaraguan cultural institutions as little more than publicity events (Whisnant 1995:110-117). This young generation of the anti-Somoza elite made their own contributions to high culture by writing poetry and other works as well as honoring the legacy of the poet-diplomat Rubén Darío. In addition, they studied folklore as a cultural basis for fostering Nicaraguan national identity in order to bind the lower classes to the elite nation-building project.

The religious basis of this folklore, i.e., Catholic festival street processions, was an indication that Catholicism had to be at the heart of Nicaraguan national identity. In

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[168] The Chamorro family is among those "notable" families of Spanish heritage that have been the traditional ruling class (Balmori, et al. 1984; Stone 1993; Stone 1990); e.g., Fruto Chamorro and Emilio Chamorro have been mentioned as previous heads of state.

1959, Jorge Arellano published a book on the festival of the Immaculate Conception as a religious celebration that expressed the "national soul." This book remains the authoritative source on the cultural history of La Purísima; it was highlighted in *La Prensa* in 1999, even though it is out-of-print and not updated since its original publication date.

In 1968, Pablo Antonio Cuadra's reflections (most originally published as newspaper articles) on folklore, literature, and Nicaraguan *mestizaje* were released as a book, *El Nicaragüense* (*The Nicaraguan*). This book has been kept in print continually with revision and additions since 1968; I learned that it was still regularly assigned as a text for high school students in Masaya.[169]

Cuadra developed his study of folklore within the *Vanguardia* (Vanguard) literary movement in the 1930's amd 1940's. After an initial support for fascism and Somoza's leadership, the young elite leaders of this movement rejected some of the values of their parents and began a cultural resistance to the Somoza regime as well as argued for a Nicaraguan *mestizaje* national identity (Whisnant 1995:152-160). They focused on the roots of an "authentic" indigenous culture (Whisnant 1995:154). Yet, as Gould (1996:6) has shown, this romanticization of the Indian past took place at the same time as existing Indian communities were being undermined. The elite developed a hybrid symbol of *nuestra raza* (our race) as mixed race national identity and elaborated it as a symbol of anti-imperialism in opposition to U.S. domination. Cuadra (1938:18-21) defended the Spanish conquest as providing Nicaragua and Latin America as a whole

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[169] After Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, the widow of martyred journalist, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, was elected president in 1990, her neoliberal government eliminated the texts that the Sandinistas used (Arnove 1994; Arnove and Torres 1995). E.g., the 1991 text *Formaciòn Civica y Social* (Escobar Morales 1991:3-46), authorized by Chamorro's Minister of Education, Humberto Belli, is a fifth-grade text that contains a chapter on the country ("La Patria") that focuses on a few great men, ending with the life and assassination of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro (Morales 1991: 41-46). It does not mention the 1979 overthrow of Somoza or the Sandinistas being in power (Escobar Morales 1991:47-60). This is not unusual because most countries produce elementary school textbooks that honor a few selected heroes, while avoiding discussion of controversies or problems.

with the "light of hispanicity" and "the grace of Catholicity;" the people of the New World

"belonged to an empire" in which everyone was equal and in which the head of the state

directed the people, whereas under imperialism, the "head enslaves" the people

(Whisnant 1995:156).

This romanticized folklore about the Indian permeated the opposition to Somoza

(Whisnant 1995). The emergence of the city of Masaya as the *cuna de folclor* ("cradle of

folklore") has its roots in this elite national project, but it is also one of the cultural tools

used by the Indians of Monimbó to keep their culture alive and defend themselves. It is

contested terrain where the public performance of ritual makes history.

Masaya and the Sandinista Revolution

Masaya gained national and international distinction during the insurrectionary

period of 1978-1979 because it became the first city to launch an insurrection against the

National Guard. The indigenous barrio of Monimbó was the epicenter of this early

incident in the general insurrection that led to the downfall of the Somoza dictatorship.

The willingness of the Monimboseños to defend themselves against the National Guard

revealed to the Sandinista guerrilla fighters that significant support for the effort to

overthrow the Somoza family dynasty could be tapped into there.[170]

The revolution was ultimately possible because a multi-class coalition formed to

challenge the dictatorship effectively (Everingham 1996). Pedro Joaquín Chamorro,

editor of the newspaper *La Prensa,* was an important leader of the opposition against to

the Somoza regime. He used fiery political commentary to attack Somoza. Born in

Granada in 1924, his political legacy was rooted in the pre-World War I Catholic anti-

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[170] The "dynasty" began with the father, Anastasio Somoza Garcia (nicknamed "Tacho"). His two sons, Luis and Anastasio Jr., both served as president. In the late 1970's, Anastasio Somoza Debayle ("Tachito"), was already grooming his son, Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero ("El Chigüín"), for leadership (Booth 1982:92 passim). After the Sandinista decade, "El Chigüín" returned to Nicaragua from exile in Miami and, in the late 1990's, his movements and views on Nicaraguan politics were reported widely.

Americanism. His father had been one of the prominent *Caballeros Católicos* (Gobat 2005:268). Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's assassination in 1978 was a catalyst that sparked an uprising that eventually led to Somoza's overthrow. Although Somoza denied being responsible for Chamorro's assassination (Somoza 1980:109-122), it was widely suspected that he ordered the death of this opposition leader.[171]

In 1978, Monimboseños named a plaza in their barrio after the martyred Chamorro and assembled for a commemorative mass on February 23, but the National Guard disrupted the mass. This repressive action sparked an insurrectionary reaction among the Monimboseños. Sandinista guerrillas interpreted the spontaneous uprising as a positive sign of revolutionary potential in Masaya. Indeed, this barrio of urbanized Indians took the first step toward a general insurrection, although their weapons were merely fireworks and stones (Booth 1982:160-161). The National Guard took control of the city again through bombings and heavy house-to-house combat, which took place primarily in Monimbó, but the people managed to hold them at bay for two weeks.

Camilo Ortega was the only Sandinista present, but he did not lead the insurrection in Masaya but rather rushed to the scene when the FSLN realized that the uprising was already in progress. The younger brother of Daniel Ortega and Humberto Ortega, who later became the president and defense minister (respectively) of the Sandinista government, Camilo Ortega was killed when the National Guard retook the city. Although this initial uprising failed, later insurrections in Masaya and in other cities on the western coast successful routed the National Guard forces in their areas. After the second insurrection, the Sandinistas organized a liberated zone in Masaya with support from the Monimboseños.

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[171] A Sandinista government investigation implicated Anastaio Somoza Debayle's son ("El Chigüín) as a leader of the conspiracy who carried out the assassination without a direct order from his father. It has been reported that he probably thought he was doing his father a favor; however, the assassination spelled the end of the regime (Booth 1982:103).

A loose cross-class coalition began to develop when the wave of spontaneous popular insurrections was augmented by a general strike organized by business leaders. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo denounced the violence of the National Guard, adding the moral voice of the Church to the struggle. Obando acted as a mediator between the Sandinista guerrilla fighters and the Somoza regime (Obando y Bravo 1990). The success of his efforts led Somocistas to call him "Comandante Miguel," but the Archbishop never supported the FSLN (Booth 1982: 136-137).

An important event during the insurrection that took place just a few weeks before Somoza was finally toppled also focused attention on Masaya. On June 29, 1979, Masaya was the fall-back location when the guerrilla fighters needed to make a tactical retreat from Managua, when they were losing the battle against Somoza's National Guard in the capital. This famous *repliegue* (tactical retreat)[172] to Masaya involved several thousand civilians accompanying the fighters out of city as they slipped quietly out of the city during the night. The guerrillas and approximately 7,000 men, women, and children walked to Masaya where a provisional revolutionary government had been established.

The Indians in Masaya were deeply involved in the nationalist, anti-imperialist struggle, but the roots of their involvement extend back to the earlier period of the emerging nation-state under previous governments, having a long history of demanding redress of grievances as citizens—citizens who happen to be Indian. Most Monimboseños were not official members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN, or Frente Sandinista) during the insurrection. They were fighting for the autonomy and integrity of their neighborhood against National Guard repression (Tatar 2005; Tatar 2003).

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[172] This event has been memorialized by the Sandinistas as a secular, political "pilgrimage" re-enacted by hundreds of participants every year, even among young people who were too young to have participated in the historic action.

The multi-class coalition (Everingham 1996) was united around a desire to be rid

of Somoza but not around a plan for a new direction for the country after he was gone.

The revolutionary project of the Sandinistas did not have the support or participation of

all sectors of the population. Rejecting traditional Catholic corporatism as the basis of

the nation-state, the Sandinistas embraced liberation theology as a modern radical

Catholic interpretation of the message of "good news" for the poor, but they also

attempted to fulfill the ideal of a secular government that supports freedom of religion.

The multi-class coalition that deposed Somoza included many sons and daughters of the

earlier Catholic Caballeros, who unlike their parents' generation in Sandino's day, were

integrated with peasants and workers in the effort to overthrow the "last Marine," i.e.,

Somoza (Gobat 2005:277-278).

This cross-class alliance in the struggle was true in Masaya, but the revolutionary

effort divided families in Masaya, as it did throughout the country. The pre-exisiting

neighborhood cleavages were exacerbated by the polarization of the revolution,

especially the controversy between the "popular" church and local indigenous leaders

who objected to open hostility to the Church hierarchy. Although the popular church did

not want to be a "parallel" church, the division reflected the differing perspectives of the

hierarchy and the lower levels of clergy and laity. Hank Johnston and Joseph Figa (1988)

analyze the role of the church and political opposition to an authoritarian regime, citing

Nicaragua under Somoza as an example. Under authoritarian regimes, the church

leaders have different positions with respect to secular centers of power than the laity or

priests at lower levels of the hierarchy:

> The church hierarchy can take advantage of these channels to further its spiritual
> mission or to work "behind the scenes" for moderately progressive ends. In any
> event, to enter oppositional politics fully or to make appeals for radical change
> closes these channels and undermines the church's *raison d'etre*. These
> considerations would apparently be less salient for lower level clerics. Because
> they are involved in the daily lives of the laity and have first-hand knowledge of
> the problems that confront them, some priests are led to question the existing

social order. When coupled with their lack of influence on centers of power, lower level priests often find themselves in situations with inherently radicalizing potential (Johnston and Figa 1988:43).

The difference in authority between priest and top-levels of the hierarchy sets up a dynamic in which points of view on what the "problem" is can differ significantly. The nuances of the internal family differences were frequently mentioned by my three host families,[173] who provided different angles of vision into the complexities of the social structure as well as differing responses to the revolution and the counterrevolution within families.

The contemporary Sandinistas took their inspiration from Augusto César Sandino's struggle against the U.S. Marines and modernized with a Cuban-influenced Marxian analysis, developing a Nicaraguan-style *mística* (mysticism) of the revolution (Ramírez 1999:42; Zimmermann 2000), an ethic of sacrificial personal behavior in service of the revolution that was quasi-religious for some, and explicitly religious for others. While conducting fieldwork 10 years after the end of Sandinista-rule, I listened to members of the Christian Base Community of Masaya debate the issues, while lamenting the loss of this *mística*. Disillusionment marked the discussion as well as talk of self-criticism being important. Some members continued to be active in local electoral politics, while others focused on specific issues. Tensions related to national politics caused many members to argue for the Christian Base Community to distance themselves from the Sandinista Party and work on specific issue-focused campaigns.

In the years since the defeat of the Sandinistas in the 1990 national election, mayoral elections in Masaya has been hotly contested. Liberal candidates have won more often than Sandinista ones. When I was doing in fieldwork in Masaya, a man of indigenous heritage from Monimbó ran for mayor on the Liberal ticket and won. Later, Iván Hüeck, the son of Cornelius Hüeck killed by the Sandinistas during the 1978

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[173] See chapter two of this dissertation on methodology to learn more about my three host families.

insurrection, returned from Miami to run on the Liberal Party ticket and won the mayor's race.

Respondents alluded to divisions or internal factionalism in Monimbó that pre-date the Sandinista period, but the revolutionary period when the Sandinistas were in power resulted in even more divisions in the intensely polarization political climate. The indigenous barrio was at the "eye of the storm" in the effort to overthrow the dictatorship and they were euphoric about the Truimph. Hopes were released among the Indians that a better future was possible and that the time had arrived when they would see concrete results. When trying to sort out the details about internal problems, some respondents refused to discuss the issues in an effort to protect the community from my prying into their affairs. Some respondents talked about the neighborhood having a geographical divided that situated spatially two general factions within the neighborhood; i.e., a division between those who live in the eastern part ("arriba") and those who live in the western part ("abajo"). This division appears to have its roots in the Somoza period with some respondents hotly arguing that labeling the barrio with these two terms was illegitimate and in itself contributed to the perpetuation of a false division imposed on it during the Somoza era.

Others described the division between these two sections of the neighborhood as rooted in religio-political divisions. A conflict for who should be recognized as the rightful indigenous *alcade de vara* ("mayor of the staff") reflects this division. While I was conducting my fieldwork, I became aware of two Monimboseño Indian men who claimed this position, a rivalry that was articulated in religio-political terms as a division between those who are revolutionary Sandinistas and conservative Catholics who opposed the Sandinistas and considered Sandinista supporters to be atheists (Hatton 1998:20). It also became clear that this division was not a simple division between Sandinista supporters supporting liberation theology and the Christian Base Community

191

in opposition to conservative Catholics who were supporters of an orthodox interpretation of Catholic theology and siding with the hierarchy of the Church politically. Many Sandinista supporters in Monimbó did not embrace liberation theology nor did they participate on a regular basis, if at all, in the activities of the Christian Base Community. This disclination to embrace the Christian Base Community centered on a perceived tendency of the organization to move Catholic religious practice away from a heavy emphasis on the veneration of the saints towards a focus on Jesus Christ as the only true saint capable of intercessory mediation on behalf of the faithful as well as on egalitarian gender relations.[174]

My ethnographic observations indicate that some male Sandinista supporters in Masaya are hanging on to their role as members of the patron saint religious brotherhood (*cofradía*) tenaciously, continuing and adapting that institution with its fusion of religion and politics as a field for autonomous action within the city. The men who carry San Jerónimo in the patron saint festival use their role as the bearers of the saint's platform to have a voice in the public sphere, both the public sphere of the church and the secular political process. On July 19, 1979, when the Sandinistas drove triumphant into Managua, a group of Monimboseños took the patron saint out of the church and led a procession throughout Monimbó that lasted all night. This spontaneous exuberance was translated into the *Octava*, an additional *bajada* (lowering, or taking the saint off its pedestal within the church) during the annual patron saint celebration

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[174] Cf. anthropologist Rosario Montoya's (1995) description of the themes found in an unpublished manuscript written by one of her respondents, a shoemaker from San Carlos, Río San Juan, Nicaragua, whose perspective parallels that of many male artisans in Monimbó. This shoemaker values liberation theology for its encouragement and provision of tools for non-elites to develop their own analysis of Nicaragua's social, economic, and political situation because it "provided elements for countering the paralyzing message of the institutional Catholic church that believers must obey their rulers and accept their lot in life as divinely ordained" (Montoya 1995:29). However, he did not accept "liberation theology's doctrinal emphasis on rational, demystified religious practice based on feelings of brotherly love" because this modern approach undermined "the saints' role as intercessors with God" as well as promoting a change in gender roles that challenged patriarchal family authority structure (Montoya 1995:39-43).

(September-November) that already had two such *bajadas*, the difference being that the new all-night ritual symbolically includes the Indian neighborhood as a prominent part of the community locally and on the national stage, no longer marginalized but rather at the center of revolutionary transformation. Yet, it is especially noteworthy that they are not members of the Christian Base Community nor were they participating in other Catholic movements, either the Catholic Charismatics or the Neocatechumenal Way.

Competing expressions of Catholic politico-religious (or religio-political) practices is the focus of my ethnographic description of life in semi-urban Masaya. This fusion of religion and politics is contested terrain within Nicaragua and looking at the way respondents talk and behave in regards to this divide provides insight into what is happening. The Nicaraguan people, regardless of their political positions, are using the abundant cultural resources of religion as a source of power in their "endless series of negotiations among actors about the assignment of meaning to the acts in which they jointly participate" (Turner 1985:154). The chapters that follow treat the patron saint celebration of San Jerónimo, the "Purísima" devotion to the Virgin Mary, and a comparative look at the "new" movements in Catholic religious practice in historical perspective. Being at the "eye of the revolutionary hurricane"[175] within Nicaragua, Masaya is a fascinating place from which to view this society—a dynamic society which continues to grow and change, grapple with its future and reevaluate its past. The historical imagination is alive in Nicaragua!

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[175] This phrase comes from Irma Antognazzi and María Felisa Lemos, *Nicaragua, El Ojo del Huracán Revolutionario* (2006), which recounts Lemos' experiences living in Nicaragua, first as an international supporter of the Sandinista Revolution (she is from Argentina) and later, after she became a Nicaraguan citizen and a member of the FSLN.

Chapter 4

San Jerónimo, Patron Saint of Masaya: A Contested Politico-Religious Symbol in Post-Sandinista Nicaragua[176]

An Ethnographic Description of a Ritual Event in Honor of San Jerónimo

On September 30, 1999, the patron saint religious procession of San Jerónimo wound its way through the streets of the city of Masaya, Nicaragua. The group of men carrying the image of the patron saint (called *peañeros* , i.e., carriers, those who carry the *peaña,* or platform on which the saint sits) stopped the procession before reaching the mayor's office and a conflict broke out between them and the leaders of their religious brotherhood (*cofradía*, or confraternity). It was hard to see what was happening from my vantage point in the crowded street near the mayor's office, but I had a clear view of the balcony of the mayor's office. On the balcony draped with small plastic blue and white Nicaraguan flags, then-President Arnoldo Alemán stood with then-mayor of Masaya, Fernando Padilla, and other functionaries of the mayor's office, all members of the Liberal party. Before the saint's image approached the mayor's office, Alemán waved to the crowd throwing out baseball caps with the Liberal party logo and waving a shirt given to him by the San Jerónimo confraternity. However, Alemán's high spirits did not last, because as the saint approached, a fight broke out on the street below. Alemán ducked back inside the building, but the other people on the balcony stayed watching the argument unfold. The crowd in the street did not disperse; all stood waiting, watching, and listening to the argument, so I decided not to be alarmed and

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[176] An earlier version of this chapter was delivered as a paper at the 2003 Latin American Studies Association conference held in Dallas, Texas.

watched, too. After several minutes of angry yelling and gestures of defiance from the *peañeros*, they took up the saint sitting on his *peaña* and the procession moved down the street without stopping in front of the mayor's office. The procession continued on its pre-arranged route through the city without further incident. The participants walked and danced with their patron saint, while the brass *chichero* bands played the songs traditionally played during the festival. The next day, the newspapers (Morel 1999; Somarriba 1999) reported that this was the third year in a row in which the devotees refused to allow the saint to pay homage to the president of Nicaragua.[177]

A Challenge to Legitimacy of an Incumbent President

This incident was widely interpreted as a political statement against the legitimacy of the Alemán presidency.[178] Those who were responsible for rendering this public rebuke to a national president were a group of men participating in an annual religious ritual, a traditional Roman Catholic patron saint festival. The *peañeros* argued against turning the saint's image to face the president; they did not want the saint to appear to bestow a blessing on the president. This conflict was visible to the local community as well as the nation through many visitors in town for the celebration and the news media. The incident illustrates the patron saint as a contested politico-religious symbol in post-Sandinista Nicaragua, under the control of a sector of the religious

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[177] Reporter Blanca Morel (1999: 3A) wrote, "Por tercera vez consecutiva los promesantes de San Jerónimo se dividieron políticamente, dominando aquellos que prefieren que el santo le dé la espalda a Alemán." My translation: "For the third consecutive time, the *promesantes* (devotees, those who have made a religious promise to) Saint Jerome were divided politically; those who dominated were those that preferred the saint turn his back to Alemán."

[178] Claudio Lomnitz-Adler (1995:37) argues, when analyzing Mexico, that "the weakness of Mexico's national public sphere guarantees that political events will be interpreted symbolically, with expressive dimensions counting at least as much as instrumental ones;" hence, political ritual is a key concept. Because there are cultural similarities between Mexico and other Central and South American countries, Lomnitz-Adler's conceptual framework could be fruitfully applied to understand the "culture of social relations" between the regions of Nicaragua and their national state (Lomnitz-Adler 1991). A route to explore!

brotherhood who, 20 years after the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution, continue to make themselves visible as an important segment of not only the cofradía, but also the national political scene. They are fighting a struggle against the religion of the counter-revolution, an oppositional struggle of the religion of the revolution.

Respondents who supported the Sandinista revolution told me that the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle had stood on this same balcony to receive the saint's blessing in the 1970's. To honor this Liberal president, they thought, would be a painful reminder of the repressive dictatorship that they had fought to depose in 1979. The media—newspaper, radio, and television—were filled with political commentaries, some calling Alemán's presidency a return to a Somocista-style state and others defending his integrity as a democratic leader. In 1999, Arnoldo Alemán of the Liberal Alliance coalition, elected in 1996, was consolidating his power base, transforming the coalition into the Constitutional Liberal Party amid charges of influence peddling and corruption.[179]

During the Somoza family reign, the building now used as the mayor's office was the private home of Cornelio Hüeck. From an immigrant Jewish family who are now practicing Catholics, Cornelio Hüeck was a Liberal Party *diputado* (deputy) in the National Congress and a Somoza associate who served as president of that body in the 1970's. Considered a Somocista,[180] Hüeck was assassinated during the 1979 insurrection.

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[179] It is significant to note that Archbishop-Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo made no secret of his support for Arnoldo Alemán (Editorial 1996). He has consistently used his position of religious authority to speak out on issues and the political process, becoming increasingly more critical of Somoza's rule (Obando y Bravo 1990; Obando y Bravo 1976; Obando y Bravo 1979), leading up to the 1979 revolution but never a supporter of the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) radical Marxist-oriented program known as *Sandinismo* (Hodges 1986; Kirk 1992; Palmer 1988).
[180] For an example of corruption, Cornelio Hüeck and Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, grandson of the founder of the Somoza "dynasty," were owners of Plasmaferesis, a blood plasma firm, which the anti-Somoza newspaper *La Prensa* accused of exporting blood plasma at a time when it was in short supply for the medical needs of Nicaraguans. In 1977, Hüeck was forced out of his position as the President of the Nicaraguan Congress due to a scandal over the embezzlement of public funds, thus, ending his career in disgrace. The Sandinistas executed Hüeck in early 1979 during the insurrectionary period just before Somoza was forced out (Booth 1982:177). An example of Cornelio Hüeck's political position during the legitimation crisis is that he threatened to try Jesuit

The Sandinista government expropriated his house, turning it into a public space—the mayor's office for the municipal government of Masaya.

The older members of the San Jerónimo *peañeros* group had vivid memories of the Somoza years and claimed to be part of the effort to overthrow the dictatorship, although not as *militantes* (official members of the Sandinista guerrilla fighters).[181] The younger members had grown up during the revolutionary years of Sandinista rule. Many served in the Sandinista Army (EPS, Ejercito Patriótico Sandinista) fighting the *contra* (counterrevolutionaries) in the 1980's.[182] After the 1990 Sandinista electoral loss to Violeta Chamorro of the National Opposition Union (UNO), former president Daniel Ortega mobilized his supporters to "govern from below" through public manifestations of opposition to government policies, especially those that were perceived as attempts to roll-back gains made during the revolution (Prevost 1997:157). The *peañeros* said that their participation in Sandinista-related activities helped them learn how to organize public demonstrations on the local level; they were determined to continue being part of the political process in spite of changing political circumstances. They could "govern from below" in their role as *promesantes*, people who have made a religious promise to carry their patron saint in the annual celebration. Thus, exercising their power in the *peañero* role of the patron saint ritual, they decided to pull away from the elite members of their *cofradía*. In 1999, then, disappointed for a second time that their party (the

priest Fernando Cardenal for treason when he testified before a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representative about the human rights abuses of the Anastasio Somoza Debayle government (Lernoux 1982:89). Although he was a Somoza associate, Cornelio Hüeck was also a potential political rival. When Somoza Debayle suffered a heart attack in 1977, people across the political spectrum began to reposition themselves with an eye to taking advantage of the change in Nicaragua's political configuration. However, after receiving medical care in Miami, Florida, Somoza recovered, took the reigns of power again, and sought to eliminate rivals who had emerged during his health crisis. This included a purge of his party, and Cornelio Hüeck was one of his targets (Walker 1991:33).

[181] They fit the pattern than Carlos Vilas (1995) found in analyzing the records of those who had died during the insurrection. The significance of Vilas' analysis of "social subject" of the revolution for my analysis will become clear as the chapter progresses.

[182] Julie Cupples (2006:85) provides a brief review of the literature on the counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) in the context of writing about women who joined that side of the struggle. See also Cupples (2004), Horton (1998), and Langois (1997), and Dickey (1987).

Sandinista Party, FSLN) did not re-gain national political power in the 1996 election, they refuse to give up without a fight; they showed their displeasure with Alemán again.

A comparative example is useful to grasp the significance of the *peañeros'* political stance displayed through a religious symbol. On the same day in the crowd walking along with San Jerónimo, another *cofradía* carried an image of Saint Michael the Archangel (San Miguel). Saint Michael's feast day of September 29 falls during the same time as the patron saint celebration. Among the people carrying Saint Michael's image was a national-level politician, a Conservative Party *diputado,* Noel Vidaurre Argüello. No struggle broke out among the *cofrades* of San Miguel in front of the mayor's office. They turned their saint's image towards the political leaders standing on the balcony and, for several minutes, the procession stopped, observing a respectful blessing for the public officials—the same Liberal party figures that the San Jerónimo *peañeros* had rebuffed.

This respectful behavior was not because there were no political differences between the Conservative Party and the Constitutional Liberal Party. Elected to the National Assembly in 1996, Noel Vidaurre Argüello was a rising political actor in the Conservative Party (PC) in 1999-2000. The Conservative Party name is a "historic" name associated with opposition to Somoza (Coleman and Stuart H. 1997). Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, an outspoken voice of opposition against the Somoza dictatorship and, in 1978, the martyred owner of *La Prensa* newspaper, was a member of the Conservative Party.[183] In a highly fractionized political scene in 2001, Vidaurre emerged as a leader and was nominated to run for president of Nicaragua by the Conservative Party (Solis R. 2001). However, whatever political differences may have existed between the members

[183] When observing Nicaraguan society, one must be careful not to make too much of the name given to a party or the ideological labels used. Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, e.g., was "nominally within the Conservative Party" and had "a complex relationship with the modernizing Christian democratic political currents" (Coleman and Stuart H. 1997:182,n.23). The cliché about politics making "strange bedfellows" is not so stale in Nicaragua, where trying to draw firm ideological lines can be seriously misleading; political alliances in Nicaragua continue to be in constant flux.

of San Miguel *cofradía* and the ruling Liberal party leaders, Vidaurre and his fellow *cofrades* did not choose that day to make an oppositional political statement through their control of the saint's image on the street.[184]

This ethnographic description of a particular ritual event taking place at a particular time and place historically illustrates hegemony being worked out in the "complicated way consent and coercion are entangled with each other" rather than a simple imposition of power from above (Crehan 2002:100). Applying Claudio Lomnitz-Adler's (1995:39) conceptual schema, it can be described as an extended cargo system in which local subalterns take action through local political ritual to criticize state and church who are moving against subaltern interests. "Ritual is a critical arena for construction of pragmatic political accommodations where no open, dialogic, forms of communication and decision-making exist," Lomnitz-Adler writes (1995:32). To understand this particular ethnographically observed event, some historical background about Masaya's patron saint celebration is necessary to deepen the context that situates the social drama.

Comparative Historical and Cultural Context of Masaya's Patron Saint Celebration

Patron saint celebrations function as social mechanisms that mobilize large groups of devotees to enact and create social solidarity (e.g., Gudeman 1976:725; Turner 1969; Turner 1974). Masaya's patron saint celebration certainly mobilizes large groups of people from Masaya, while also attracting people from other parts of Nicaragua and

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[184] Vidaurre's candidacy was sufficiently strong to cause then-U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, Oliver Garza, to worry that he might pull votes away from the Liberal candidate, Enrique Bolaños. Under political pressure, the PC substituted a less popular candidate (Solis R. 2001), and Bolaños eventually won the presidency. Vidaurre is a highly educated lawyer who studied in both Nicaragua and the United States; his class and status place him in the elite, Catholic conservative sector whose base of operation still radiates from Granada. The peañeros are not from elite families but are largely urban artisans.

international tourists. The streets of the city are filled to capacity with people walking in procession with the saint or lining the streets to watch the icon pass by. Stephen Gudeman (1976:724) notes that patron saint fiestas provide an opportunity for villages, towns, and cities to distinguish themselves as unique and special through their modes of celebrating their protector saints. Masaya is proud of its patron saint celebration; respondents claim that the festival, which lasts three months from September through November, is the longest patron saint celebration in the country. Some people even boasted that they thereby demonstrate a religious devotion of greater intensity than anyone else, Catholic or evangelical.

Masaya's protector (patron saint) Saint Jerome was a scholar of the early Christian Church, a contemporary of Augustine's. Best known for his Latin translation of the Bible, he is officially recognized as a Doctor of the Church, but he is also known for extreme ascetic practices as a form of spiritual discipline.[185] A slogan is traditionally shouted out during street processions in Masaya: "The doctor who cures without medicine" (*El doctor que cura sin medicina*), which some respondents told me was to help the participants distinguish this doctor of the church from a medical doctor. Nicaraguan anthropologist Milagros Palma (1988:106), however, notes that Jerome, while living his life of ascetic sacrifice in the mountains, cured the illnesses of poor people with mountain plants and water from the river.[186]

Masaya's patron saint festival is a multifaceted celebration whose centerpiece is a set of three ritual lowerings (*bajadas)* of the saint from the church to the street for outdoor processions. The patron saint festival begins on September 20 with the first

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[185] Jerome (c. 341-420 C.E.) was born in the small town of Stridonius at the head the Adriatic Sea in the Roman province of Dalamatia. His translation of the Bible is known as the Latin "Vulgate" version. Gerald Bray (1998:385) notes that Jerome was known to have "supported extreme ascetic practices."

[186] Milagros Palma (1988:106) writes: "Allí enmontañado, Jerónimo curaba a los pobres con agua del río y plantas del monte." My translation: There in the mountains, Jerome cured the poor with water from the river and mountain plants.

bajada. This day marks the beginning of the patron saint annual celebration because it was on this day in 1295 that Pope Boniface XIII designated Jerome a Doctor of the Church. Every year, the cofradía officially and formally takes the saint's image down from the altar in the Saint Jerome Church on that day, and the *peañeros* (carriers) perform their *promesa* (promise) of carrying it through the main streets of Masaya to the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in the center of town.

Since Jerome died on September 30, 420 C.E., that day was set by the Roman Catholic Church as his official feast day in the international church's liturgical calendar. Consequently, September 30th is the date of the second *bajada* of the image of the saint in Masaya. The *peañeros* lower the saint's image from the altar in the Church of the Virgin of the Assumption and carry the icon on an ambitious route around the neighborhoods and main roads of the city with many pre-arranged stops along the way. Those who have provided funds for the event receive the blessing of the saint by having his image stop in front their houses or businesses along the route. The last lowering of the saint's image takes place on the eighth day (or Octave) after the official feast day. This final *bajada* has experienced the most recent innovation in the way the patron saint festival is celebrated in Masaya, when this celebration was fused with the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution; it is at this point that the saint began to travel the streets and footpaths of the Monimbó barrio.

The tiny image of Saint Jerome sits on top of a massive platform (*peaña*) constructed of bamboo and sugar cane stalks covered with leaves and flowers to simulate a mountain. While carrying the saint on his mountain, the *peañeros* also occasionally shake the platform, making it "dance." The lifting and dancing actions require considerable physical strength and coordination because the platform is extremely heavy; I was told that eighty men are needed to hoist it. Pablo Antonio Cuadra (1997

(1968):120), an important Nicaraguan literary figure and folklorist,[187] called the procession for Saint Jerome a volcanic dance, referring to the pre-Hispanic Chorotegan Indian belief in a god of the volcano who required appeasement through ritual human sacrifices.[188] Cuadra (1997:119) advances the theory that the dance to the volcano-god may have been a Chorotegan Indian tradition that was Christianized by the conquering Spanish. He (Cuadra 1997:121) writes that the worship of the volcano-god, a "monster without a mind," was replaced by devotion to Saint Jerome, the holy doctor and "intellectual saint" of the Church; [189] thus, Cuadra reveals his sense that Indian "primitives" need civilizing, having moved even by the mid-twenieth century only slightly from worshipping a mindless monster to being under the guidance of an educated European Church Father.

Masaya actively promotes its religious festivals as folklore, calling itself Nicaragua's "cradle of folklore" (*cuna del folclore*). Although this designation is part of an effort to attract tourists to the city, the celebration and the folkloric dance have considerable appeal to people in Masaya apart from any commercial tourist activity

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[187] Pablo Antonio Cuadra, poet and essayist, who published a literary journal, *El Pez y el Serpiente,* was a close associate of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's, wrote for *La Prensa*, and was part of the conservative Granada elite who came to oppose the Somoza dictatorship, although he was initially a supporter (Whisnant 1995:145-146). Les Field (1999:186) describes Cuadra as someone who represented the epitome of "a weak romantic *indigenismo* about the 'Indian soul' of the Nicaraguan people compatible with a literary conception of the inexorable decline and disappearance of Indian cultures in western Nicaragua." In 1999, at the age of 87, Cuadra was honored for his literary achievements as well as his extensive commentary on social, political, and cultural changes in Nicaragua (e.g.,Alvarado M. 1999). He died in 2002 (Berman 2002).
[188] The volcano near Masaya and the Chorotegan Indian religious practices related to the volcano captured the attention of the Spaniards who recorded the history of first contact between the Europeans and the Indians of Nicaragua (Esgueva Gómez 1996).
[189] Cuadra's (1997:121) passage reads: "El culto al 'monstruo sin mente', fue sustituido por el culto al santo 'doctor', al santo *intelectual*. Contra la vieja sumisión a la fuerza bruta divinizada, la Nicaragua chorotega—renovada en Cristo—comenzó a pagar promesa a la inteligencia pura o purificada, simbolizada en ese gigante de santidad y sabiduría que fue el Doctor Jerónimo." My translation: "The worship of the 'monster without a mind' was substituted with the worship of the holy 'doctor', the *intellectual* saint. Against the old submission to brute divine force, the Chorotega Nicaraguan—renewed in Christ—began to pay his promise to pure or purified intelligence, symbolized in this giant of holiness and wisdom, Doctor Jerome."

(Borland 1994).[190] Children, youth, and adults in the *mestizo* barrios close to the town center and in Monimbó alike practice the dance steps at *ensayos* (rehearsals) several months before the festival in preparation for the dances performed every Sunday during the month of November, which culminate in a dance contest (Borland 1994; Borland 1996). Although folkloric dance was performed under the Somoza dynasty, dance and other such cultural activities were given significant support by the Sandinistas (Stansifer 1981; Whisnant 1995).[191]

Masaya's patron saint fiesta shares it basic pattern with similar Catholic ritual celebrations throughout Latin America, Europe, and North America where there has been a concentration of Catholic immigrants (i.e.Diener 1978; Gudeman 1976; Mendoza 2000; Orsi 1985; Reina 1966). Nicaraguan street processions bear strong resemblance to Catholic saint processions in peasant communities in Italy and in an Italian immigrant neighborhood in New York City (e.g.,Orsi 1985).

Just as the ritual performances associated with the patron saint of San Jerónimo are by no means unique to Masaya, neither is the association of folkloric dances with the celebration unique. In a village called San Jerónimo in Peru, near Cuzco, the sacred image of Jerome is a tall, middle-aged white man dressed in red and white vestments

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[190] Mendoza (2000:5) explores the process of "folklorization" in the history of twentieth century Andean music and dance. Mendoza (2000:4) characterizes the Peruvian folkloric dance as a *mestizo* cultural form that shapes society, a public ritual performance of "key sociocultural categories such as decency, elegance, genuineness, modernity, and folklore, which establish the basis of social distinctions." Understanding the Nicaraguan interest in folklore within the larger social process of folklore studies in Latin America as well as comparing it with the European folklore study would, no doubt, throw even more light on the cultural meaning/performance of the folklore phenomenon in Masaya. See analyses of folklore studies by Uli Linke (1990), William A. Wilson (1988), and Lauri Honko (1979).

[191] While I was on the Witness for Peace delegation in the northwestern region near the city of Estelí in 1999, a group performed folkloric dance to celebrate our arrival in their community. A young woman dancer apologized for her amateur performance, saying that they have no indigenous customs and have learned the dances from the Indians of Monimbó as part of Sandinista cultural events. In this particular welcoming celebration, she danced to the marimba music of "El Solar de Monimbó, a well-known contemporary marimba song written by Camilo Zapata, who is not from Monimbó (Scruggs 1994). A biography has been written about this composer, but I was unable to find any information other than an article in *La Prensa*, announcing its publication (Pastora 2003).

(Mendoza 2000:98-99), a depiction that resembles a scholar of the early Church.[192] In

Masaya, however, the image of the patron saint is strikingly different; it highlights

Jerome's extreme asceticism. The icon is a small statue representing Saint Jerome as a

hermit in the wilderness doing penance. The icon represents an older white man with a

white beard, semi-nude with bloody knees and a wound in his chest. With a stone in his

left hand, Jerome beats his breast in self-flagellation. While the chest of the image is

never covered, devotees donate hats or bandanas for his head or neck as well as a cloth

or towel to cover his lower body.

In Mendoza's study site in Peru, she describes, in addition to their main icon of

the scholarly Jerome, a second representation that resembles the one carried in

procession in Masaya. The icon of the "repentant" Saint Jerome in Peru "is portrayed as

a pale old man kneeling and looking up and barely clothed. The image recalls the part of

the saint's life when he was undergoing penitence in the desert. While this image is

placed in an individual altar on the side, townspeople do not pay much attention to this

icon" (Mendoza 2000:254-255, n. 39).[193]

Among ethnographic descriptions of Catholic religious brotherhoods, Henk

Driessen's (1984) study of *cofradías* in Spain presents a particularly striking parallel,

given the shared cultural patterns between the New World from this region of Andalucía,

one of the regions of Spain from which a significant number of immigrants came.

Moreover, Driessen's study describes a historically specific modern context in which

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[192] Zoila S. Mendoza's (2000) ethnographic study of the patron saint celebration and dances in Peru is a rich description of a parallel celebration of masked, costumed dances broadly similar to those performed in Masaya. The actual dance steps (*danzas*), music, masks, and costumes designed by the ritual dance groups (*comparsas*) are considerably different between the two cultures. I have not made a comprehensive comparative study of Saint Jerome patron saint celebrations around the world nor located such a study.
[193] These two representations of Jerome are historically attested as authoritative, i.e. accepted by Roman Catholic Church authorities. Parallels between the San Jerónimo patron saint celebrations in these two communities point to top-down "authorizing" processes (Asad 1993:37-38) in the Roman Catholic Church, yet individual communities have been able to make choices in how they want to represent the saint.

confraternities in rural Andalusia of Spain in the 1930's vented political and class views, giving expression to their conflicts through religious ritual in the community which is useful for comparison with my case in Nicaragua. Driessen's case in Spain reveals that the men who participated in the *cofradías* were often indifferent or hostile towards the Church and the priests. My observations of Catholic male behavior in Masaya could easily be described using the same language that Driessen uses to describe Spanish Catholic male behavior in the 1930's:

> The vast majority of the male inhabitants of Mirabuenos (Spain) only enter the church at special occasions when a *rite de passage* is celebrated and even then most of them remain at the back near the entrance or in the square in front of the church, where the priest's voice gets lost in the noise and bustle. They come only to fulfill a social obligation and do not participate in the official religious ceremony. The small groups of male devouts who regularly attend church and comply with official religious duties are drawn from sections of the local middle and upper classes.

Driessen's study notes that the institution of the confraternity had been in decline, but it was revived within a context of repression after the Spanish Civil War. Driessen (1984:74) focuses on the *cofradía* as "a resource of power in the local class conflict," when General Francisco Franco made efforts to legitimate his rule through religious means. However, Franco did not want his regime to become a confessional state and, in its turn, the Church hierarchy was not completely confident that the new state should be given unqualified support (Grugel and Rees 1997:36). Franco's regime was repressive, rooting out vestiges of Republican secularity and those he considered "radical" republicans, even if they were active in Catholic groups. His actions often targeted rural laborers who had been supportive of the Spanish Republic. These workers, according to Driessen (1984:76), "took to the saints and turned them into weapons against their oppressors."[194]

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[194] Driessen's (1984) analysis utilizes a structural materialist explanation for the religious behavior he describes—Spain's capitalist transformation and the emergence of a working class in the 1930's. The capitalist transformation in Nicaragua did not produce a significantly large working class. Nicaragua's agrarian economy with large concentrations of people in urban areas

The San Jerónimo *peañeros* have also taken to the saints and turned San

Jerónimo into a weapon in their political context—class, ethnic, and gender politics are

in play. Having already explained some of the class and ethnic elements, the gender

factor must now be added. The *cofradía* is a male organization, a religious brotherhood

or confraternity. They do not have female members, explaining that women are not

strong enough to carry the heavy platform on which the saint rests—a physical reason

given for being a male-only sodality. Only the strongest men can do the heavy lifting

required. Manliness is a basic value in performance of the *promesa* of carrying the saint,

in sharp contrast to the priest's role within the Church, which is considered effeminate.

Carrying the saint through the streets and making the saint's platform "dance" are

displays of masculine strength. In addition, the *cofradía* is about sociability and festivity

through dancing and drinking,[195] which have roots in Indian traditions (Gruzinski 1990;

Newson 1987:192); while the middle and upper class members of the confraternity, then

and now, tend to think the ritual should be a solemn, sober ceremony. The patron saint

confraternity experiences internal tensions created by its cross-class and cross-ethnic

composition, economic and status differences that are at the roots of political

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whose livelihood is artisanal reveals that uneven economic development has not created as sharp a class transformation in this Third World country as has taken place in Spain, a country that has lagged in the transformation to capitalism in its European neighbors. The theory of rural workers being "semi-proletarian" (Vilas 1989a) is an imposition of Marxian theory beyond the actual data. A better explanation is Les Field's (1999) conclusion that they are artisans rather than proletarians: Monimboseños are a "rebellious subaltern ethnic community." In spite of this difference in class structure, other elements of the social structure of the religious brotherhoods in the two cultures are broadly similar (Driessen 1984:82-83). Both are male religious associations whose location for performance of religious ritual is outside the walls of the church in the streets—a masculine ("macho") sphere defined in opposition to the "emasculated" celibate priest. Catholic conservatives were triumphant under Franco, many served in the Franco government, blurring the lines between church and state. "The result of the compromise between church and state," according to Jean Grugel and Tim Rees (1997:37), "was that the Franco regime was by no means a theocracy but was to have a strong clerical influence and made extensive use of religious symbolism." Thus, members of religious brotherhoods in Spain fought back in anti-clerical mode, another strong similarity with the *peañeros* of Masaya. Tracing the history of the San Jeronimo confraternity back to, at least, the 1930's would be an important scholarly contribution to the history of Masaya.

[195] Participant-observation revealed to me that Nicaraguan women drink alcohol, but almost always within the home among family and friends, not on the street or in other public places.

differences; gender adds another dimension but, ironically, creates a division between the peañeros and the Sandinistas rather than the elite, non-Indian men within the confraternity.[196]

One of my respondents[197] explained that the introduction of San Jerónimo as the patron saint was imposed on Monimbó and, although a blow to the indigenous community, they eventually adopted the saint and, later, many of the traditions associated with this saint were specifically due to the religious creativity and adaptability of Monimboseños. He told me that, originally, the patron saint of Masaya was the Virgin Mary of the Assumption, possibly dating from the 1650's.

An especially strong bond with this image of the Virgin developed because the Indians believe that the Virgin Mary protected them when a volcano near Masaya erupted in 1772.[198] While the volcano was erupting, priests organized the frightened Monimboseños to carry the image of the Virgin to the edge of the lagoon, seeking divine protection against the lava threatening both Masaya and the nearby Indian village of Nindirí. The volcano stopped erupting but not before a spark from the hot molten lava burned a toe of the sacred image. A controversy arose because the priests thought the sacredness of the icon had been destroyed by the burn, but the Indians disagreed, thinking that the damage was a sign of the miracle that the Virgin's intercession had performed for them; to them, the icon was more sacred than ever due to the burn she suffered on their behalf in calming the volcano. This miracle of protection against the volcano is celebrated every year on March 16 by a small *cofradía* who continue to honor

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[196] How this gender conflict adds to the interpretation of my case study of this cofradía will be developed a greater length later in this chapter.

[197] This respondent is a young man from a poor Indian family in Monimbó whose family works together to make and sell brooms made from palm leaves, an Indian artisanal craft whose market is entirely local. He is studying for the priesthood and works closely with the Christian Base Community of Masaya.

[198] The 1772 volcanic eruption was discussed in chapter 3.

the *promesa* to the Virgin that they say has been passed down from their ancestors and must be honored because the volcano is still active and could erupt again.[199]

Carmen Rojas (1993), editor of the folklore journal *Tata Chombo*, writes that Saint Jerome became Masaya's protector in 1839, when the Villa Masaya de San Fernando was elevated to the level of a city. Although Rojas does not mention this fact, I noted that this date was one year after Nicaragua had become an independent republic in 1838. Rojas (1993) writes that the "bourgeois" leaders of Masaya began thinking they would switch the patron saint to the Virgin of the Assumption,[200] but the Indians from Monimbó outmaneuvered them in 1841 by obtaining a lovely image of San Jerónimo for the September 30 *bajada*. They proceeded to launch a grand patron saint festival. The account describes the *alcade de vara* (indigenous mayor[201]) as having organized the community to send up firecrackers and light candles, playing the traditional Indian drum, while the procession was also accompanied by marimba music. Thus, Rojas asserts, Monimboseños were responsible for launching Masaya's patron saint festival as the longest and grandest annual celebration of any city's patron saint in Nicaragua. Carmen Rojas' folkloric interpretation strives to paint a picture of a vibrant and devout

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[199] Another respondent, also an artisan by trade, came to the procession, while I was observing in 2000; he showed me a typed paragraph recounting the history of the 1772 volcano eruption and the Virgin Mary procession, an excerpt from the work of historian Jerónimo Pérez (1975), a native-son of Masaya. His motivation appeared to be a desire to demonstration the historical factualness of the miracle event being religiously commemorated; he did not participate in the ritual. As a Sandinista supporter, he viewed the practices as indigenous customs, something that should be respected in order to understand the people of Monimbó. He attended events and celebrations sponsored by the Christian Base Community, saying that he felt an obligation to the organization due to his revolutionary and family commitments but that, in truth, he preferred evangelical worship services. Obviously, the appeal of different models of worship should not be reduced to political motivations; other factors are often involved, i.e., spiritual, aesthetic, family or social network influences.

[200] Rojas (1993) did not say that the patron saint of Masaya had been the Virgin of the Assumption at any time in the past.

[201] Les Field (1999:182) argues that the institution of the *alcalde de vara* ("mayor of the cane") is a colonial creation because the King of Spain provided a silver-headed cane as a symbol of the authority, although he notes that his respondent, Flavio Gamboa, and other Monimboseños see it as "evidence for the persistence of traditional authority." Joshua Hatton (1998) also considers the *alcalde de vara* (which he translates as "mayor of the staff") to be a traditional office of authority, even though it dates from the colonial period, because the Indian population has used and adapted the institution for their survival as a community.

Indian community capable of influencing religious affairs in Masaya.[202]

Contrasting Perspectives within the San Jerónimo Cofradía

With this deeper context sketched out, I return to the specific social drama in 1999. Interviewing leaders of both factions within the cofradía, the head of the *peañeros* and the president, I found that their contrasting views reflect the split between the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church and the "popular" church, but not the popular church associated with liberation theology and the Christian Base Community movement (e.g.Levine 1990; Linkogle 1996; Sabia 1997), but rather an older popular church—the *cofradía* (religious brotherhood) and the "cult" of the saints.[203]

The *peañeros* formed a separate group in 1979, pulling away from the elite members of their *cofradía* at the time of the "Triumph" of the Revolution.[204] They did not seek legal recognition (*personería jurídica),* an authoritative legal status granted by

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[202] A follow-up question that I wish I had been able to explore is the reported social split within Monimbó labeled with the spatial terms about differences and conflicts between Monimbó "arriba" (up) and Monimbó "abajo" (down); what are the roots and on-going issues that caused and continue the division? Are there roots that stem from the controversy in mid-1800 over the patron saint? What are the contemporary causes of conflict between them, and how much may be attributed to politico-religious conflict? Claudio Lomnitz's (2005) history of the Mexican Days of the Dead and its connection to Mexico as a nation is an inspiration for further study of this type of question, although he deals with ritual on the national level, and I would keep an ethnographic focus on the history of the local community within the context of Nicaragua "imagining" itself into a nation-state.

[203] Peter Brown's (1981) famous study of the rise of "cult of the saints" in Europe could be relevant for understanding the practice in Nicaragua. Fenella Cannell (2006:12) argues that we should be consulting the work of historians of the early church, such as Peter Brown (e.g.1981; 1988) and Averil Cameron (1991), as a "key body of work for a different kind of anthropology of Christianity" because they "have begun to build up a concrete picture of how…shifts in social imagination actually come about."

[204] When respondents called the 1979 victory of the Sandinistas simply the Triumph (*El Triunfo*), it quickly became evident that this could be used as an indicator of the side of the struggle they identified with. My Sandinista respondents emphasized that the association of San Jerónimo with politics did not begin with the revolution. They said San Jerónimo had "always" been involved with *politiquería* (political intrigue) in Nicaragua. This perception of political involvement of their saint is important for a deeper understanding of the *peañeros*, as will become clear in this chapter.

the Nicaraguan National Assembly.[205] During the Sandinista years, securing legal recognition did not seem necessary because they had political support. Now they continue with *de facto* separate status, but with less possibility of securing legal recognition under the changed political landscape. My respondent did not refer to himself or the members of this break-away group in either class or ethnic terms; instead, he said they have political differences with the other members of the confraternity; namely, they are Sandinistas, while the elite leaders of the *cofradía* are Liberals.

The current president[206] of the San Jerónimo *cofradía* said that the hierarchy of the Nicaraguan Catholic Church is concerned about the division between the *peañeros* and the rest of the members of the *cofradía*, and he shares their concern. Not a *peañero,* he is a non-indigenous, university-educated professional, who lives in the barrio of San Jerónimo where the saint's image is displayed inside the parish Church when it is not being carried in the annual procession. This respondent explained that there is a concerted effort within the Church to end this division between the *peañeros* and the other *cofrades.* As a lay leader of the *cofradía*, he is working on reconciliation, a re-unification of the group because, he explained, they should be showing their piety through veneration of the saint rather showing ideological differences. He recognizes the split in the confraternity as rooted in socioeconomic differences and heightened ideological sensibilities related to the Sandinista Revolution. The Nicaraguan Catholic Church continually reiterates the message that unity of the faithful should flow down from the authority of the hierarchy, and obedience to that hierarchy should be the

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[205] I was unable to find out how much this lack of legal recognition may have been a source of internal dissension among the *peañeros*.

[206] This respondent told me that they have legal recognition by the government as a religious confraternity, explaining the structure of the confraternity as a modern one with officers given titles in the same manner as any civil society organization, i.e., president, vice president and other modern terms for positions. This is the legal recognition granted by the National Assembly that the *peañeros* do not have for their break-away section of the *cofradía*. The term *mayordomo* is still used widely to refer to the person in charge of organizing and coordinating the activities of the celebration.

response of the laity. The *cofradía* president clearly supports the religious hierarchy and its clerical authority structure.

The president also mentioned his efforts to root out "pagan" influences in the way that the *peañeros* understand and celebrate the patron saint. The president of the *cofradía* says that they have a "twisted vision" (*una visión torcida)* of the saint. An example is that the *peañeros* tell jokes about the sexual organs[207] of the saint. He believes that accounts of Jerome struggling with sexual temptation in the form of dreams of fornication with a woman who was really the devil dressed in women's clothing underlies the practice of men dressing like women in the *torovenado* carnival processions performed during the patron saint celebration.[208] He states that his goal is a pastoral one, trying to teach the proper religious attitude to believers who celebrate the patron saint. He also objects to using the image of San Jerónimo as a political symbol. For him, this is a perversion of the proper understanding of the patron saint celebration, which is purely religious and should have no political content. He thinks Sandinista leaders have no real religious commitment and are simply exploiting poor people (who have a simple, uneducated faith) for secular political aims.

To the president of the confraternity, one thing that was especially irksome was the Sandinista treatment of religious ritual as folklore. I heard this criticism of Sandinista "folklorization" of religion frequently, even among people participating in the

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[207] Nicaraguan anthropologist Milagros Palma (1988:105-106) describes the context in which devotees of San Jerónimo are tempted to tell off-color jokes. While the man charged with the sacred task of caring for the saint's image bathes it with perfumed water and dresses it with a fresh towel, the sacred vigil is accompanied by prayers and songs, but there is always the temptation to tell jokes about "the organs of virility." Palma's passage reads as follows, "Se celebra una vigilia con rezos y cantos mientras un devoto baña con agua perfumada y enjuga el cuerpo rosado de la imagen para luego ceñirle una nueva toalla, ofrendada por alguna promesante. Esos baños son siempre tentadores porque se prestan a toda clase de bromas relacionadas con los órganos de la virilidad."

[208] Palma (1988:106) also describes the tradition of men cross-dressing in the *torovenado* processions during the patron saint celebrations as associated with the story of Jerome's struggle with sexual temptation and the period of penance in the mountains in which he practiced self-flagellation to fight this temptation. Although I have not explored this aspect of the patron saint celebration, but I am certain that it is a much more complicated phenomenon than either my respondent or anthropologist Milagros Palma suggest.

Christian Base Community. If there is Gramscian influence in Sandinista circles, as Doug

Brown (1990) contends, then perhaps the Sandinistas consider folklore to be (as Gramsci

did) part of an "essentially *oppositional* culture" of subaltern peoples (Crehan 2002:108)

that they wish to develop for non-religious purposes. Gramsci (1985:191) wrote:

> Folklore must not be considered an eccentricity, an oddity or a picturesque
> element, but something which is serious and is to be taken seriously. Only in this
> way will the teaching of folklore be more efficient and really bring about the birth
> of a new culture among the broad popular masses (also quoted in Crehan
> 2002:109).

Sandinista cultural policy supported and promoted Nicaraguan folklore as a basis for

building national identity to a far greater extent than the Somoza family; this is a

criticism that anti-Somoza literary *vanguardia*, including Pablo Antonio Cuadra, had

been making as well (Whisnant 1995:145ff). Although the nuances between the two views

of folklore are evident, the interpretations share the idea of *mestizaje*. Rather than a

respect for Indian ways of life, they share an instrumental use of a romanticized image of

Indianness.

Several *torovenado* processions are performed during the patron saint

celebration in Masaya (García Bresó 1992; Palma 1988), and tableaus of political satire

are a highlight of the events. The meaning of the name, *toro* (bull) *venado* (deer), is not

known, but the processions are transgressive, carnivalesque events in which groups of

people form a living tableau (*cuadro vivo*) of some aspect of Nicaraguan life, including

political satire about local and national public figures. Palma (1988:114) notes that, in

the 1983 *torovenado* in Masaya, some of the tableaus included Somoza's widow crying

inconsolably, Fidel Castro, the nine members of the FSLN National Directorate, Ronald

Reagan, and Archbishop Obando y Bravo. In 1999, among the political tableaus I

observed were Arnoldo Alemán and his new bride, a woman much younger than he;

Cardinal-Archbishop Obando y Bravo; and a female education official who had a huge

pencil stuck in her hair. Many children also participate, either in the community-wide

torovenados or special processions made up of only children. Other themes for tableaus abound, which do not appear to have political allusions; e.g., devils or other scary figures know as *agüizotes*, animals such as the tiger, costumes that allude to the Indian way of life of the past, or market women selling their goods (García Bresó 1992:316-325).

Women do not dress in costume in these tableaus; it is a male tradition. They are, instead, involved in the making of special foods that are an important part of the celebration: cooking of the corn (*se nesquiza el maíz*) to make the *masa* (dough) for the special Nicaraguan *nacatamale*s (corn or rice-corn dough with a piece of pork in the middle steamed in a banana tree leaf) and making *chicha,* a drink made from corn that can be fermented or not.[209] The preparation of the corn dough is a ritual activity, an event that is an important public part of the communal ritual.

As I mentioned earlier, the last lowering of the saint's image taking place on the Octave after the official feast day is the most recent innovation in the patron saint festival. Lasting all day and night, it covers more of the city than either of the other two *bajadas* because, most importantly, the innovative aspect is that the circuit includes the barrio of Monimbó. It has been noted that, since the colonial period in Latin America generally, the octave of a feast has often enjoyed greater importance than the feast day itself (Cahill 2002:635), but for Monimboseños, in the late twentieth century, the Octave assumed a new importance related to the revolution. A spontaneous patron saint street procession (as previously mentioned) took place when the Sandinistas marched into Managua on July 18, 1979, while Somoza fled and the National Guard disintegrated without his leadership. In the euphoria after the overthrow of Somoza, *peañeros* from Monimbó lowered San Jerónimo from the altar and carried the image for hours through the indigenous barrio. For the first time, my respondents explained, San Jerónimo's circuit went throughout the Indian neighborhood. Later that year, this additional street

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[209] See Jaime Wheelock Román's (1998) for a political economic and cultural history of the development of Nicaraguan cuisine, but he does not explore connections to religious ritual.

procession was institutionalized as a procession during the Octave in late October. Its circuit is in and around the city center during the day and all night it winds its way through the streets and narrow footpaths of Monimbó.

My *peañero* respondent was proud of his role as head of the *peañeros*. He said he had no desire to move out of the ranks of the *peañeros* to assume any other position within the confraternity. In this role, there are elements of oppositional culture, a defiant expression of pride in being Monimboseño and, although he did not express it in these terms, I believe that his ethnic, class, political, gender, and religious identities are fused in this celebration. The Indian male *peañeros* of Monimbó, empowered by the revolution, saw the street procession of their patron saint as the appropriate way to celebrate what they perceived to be political liberation from a dictator. The procession projects their identity as a people who have been reborn as politico-religious subjects. Observation of this ritual procession in 1999 reveals a celebration that has continued in the years since 1979, a dynamic, historically significant process because a subaltern group expresses its identity as it contests public authority through its control of the cultural tools.

Sandinista class analysis understood artisans as a revolutionary class, but Les Field (1999:94-98) argues that the artisans of Monimbó rose up as "a rebellious subaltern ethnic community" against Somoza rather than as a revolutionary class. He argues that Monimboseños had economic grievances against Somoza as indigenous artisans, not as proletarians. Marxian class rhetoric resonated positively with artisans in Monimbó because they had been partially assimilated and influenced by the national myth of *mestizaje*, since a stigma is still attached to being Indian, although it has diminished (Field 1999:183-187; García Bresó 1992; Gould 1995b). Monimboseños appear to be reclaiming the term *indio* after years of avoiding it because of its frequent pejorative use. It became clear to me that Sandinista supporters in Monimbó are a major

214

social force behind the continuing popularity of the *cofradía* of San Jerónimo. In spite of the importance of the Christian Base Communities and its extensive coverage in the both the scholarly and activist literature (see, e.g. Berryman 1997; Berryman 1987; Cabestrero 1986a; Canin 1997; Dodson and O'Shaughnessy 1990; Linkogle 1996; Randall 1983; Reding 1984; Sabia 1997; Shupe and Hadden 1988), the saint processions may have more resonance for indigenous subaltern men, and the generation of the 1970's and 1980's were galvanized more by the political promise of the revolution than modern liberation theology developed by Latin American theologians.[210]

Illuminating hints about why liberation theology may not be attracting large number of adherents can be drawn from Rosario Montoya's (1995) analysis of an unpublished manuscript written by one of her respondents named Francisco Berroterán.[211] She describes him as a peasant from Río San Juan, Nicaragua (a community south of Masaya in western Nicaragua), who works in a family shoe-making business and supplements his income by working as a landless agricultural worker. In his manuscript, Francisco describes his socialist vision but, rather than looking forward

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[210] The Christian Base Community shares a modernizing pastoral role with the conservative Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the *neo-catecumenado* (Neo-catechumenal Way) movements as active in Masaya, and all three are pulling Catholics away from the *cofradía* and its traditional veneration of the saints. A comparison between these three movements within the Roman Catholic Church is the subject of chapter 6.

[211] Montoya (1995:25) characterizes Berroterán's manuscript as "a dialogue between an 'organic' intellectual and a group of 'traditional intellectuals," thus, like Les Field (1999), she finds Gramsci (1971) good to think with. "Gramsci," Montoya writes (1995:25-26), "defined organic intellectuals as thinkers whose membership in subordinate classes allowed them to organize and direct the aspirations of their group (Karabel 1976:151). He defined traditional intellectuals, on the other hand, as thinkers whose emergence is linked to social classes of the past but who are generally ideologically and materially tied to contemporary ruling classes. In a striking parallel to the Nicaraguan situation, Gramsci (1971:10) argued that one of the characteristics of classes ascending to dominance was their ability to assimilate and ideologically 'conquer' the society's traditional intellectuals. While in Nicaragua this process took place during the war against Somoza as revolutionary Christians joined the movement in large numbers, the officialization of radical Christianity as one of the sanctioned versions of Nicaraguan history that followed the 1979 triumph necessarily entailed some separation from the continual nourishment of grass-roots perspectives. I thus regard Don Francisco's reinterpretation and contestation of certain aspects of radical Christianity as part of the process through which this separation was bridged during the Sandinista period. More broadly, Don Francisco's writings exemplify one of the ways in which popular sectors attempted to participate in shaping the direction of the revolution under Sandinista leadership."

with a Marxian analysis of class struggle, he looks back to the model of mutual aid in a peasant community. He paints a utopian picture of a self-sufficient, pre-capitalist community—a romanticized account of his boyhood village. Montoya (1995:35) argues that his backward-looking ideal was essentially "a nostalgic longing for peasant worlds that were lost to history during his own lifetime." The cattle haciendas in the countryside around his region formerly held by Granadian landed elites had been bought by the Somoza family who transformed them into highly capitalized ranches, eliminating the practice of usufruct rights to land, which had "provided for a semblance of a peasant existence" for the landless prior to this change of ownership (Montoya 1995:36-37).

Although the economic structure that was the material basis for his ideal peasant community may not objectively exist anymore, Nicaragua's agrarian economy embedded in a disadvantaged place within the capitalist world-system has not produced a capitalist class structure. Given this lack of fit with ideal typical class structure, it has been common to describe the class position of people similarly situated as occupying a "semi-proletarian" position. Thus, the lack of a sufficient material basis for a more dramatic transformation in socioeconomic status also means that there is not enough transformation to produce a decisive change in religious views or gender relations.

Don Francisco values liberation theology because it encourages and provides tools for poor people to develop their own analysis of Nicaragua's social, economic, and political situation. He found it useful to the extent that it helped counter "the paralyzing message of the institutional Catholic church that believers must obey their rulers and accept their lot in life as divinely ordained" (Montoya 1995:29). He did not accept, however, "liberation theology's doctrinal emphasis on rational, demystified religious practice" (Montoya 1995:39-43).

Prominent in his critique was the attempt to de-emphasis the role of the cult of the saints. The role of saints as intercessors with a distant and stern God remains

important for Francisco. He rejects the image of a loving God in liberation theology, instead articulating that God has not changed; he is a stern, judgment-wielding divine authority. Due to the sinful nature of fallen humanity, Francisco thinks that evil must be checked by a wrathful God. Fear is needed to control human beings and, thus, he rejects liberation theology's tendency to focus on brotherly love rather than obedience, discipline, and authority.

Gender also plays an important role in his utopian vision. The Nicaraguan cultural model of proper family structure parallels the sacred authority structure of popular religion (Lancaster 1988:33-34). Traditional family structure is legitimated by orthodox Catholic ideology, while liberation theology has adopted a feminist critique of the family.[212] Montoya (1995:41) argues that the patriarchal family and religious authority structures may be "dispensable" among the middle classes, "but they are essential in the peasants' struggle to maintain household independence and community integrity."

Roger Lancaster's (1992) ethnographic description of life among the poor families in Managua adds more data for understanding the lack of transformation in gender relations.[213] Lancaster (1992:19) argues that, "The revolution's plans for more

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[212] During my year of fieldwork, I observed numerous instances in which priests who were workshop presenters at the Christian Base Community of Masaya taught a feminist analysis of gender relations that I am familiar with as someone who has been a supporter of the women's movement in the United States since the 1970's.

[213] Lancaster's (1992:34ff) ethnographic observations of family life in Managua are illuminating about what has changed and what has not in gender terms. Lancaster (1992:39-40) explains, "Until the revolution, it was one of the working assumptions of Nicaraguan society that men could control and discipline their wives with impunity…The impunity with which a man might physically intimidate and discipline his wife is gone now. Legally, he may not do so, and community opinion, too, has changed. The sectors of opinion that have changed the most, not surprisingly, are the most politically involved and revolutionary sectors of the public, especially urban and educated militants. Certainly, women are able to describe machismo as a political and social system and to delineate its core practices: hard drinking, excessive gambling, womanizing, wife beating. Just as certainly, men—even educated, involved, revolutionary men—have been markedly slower to change their habits. Two sets of values coexist, compete, and more than occasionally blur: the ideals of machismo, with its cult of aggressive masculinity, defined as a mode of sexual and physical conquest; and the ideals of the revolutionary New Man, who is envisioned as hardworking, devoted, and family oriented. The irony of Onix's case (note: this case

stable, egalitarian, and responsible families—like its place for a more productive, just

economy—failed. The transformations envisioned by revolutionaries would have been

difficult under the best of circumstances" (Lancaster 1992:19). Certainly Nicaragua did

not experience the best of circumstances in the 1980's, given the external forces that

mounted an intense economic, military, and diplomatic campaign against the revolution

and the internal opposition led by the Nicaraguan Church hierarchy who received the

support of Pope John Paul II and President Ronald Reagan.

Rosario Montoya's account of the shoemaker's worldview suggests a hypothesis

for examining the strong adherence to devotion to the saints in Nicaragua, especially

among the subaltern male members of the San Jerónimo *cofradía* who, although they

supported the revolution, could not fully embrace liberation theology or gender equality.

My ethnographic data reveal that the *peañeros* resist changes in family authority

structures and efforts to turn Catholicism away from the veneration of saints. I disagree,

however, with Montoya's characterization of Francisco Berroterán as a peasant. Based on

the data she provides, it is clear that he is an artisan trying to earn a living in an agrarian

society—the description is strikingly similar to the artisans of Monimbó, including the

prevalence of the artisanal shoe-making industry in the barrio.

Combining this alternate interpretation of class position for Francisco Berroterán

with data about family structure in Monimbó, the argument for the religious

brotherhood as an institutional bulwark for patriarchal authority grows stronger. The

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is one of Lancaster's ethnographic examples of a woman beaten by her husband for drinking at a party) is that her husband, a Sandinista militant, reformed his machista behavior for political, social, and moral reasons: that is why he did not drink. But to prevent his wife from drinking, even on special occasions, he was willing to retain the option to a sort of intimidation that is at the core of machismo's values and practices." The Nicaraguan women's movement, after the 1990 FSLN electoral defeat, was no longer hampered by a socialist revolutionary ethic that deemed women's issues as either non-revolutionary or secondary, hence pushed aside by the need to defend the revolution (Criquillon 1995; Isbester 2001; Kampwirth 1998). In addition, Daniel Ortega's political career has been clouded by charges of sexual abuse (Babb 2001:238), but it did not prevent his winning the presidential election in 2006 (Aizenman 2006).

patriarchal family is relatively stable in the barrio of Monimbó in comparison with Nicaragua as a whole, and especially in comparison with Lancaster's urban neighborhoods of the capital city, Managua. A 1993 census of Monimbó (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993) indicates that the neighborhood has a majority of two-parent families, unlike the data for Nicaragua as a whole; 76% of families in Monimbó in 1993 were two-parent families, while only 16% had a single woman as head of household.[214] The national average shows only 28.1% of Nicaraguan families have an intact, two-parent family structure. Thus, the prevalence of the two-parent family in Monimbó runs counter to the national trend in which the father is absent or whose presence is "almost invisible" (UNICEF-Nicaragua 1999:36). Moreover, the census also noted that Indians were more likely than non-Indians to belong to Catholic religious brotherhoods (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993:18). If I am correct that Francisco Berroterán's social class status parallels those of the *peañeros* of Monimbó, then the *peañeros* may have an elective affinity for the institution of the religious brotherhood because it represents a cultural resource for male dominance and work against the modern trends in the "new" movements that emerged in the Roman Catholic Church after the second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Let's look more closely at this institution in the context of Nicaraguan political culture in the next segment of this chapter, while liberation theology and its associated group, the Christian Base Community, will be discussed in juxtaposition with two other "new" movements in the Church in chapter 6.

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[214] I discussed this census (Martínez Vega and Membreño Idiaquez 1993) at greater length in chapter 3.

New History Being Made:
San Jerónimo, a Patron Saint Festival that is "Politiquero"

Wherever Catholic communities organize to celebrate the saints, *cargos* (offices)[215] for patron festivals are "a great economic burden" (Chance and Taylor 1985:1; Diener 1978:103). The *mayordomo* is responsible not only for gathering the economic resources needed but also for coordinating the work groups that prepare food, make decorations, and ask for donations (Lanza 2002). The Saint Jerome celebration in 1999 celebration probably cost about 40,000 córdobas (roughly U$ 3,300), according to the president of the brotherhood. Politicians as donors to the celebration became important in the twentieth century.

Flavio Gamboa, Nicaraguan historian and indigenous leader from Monimbó,[216] possesses historical documents that show President José Santos Zelaya, at the turn of the twentieth century, coming to Masaya for the patron saint festivities with an expressly modern political purpose in mind: providing funding for the fiesta as a way to secure votes.[217] The city is said to have rolled out the red carpet for Zelaya and his Liberal Party.

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[215] Chance and Taylor (1985:1) describe the classic form of the cofradía as "a hierarchy of ranked offices that together comprise a community's public civil and religious administration (DeWalt 1975:91). All local men are expected to ascend this ladder of achievement during their lifetimes, alternating back and forth between civil and religious posts. Each elective office, or *cargo*, is held for one year and there are numerous 'rest periods' along the way. The higher the cargo served, the greater the prestige enjoyed by the *carguero* and his family. Such rewards do not come without a price, however, for many cargos, especially the higher ones, require substantial financial outlays...This classic form of the system includes the offices of municipal government on the civil side, and positions in sodalities (*cofradías* or *mayordomías*) honoring the Catholic saints on the religious side."

[216] Les Field (1999:19) calls Flavio Gamboa a self-appointed historian-ethnographer, an organic intellectual. Gamboa has published articles in Nicaraguan newspapers on the history of Nicaraguan indigenous peoples who live in the Masaya-Carazo region.

[217] Indian communal property had been the source of financing for this type of religious fiesta; in the late colonial period in Nicaragua, conflicts emerged as both church and the Spanish crown struggled with each other for control over these resources, taking them away from Indian communities (Peña Torres 2002). The loss of this source of wealth for the saint fiestas put a greater burden on mayordomos to be individual sponsors rather than stewards over communal holdings, a trend noted by Pedro Carrasco (1961) in Mesoamerica generally. The political party as institution in Nicaragua at this time was nascent and fragile, being opportunistic efforts to seize power, often through violence (i.e., *caudillo* patron-client), rather than a vehicle for ideologically

Later, after the United States helped to depose Zelaya with Conservative Party assistance, the green colors of that party were evident in the patron saint festivals during their Thirty Years of one-party governing. The first Somoza took negotiated political pacts with the Conservatives (Esgueva Gómez 1999), and then, the *cofradía* received donations from both parties. The street procession would pass the balcony where the Somozas stood with their local supporters and, then, go down another street to give the saint's benediction to whoever was the Conservative Party leader that year. Thus, the political pact, while keeping the Somoza family dynasty in power and the Conservatives only minor players (Esgueva Gómez 1999), ironically, provided a relatively stable environment for the solicitation of funds from politicians for the patron saint festival.[218]

The Sandinista Revolution broke this form of bipartisan relations that had been going on for forty years. There was no longer an on-going negotiation of political agreements. The Liberal Party was completely discredited. No quotas of power were given to either Liberal or Conservative party leaders, who were also discredited because of the political pacts they had made with the Somoza family (Mackenbach 1996). With the Sandinistas in power, one-party rule returned within a context of revolutionary rhetoric and ideological polarization. Symbolic gestures of wrapping Masaya's patron saint in the Sandinista colors of red and black were common, but it also meant that opposing political forces were shut out. A new era of one-sided, partisan support for the patron saint festival prevailed.

The institutionalization of the lowering of the patron saint image on the Octave was an "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) made in association with

consistent party platforms, promotion of public policy programs, or the enforcement of party discipline.

[218] Roland Ebel et al (1991:185) describe the system that the first Somoza pulled together in the 1930's and 1940's as a "patrimonial-corporativist" system with formal and informal elements; cronyism and personal rule were mixed with "the guaranteed representation of the Conservative Party in both houses of the Nicaraguan legislature." Somoza's political pacts allowed "economic space" to segments of the traditional elites, but they were not wielding enough influence to be viable political rivals.

the Sandinista Revolution—clearly a tradition whose genesis was a ritual of "new history being made" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990). This new tradition of the saint's image traveling the streets of Monimbó where the icon had never been before marked an expansion of the "imagined" community to the indigenous barrio. The men carrying the saint actively redrew the sacred boundaries of the city to include themselves and their neighbors as Monimboseños, fusing the political and the religious through their actions.

However, the Sandinistas were resisted in their creation of a socialist state and a new hegemonic configuration because a counterrevolution (*contra* war) ensued. External resistance came from deposed National Guard leaders who sought help from newly-elected U.S. President Ronald Reagan (1986:11), who supported them militarily, economically, and diplomatically because they were "freedom fighters" in his eyes, not "counterrevolutionaries." When the Sandinistas passed the first draft law Nicaragua had ever had in order to have military troops to fight the *contra* war, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Miguel Obando y Bravo of Managua led the internal opposition, calling for resistance to the draft as well as objecting to Sandinista attempts to legitimate their rule through religious symbols. They were accused of expropriating Catholic symbols and trying to mix "godless communism" into Christianity (e.g.Belli 1983; Belli 1985). A new climate of anti-clericalism was heightened by the high-level conflict between church and state (e.g.,Crahan 1989; Kirk 1992; Lernoux 1989; Mulligan S. J. 1991). San Jerónimo became a contested politico-religious symbol in an ideologically polarized environment.

During the struggle against Somoza, most young men of Monimbó who became combatants were not official members (*militantes*) of the Sandinistas guerrilla movement but contributed to the overthrow of Somoza largely through their own spontaneous efforts as a community to defend themselves against Somoza's National Guard (Tatar 2005:183). When the insurrectionary uprising took place in Monimbó in

1978, the Sandinistas hastened to the community to lead the local movement (Booth 1982).

Carlos Vilas (1985; Vilas 1989a) found that the "social subject" of the insurrection was not the working class.[219] Using the data of benefits awarded to families of the *caídos* (the fallen), Vilas noticed that those who died fighting Somoza's National Guard were very young and predominantly male. Using national state, rather than focusing only differences between communities, Vilas (1985:127) discovered that more than half the fallen fighters were illegitimate sons living with single mothers. Noting the lack of a strong patriarchal family structure, Vilas interpreted this data to mean that these young men were growing up with distant or no male authority and the only contact with male authority may have been the conflictive relationship with the repressive Somocista state (Vilas 1985:129).[220] However, Vilas overlooks the possibility of alternate male authority structures, e.g., *cofradías*. Young men in Monimbó may have differed from the national average in that the patriarchal family structure may have been somewhat stronger and the male sodality (religious brotherhoods) may have offered a local male authority structure not as readily available in non-Indian communities. Living within a pattern of gender alienation from religious worship inside the Church, they would have been more likely to participate in religious celebrations in the streets. Hence, since the weakening of

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[219] Vilas (1985:121) characterizes the economic structure of Nicaragua as one that is composed of a great many small businesses, mostly artisan workshops, coexisting with a few large factories (Vilas 1985:121).

[220] Vilas (1985) has presented a fascinating hypothesis of connections between gender, family, and state under insurrectionary conditions that should be further researched. Moreover, transformations in Nicaragua have, of course, continued since the time frame Vilas (1985) set for his study of the "social subject" of the revolution. The Sandinista Army provided an institutional experience that reflected a strong state demanding loyalty to the revolution (a wider national project) rather than personal loyalty to a dictator, as had been the case under the Somoza dynasty. The Sandinista Army made gains towards professionalism as a national defense force during the contra war. Although the army was a socialist fusion of state-party-military, it was decidedly broader in its function than the personal coercive force of a dictator running a patrimonial state. The *peañeros* in 1999 were men 25-40 years of age, many having fought against *Guardia* during the insurrection, although the younger members served their "patriotic military service" under the Sandinista state. The membership of this cofradía and other groups could provide sampling frames for a study that looks at this transformation in forms of state and military structure and possible connections with gender and family.

the *cofradía* as an economic institution in colonial and early modern times (Peña Torres

2002), the move to develop a modern nation-state means that national level secular

political transformations would have begun to have an impact on the source of funds for

saint celebrations.

In the years after the 1990 electoral defeat to Chamorro's coalition, the

Sandinistas maintained considerable loyalty among its ranks, giving it greater cohesion

as a modern political party than others in Nicaragua. This cohesion rested on the bonds

created through the revolutionary struggle and military service in the contra war. The

revolution and the emergence of the FSLN as a political party created stronger political

partisanship than during the Somoza years.

The *peañeros'* fierce political loyalties made them vulnerable to political

retaliation when the Sandinistas were voted out of office in 1990. When Sebastian Putoy,

a Liberal Party candidate from Monimbó, was elected mayor in Masaya, he refused to

donate money to the *peañeros* for the patron saint festival. Even though he was an

Indian, he did not share their political perspectives. He refused to contribute because he

said the patron saint celebration had been illegitimately politicized. The leader of the

peañeros expressed bitterness about this refusal to fund their celebration, although he

acknowledged that they had not endorsed Putoy.[221] The lack of separation between

religion and politics in how the peañeros operated was a drawback for their ability to

fund the religious celebration in the context of the development of modern political

parties and greater ideological polarization.

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[221] A biography and further background about Sebastian Putoy and his political context would
deepen understanding of Monimbó.

Conclusion

Anthropologists have a long tradition of studying ritual process, and with the turn towards historical anthropology, our eyes are opened to the analysis of ritual as "a principal site of new history being made" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990:141). This chapter describes how male Monimboseños, empowered by the overthrow of the dictator Somoza in 1979, spontaneously expressed their new freedom by carrying the patron saint in Monimbó. Before 1979, the image of Saint Jerome had not traveled the streets and pathways of the indigenous barrio. Institutionalized on the Octave of the patron saint celebration, this new ritual marked an important innovation in the celebration. As artisans in a "rebellious subaltern ethnic community" (Field 1999), this group of Monimboseños recognize themselves as a self-defined group empowered by the revolution to redraw the sacred boundaries in their city in order to include themselves in that community. My respondents among the *peañeros* are Monimboseños who, like their Indian ancestors, do not see the sacred image as a static object for display in a church but as an extension of their self-identity that properly moves through the profane world. As they carry the patron saint, they perform their faith, using the streets as a stage for demonstrating their right to act as autonomous agents who have a place in the political process.

Those that carry the image in the streets engage in ritual practices that seek to define the actors' dynamic place in the community, which is closely connected with contemporary political struggles. This mode of collective expression of oppositional sentiment has a deeper history than liberation theology, although liberation theology and the Christian Base Communities are commonly given more attention by those who write about the revolution. The cultural continuity of the patron saint celebration as carried on

225

by the diverse members of the *cofradía* structure is rooted in the traditional forms of Catholicism but is experiencing changes based on a modernizing political context.

The *cofradía* (religious brotherhood or confraternity) is an enduring social institution with deep roots in Mesoamerican culture. Indigenous men took full advantage of this structure, although it was imposed on them by their conquerors, because they recognized its vaule as a survival mechanism, one that afforded them a measure of autonomy (Burkhart 1989). In spite of many changes over the 500 years since the Conquest, this civil-religious institution endures but not without internal changes and a changing connection to the "civil" or political structures of the municipality. As did land laborers in Spain in the 1930s (Driessen 1984), the members of the religious brotherhood in Masaya express their viewpoint on social conflicts through the medium of the street procession. These data suggest that internal unity is not a prerequisite for the reproduction of this institution. In fact, I argue that the religious brotherhood is an internally pluralistic institution. It is a cross-class, multi-ethnic social group that keeps the class segments interacting with each other, since each subgroup claims its right to legitimate action through the confraternity. Predominantly non-Indian middle class members of the religious brotherhood attempt to control the expression of this popular religious practice, trying to bring it in line with orthodox Catholic Church doctrine, while the subaltern members assert their oppositional cultural identity (Crehan 2002) in its terms. Ethnicity, class, gender and political power converge to sustain the oppositional political behavior expressed by the male subaltern subject, empowered by the revolution, continuing to use the symbols at their disposal in the post-revolutionary period, but also suffering the consequences of adopting strong partisanship in an emerging modern political party system.

The veneration of the saint simultaneously embodies both acceptance and rejection of the Catholic Church. The male artisan Monimboseños continue an

oppositional culture from below. They experienced a renewed anti-clericalism struggle

during the Sandinista revolution, rejecting the church hierarchy, while reinvigorating

their devotion to the saints. While respecting a long-standing religious tradition which

confers an element of legitimacy on them as participants, they nonetheless criticize the

hierarchy of the Church and rebel against its authority as well as the secular authority,

continuing a historically robust tendency to see the patron saint as a politico-religious

symbol. The *peañeros* insist on their right to express their own blend of religion and

politics, although they do not have legal recognition as a group from the Nicaraguan

National Assembly. Although they may have difficulties staying independent because

they lack either religious or secular authority to defend their self-organization as a break-

away section of the larger *cofradía*, they have nonetheless played an active role through

ritual performances in challenging the legitimacy of political and religious authority.[222]

Yet, they have paid a political price because former political configurations (under the

Somoza dictatorship) allowed a type of bi-partisan support for the festival that has been

disrupted by the ideological polarization of the revolution.

Although Daniel Ortega officially declared the support of the FSLN for women's

rights and the importance of struggling against machismo (Chinchilla 1990; Criquillon

1995: 219-225),[223] the actual process of change in government policy and in gender

relationships in everyday life was, of course, fraught with difficulties. The FSLN position

was a feminist articulation that made it stand out from traditional leftist arguments in

Latin America (Chinchilla 1990: 393, n.1); however, translating ideas about formal

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[222] Arnoldo Alemán's political fate resulted in trial and conviction for corruption in December 2003; however, he remains a powerful political presence and says he will run for the national presidency again (Jordan 2005; New York Times 2003; Rogers 2007).
[223] At the same time Daniel Ortega officially articulated the FSLN programmatic support for combating discrimination against women, he did not deal with abortion, sex education, or birth control (Chinchilla 1990: 371). He also included a statement about the family being a basic unit of society that preserves the values of Nicaraguan society; this general statement of the importance of the family "appeared to conciliate the advocates of a more traditional position on women" (Chinchilla 1990: 371), one that is consistently articulated by the Roman Catholic Church.

gender equality in the context of revolution produced feminist and antifeminist reactions (Kampwirth 2004:47-74; Kampwirth 2006).

While seeking to understand the patron saint festival and the male *cofrades* who are *peañeros,* gender patterns became evident. Support for a feminist form of gender equality is not part of their world view. In general, popular religion supports an authoritarian, male-dominated patriarchal family structure and a view of God as a severe judge of human sinfulness (Montoya 1995). Folk Catholic religiosity, so called "popular" religion, continues to appeal more to the men of Monimbó than do the modern forms of Catholic worship. Although men attended the prayer services and other religious events of the Christian Base Community,[224] the *peañerors* were not among them.

The *peañeros* belong to the generations that, over the past twenty years, have been those who fought to overthrow Somoza and, later, those who fought in the Sandinista Popular Army against the contra in the 1980's. In the 1990's, they remained among the most militant supporters of the Sandinista Party, a party in which Daniel Ortega has emerged as a traditional *caudillo* (strong man) rather than a democrat (Booth and Richard 2006).

The Church is allowing modern forms of Catholic worship to compete against not only non-Catholic evangelical religious practices and liberation theology, but even within traditional folk Catholicism. The *cofradías* for the patron saint celebrations are a form of traditional folk or popular Catholicism, which have a long history of asserting their autonomy against the official hierarchy of the Church. The priests as official

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[224] Lay women continue to be the majority of attendees at all Catholic worship services, whether a mass in a church parish, the Christian Base Community, or the Catholic charismatic gatherings. This does not appear to be the case for the Neocatechumenal Way, which explicitly organizes itself to include married couples as leaders. It supports patriarchal gender roles, however, emphasizing the sacraments, such as marriage in the Roman Catholic Church, in order to bring men back into the church and to insist on support for the family as

representatives of the Church have an equally long history of trying to control these local institutions (Gruzinski 1990; Peña Torres and Castillo 1995; Peña Torres 2002). In 1999, the *peañeros* of Masaya's patron saint festival used their position within this venerable, yet controversial, religious institution to make history through ritual, contesting the legitimation of authority. At the same time, they question religious authority as well as Sandinista authority—they continue the tradition of anti-clerical politics, while also resisting changes in gender roles and values.

The theme of the intersection of politics and religion continues in the next two chapters, each chapter providing additional ethnographic examples within Nicaraguan society of the Roman Catholic Church's efforts to contain (1) secular political rivals to Catholic integralism, (2) religious rivals to Catholic cultural monopoly, and (3) Catholic laity who are rivals to clerical authority from within the church. The next chapter about the Purísima celebration of the Virgin Mary and the following one that juxtaposes the "modern" movements—liberation theology, Catholic charismatics, and the Neocatecumenal Way—within the Church are additional ethnographic descriptions that reveal how rituals have made new history in the past and continue to do so in the present, whether or not they have "elective affinities" for conservative or radical religious and political ideas in the politico-religious fusion that is Nicaraguan culture.

Chapter 5

"Nicaragua Es Muy Mariana":
Devotion to the Virgin Mary and the Struggle for the
"National Soul" of Nicaragua[225]

La Purísima is a set of Catholic religious ritual practices that honors the Virgin

Mary as the Immaculate Conception which, although a long-established festival in

Catholicism worldwide, is celebrated with special fervor throughout Nicaragua. Projected

as a saint festival that informs Nicaragua's "national soul" (Buitrago 1959), it is also lived

experience[226] as a religious devotion under the control of subalterns who annually

reproduce the tradition of the Purísima in household and neighborhood, disassociating

the image from both church and state in order to claim her as their own.

Repeatedly, while doing my fieldwork, I was told that *Nicaragua es muy*

mariana ("Nicaragua is very Marian"). Drawing on ethnographic data I gathered in

1999-2000, I describe Purísima ritual practice in the city of Masaya and the indigenous

neighborhood, Monimbó. Then, I compare this manifestation of Marian devotion with

other such Marian rituals, including the pilgrimage to Cuapa fueled by claims of a series

of appearances of the Virgin Mary that occurred in that village in 1980, the Salesian

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[225] A section of this chapter was presented at Northeastern Anthropological Association
Conference held March 14-16, 2002 at Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
The title of that talk was "*Mística*, Carlos Fonseca and *La Purísima*: The Religious Connection
between the FSLN and Popular Religiosity in Nicaragua."

[226] I draw on Russell Leigh Sharman's (2006:843) theory of experience, which is rooted in
pragmaticism and informed by Victor Turner and Antonio Gramsci. He is critical of interpretive
anthropology's tendency to define culture as meaning and to marginalize experience. There are
some broad similarities between the Nicaraguan La Purisima and the Costa Rican La Negrita.
Tracing the early history of an apparition in the 1630s of the Virgin Mary "La Negrita" to a young
mulatto woman and its transformation by white elites into Costa Rica's patron saint in 1824 and
beyond, Sharman (2006:851) concludes that "from the moment of her (the Virgin Mary's)
apparition, the egalitarianism of experience challenged attempts to control the meaning of La
Negrita, forcing her to be remade by church and state intellectuals. But such remaking left a gap
in experience, leaving just enough space to threaten hegemony once more."

Virgin Mary as Auxiliadora, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the Carmelite Mary. I had

many opportunities to observe and compare local Purísima celebrations as well as to

follow radio, television and newspaper coverage and, in addition, I was a participant-

observer during a pilgrimage to Cuapa in 2000.

Nicaraguan Marian ritual is contested terrain, a cultural site for speaking to

issues of religion, politics, and family. Like the patron saint celebration, Marian devotion

is a set of ritual practices that reveal "new history being made" (Kelly and Kaplan 1990)—

a complex cultural pattern that requires understanding world history (especially

European and Latin American church history as well as political history) and

understanding religious practice by tacking back and forth between various levels (local,

national, and international) in order to see how Roman Catholic "great" tradition

interacts with the "little" tradition specific to Nicaraguan culture.[227]

After my analysis of La Purísima, I include a separate section in which I reflect on

the revolutionary *mística* of Carlos Fonseca. One of the founders of Sandinista National

Liberation Front (FSLN), Fonseca died fighting Somoza's National Guard three years

before the dictatorship was toppled (Zimmermann 2000: 203-205). It was Fonseca who

persuaded his fellow revolutionaries to name their organization after Augusto César

Sandino and to integrate Sandino's thought into their analysis and strategies

(Zimmermann 2000:74-74). Moreover, and this is critical for my analysis, he embodied

and promoted a revolutionary ethic of self-sacrifice and humility (Zimmermann

2000:192-194)—a high standard of revolutionary commitment that came to be called (by

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[227] Robert Redfield's (1956) theory of "little traditions" and the "Great Tradition" has been criticized as a false dichotomy. Trying to isolate the oral traditions embedded in village folk religious culture from the written tradition reserved for urbanized, educated elites has turned out to be a false dichotomy because "villagers have turned out to be rather avid 'Great Traditionalists' themselves... Studying Catholics without the Mass, Muslims without worship, or Buddhists without the Pali canon is a bit like studying the Ndembu without the milk tree or the Azande without witchcraft" (Bowen 1993:185-186). However, also see Clifford Wilcox's (2006) reassessment in which understanding Redfield's use of ideal types avoids the mistake of seeing them as if they are rigid dichotomies.

those who supported the revolution) *mística*. This may appear to be a surprising

conclusion, given that Fonseca was by all indications a secular political actor, a

"convinced Marxist" who had abandoned the Catholic faith in his youth (Zimmermann

2000:106). My argument rests less on Fonseca himself than on a cultural pattern of

religious sensibility that permeates Nicaraguan society. The possibility of such a pattern

snapped together like a gestalt when I discovered a minor historical datum from an anti-

Somoza march in which radical student demonstrators shouted out a slogan that was a

take-off on the traditional chant about the Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception.

Student marchers shouted the phrase: "What is it that brings us such delight? Carlos

Fonseca and his guerrilla fight!" (Zimmermann 2000:84).

Nicaragua's culture, deeply informed from colonial times by the Franciscan

religious order noted for its devotion to the Immaculate Conception and to the "holy

poor," contains a Catholic idiom of asceticism—a "virtuosi" (Turner 1996) approach to

social life in which only a select few can aspire to certain rigorous behaviors that

demonstrate true devotion of a cause, whether to the religious life or to the revolutionary

life. Following Bourdieu

(1987) that the charisma of a leader is a synergy between the qualities of that person and

the response from followers,[228] this chapter briefly explores the cultural and political

history of Nicaragua's Marian sensibility.

The Virgin Mary and Nicaraguan Nationalism

Nicaragua's history shows several critical junctures in which the Virgin Mary has

been called upon to reinforce the identity of the nation with Catholicism.[229] A few points

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[228] Bourdieu (1987) evaluates and reworks Max Weber's formulation of charismatic authority.
[229] Nicaragua shares this pattern with other countries in Catholic Latin America where the Virgin Mary has been adopted as a national symbol in the struggle for independence from Spain and in

include, during the colonial period, when the Spanish colonists were threatened by the

Protestant British attacking Granada; in 1856, when Nicaragua adopted the Virgin Mary

as its national patron saint after the crisis of William Walker's filibustering; and in 2001,

when the political counter-revolution was being consolidated. At such points of crisis,

the country's association with the Virgin Mary as national patron saint has been

reaffirmed. Given that Nicaragua's efforts to become a stable nation-state have been

fraught with difficulty (Burns 1991; Cruz Jr. 2002; Holden 2004; Radell 1969),[230]

Marian devotion has been available as a symbol for reconciliation because it is shared

across class and ethnic lines, deeply informing Nicaraguan cultural imagination.

However, since the 1960's, the cultural hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church in

Nicaragua has faced a dual challenge from Marxism and Protestantism, provoking

changes within the institution to retain its role as "soul provider" (Gill 1999)[231] among

the laity as well as to continue have a prominent role in the political arena. The

Protestant challenge is the subject of chapter 6, while in this chapter I will explore the

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establishing themselves as fledgling nation-states. The Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, an
Immaculate Conception icon like the Nicaraguan Purísima image, is the best known example
(e.g., Brading 2001; Elizondo 1987; Lafaye 1976; Taylor 1987; Wolf 1958). Jean-Pierre Bastian
(1994:128 passim) brilliantly describes the Catholic cultural context that Protestants confronted
in Latin America, including the way the Virgin Mary symbol was consecrated to the nation in
various countries in the face of the secularizing politics of Liberals in power.

[230] The authors cited (Burns 1991; Cruz Jr. 2002; Holden 2004; Radell 1969) are just a few
examples of historical works that describe Nicaragua's long-running city-state rivalry that
repeatedly has caused upheaval. E. Bradford Burns summaries: "From the violence—always
endemic and often erupting among the patriarchs of the dominant families, the folk communities,
and the foreigners—emerged Nicaragua. The painfully prolonged process of transition from
colonial status to incipient nation-state lasted six decades, 1798-1858. The dates mark, at the
starting point, the first cogent statement by the Nicaraguan patriarchal elites of their vision of a
vibrant commercial future, the logical consequence of an abundant nature and unique geography,
and, at the end, the first signs of the emergence of a viable nation-state. Anarchy characterized the
decades between them."

[231] With pun intended in the phrase "soul provider," Gill examines the institutional church
struggling to be the only or "sole" source of religious goods in the face of religious pluralism.
Using the model of religious economy, Gill analyzes the cases of Mexico and Argentina because
both countries did not have significant Protestant growth until 1980s. He explains how the older
strategies (e.g., national policy measures to restrict non-Catholic religions from operating) no
longer work. Protestantism and Pentecostalism in these countries are growing as significant
numbers of nominal Catholics move to other religions. The new strategy is to allow reforms that
offer choices in ritual form, style, and pastoral emphasis within the Church and will be discussed
in chapter 6.

Marxian challenge, including how symbolic battles over the Virgin Mary were at the center of the struggle during the Sandinista period.

A must-discussed feature of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution was that it did not reject religion as "the opiate of the masses" in typical Marxian fashion.[232] Viewed through a Gramscian lens (Billings 1990:9; Lofland and Stark 1965:863-864), it can be seen that the Nicaraguan people live in "a culture of religiosity" and they moved along a trajectory towards a dramatic challenge in their social and political patterns when they began "to see through their culture toward political goals in such a fashion that their religious discourse and practices become oppositional." However, this oppositional religious discourse and practice included social actors on both left and right who made interpretive appeals to the same religious tradition as either a religion of revolution or a religion of counter-revolution.

In liberation theology, an alternative story line about the Virgin Mary developed into an important symbol—another example of "new history being made" through reinterpretation. They highlighted Mary as a poor, humble peasant girl, drawing explicit parallels to the poor, humble women of Nicaragua, who sings a revolutionary song, the Magnificat.[233] In response to hearing of her miraculous pregnancy, Mary sings not only

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[232] Although the leaders of the FSLN were influenced by the Cuban Revolution and spent time in exile in Cuba, they adopted a different approach to religion than did Castro. The 1959 Cuban Revolution took place before Vatican II (1962-1965) and the advent of liberation theology, often dated from the release of Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973) book, *The Theology of Liberation*. See Margaret Crahan's work on Cuba and her comparisons with Nicaragua (Crahan 1985; Crahan 1988; Crahan 1990). Fidel Castro was influenced by his association with the Sandinistas and he was interviewed on religion by Brazilian Dominican priest, Frei Betto (Betto 1985; 1987).

[233] The Bible passage known as the Magnificat is in the *Gospel according to Luke* (chapter 1: verses 46-56, NRSV):

"And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord,
  and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
  Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
  and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
  from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;

praise to God but also paints a picture of God deposing powerful rulers and sending the

rich away empty. Hearing Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo preach this passage,

including once when he celebrated a mass at Cuapa in 2000 where the Virgin is said to

have appeared in 1980, I noted that he often emphasized Mary's humble and obedient

response to the God's will (Luke 1:48, Mary responded by saying God "has looked with

favor on the lowliness of his servant"). He passed over in silence the section about

economic and political reversal. In contrast, priests and lay speakers in the Christian

Base Community often juxtaposed the words from Luke used when praying the Rosary[234]

("Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb") with the words

of the Magnificat as God's will about justice for the poor and powerless.

Liberation theology was taken up as religious resistance to the repressive status

quo under the Somoza family dictatorship, an oppositional interpretation that fueled

hopes for a new society (Arnaiz Quintano 1990; Jerez SJ 1989; Montoya 1995; Murphy

and Caro 2006; Randall 1983; Reding 1984). Fonseca appealed to Christians to join the

struggle in 1970 (Hodges 1986:269); however, the original founders of the FSLN were

not themselves involved in the Christian Base Communities where liberation theology

was developing as a consciousness raising process in certain parishes, such as in the

famous case of El Riguero in Managua with Father Uriel Molina. Significantly, it was the

sons and daughters from bourgeois families who were active in the radical Christian

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he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
   and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
   and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
   in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
   to Abraham and to his descendants for ever."
[234] Luke 1: 39-42, "In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb*."

movement who answered Fonseca's call (Murphy and Caro 2006:72-88; Randall

1983:160). As one example, Monica Baltodano, active in the Christian Base Community

and the radical student movement, was recruited to join the FSLN as a guerrilla

commander (Randall 1981; Randall 1994:57-79; Randall 1999).[235]

However, since Nicaragua's revolution was eventually achieved through a multi-

class coalition[236] (Booth 1982:97-126; Everingham 1996), not all those who opposed

Somoza were inspired by liberation theology.[237] The composition of the transitional

government reflected this multi-class coalition which loosely converged to overthrow

Somoza. Sandinista leaders worked with bourgeois leaders to reconstruct a new state,

but the coalition began to breakdown after a few months. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro,

[235] Monica Baltodano (Randall 1981:57) was one of the Sandinista guerrilla commanders who led the famous "tactical retreat" (*el repliegue*) from Managua to Masaya during the final offensive against Somoza, when the guerrillas slipped out of the city in the middle of the night accompanied by 7,000 civilian supporters and walked all the way to Masaya (a liberated zone which the FSLN held) without the National Guard being aware of the massive movement of people (Booth 1982:177). This event is reenacted every year on June 28 with young and old, men and some women, walking the distance at night (Babb 2004:554, n.15). I observed the event in 2000; it is a secular ritual, sponsored by the FSLN, which commemorates the bond between the guerrilla fighters and the civilians participating in the effort to overthrow Somoza.

[236] Everingham (1996:6) argues that the Sandinista Revolution was not a peasant revolution but rather "a coalition between economic elites and a guerilla movement, acting on behalf of the poor." Moreover, he (1996:6) argues that "neopatrimonial dictatorships, like the Somoza dynasty, are more susceptible to elite desertion to a radical guerrilla vanguard than 'impersonal' bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, like in El Salvador." Wickham-Crowley's (1992:263-296) comparative structural analysis of the revolutions in Nicaragua and Cuba focuses on weaknesses in the political party system and the military; however, he (1992:335-336) has an appendix in which he records data on the social origins of Nicaraguan guerrilla leaders, finding that they were university students from middle or upper class families. Sandinista areas of peasant support were nearly congruent with those regions that had supported the earlier movement led by Sandino, but labor unions, working classes, and the urban poor were also drawn into the struggle (Wickham-Crowley 1992:246; Booth 1982:97-126). Paige (1985:103-105) found that cotton growers were a significant part of the bourgeoisie who opposed Somoza, noting that Alfonso Robelo's political base was among the cotton growers of Chinandega and León. Robelo served briefly in the transitional government after Somoza was deposed, but then joined the contras operating out of Costa Rica (Paige 1985:104).

[237] Pablo Antonio Cuadra is an example of an ardent and long-time opponent of the Somoza family dynasty who did not support liberation theology (Berman 2002). Humberto Belli (1983; Belli 1985) mounted an international campaign pointing out the illegitimacy of Sandinista efforts to appropriate elements of Catholicism in their efforts to consolidate the revolution as well as bringing to light their human rights abuses. Napoleón Chow (1992) wrote an elegant and balanced critique of liberation theology after the Sandinista decade was at an end. He (Chow 1992:18-19) did not question the right of intellectuals to integrate Marx and theology because it was a fait accompli, but rather he clarified what he thinks are the consequences of that project. He notes that liberation theology does not have a monopoly on concern for the poor nor the "divine political wisdom" to know what policies would truly help the poor.

widow of the martyred journalist Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, and Alfonso Robelo, millionaire businessman, resigned. Then, in May 1980, just 10 months after Somoza was deposed, the Nicaraguan Roman Catholic hierarchy emerged as the leading internal force of opposition to the FSLN. The hierarchy fought back against the FSLN with a traditional view of the Virgin Mary which emphasized her submission to God's Will as the mother of God rather than the image of rulers being deposed—and in this project, they had an enormous resource in the Catholic religious culture shared by bourgeois and subaltern groups for whom the liberation theology of the humble peasant girl singing the Magnificat against the powerful and the rich was new and unfamiliar, and ultimately unable to establish itself as the dominant view.

Liberation theology has been called "the closest thing to an overarching ideology of the Sandinista Revolution" (Lancaster 1988:56).[238] The Sandinista leaders incorporated two strands of Catholicism—recently formulated liberation theology and popular religion rooted in traditional Catholicism stretching back to the colonial period, a tradition deeply informed by Franciscan and Dominican views of the "holy poor." From a Sandinista perspective, the church-state struggle that began in 1980 was a struggle for dominance between a "traditional hegemonic religious ideology and a new counterhegemonic one" (Gismondi 1986:18). Liberation theology was an important element in this attempt to construct a counter-hegemonic consensus to legitimate the new revolutionary state (Gismondi 1986:18).

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[238] Some researchers take exception to this assertion that liberation theology was the overarching ideology. E.g., Phil Ryan (1995:22-54) argues that "neither the thought of Sandino nor Christianity was an important influence upon domestic policy decisions of the FSLN leadership," instead, he believes orthodox Marxism guided economic policy and, while liberation theology may have helped mobilize support during the period of insurrection against Somoza, it had little influence later. I disagree; liberation theology and Sandino's ideology continued to be important in the general moral framework or overarching ideology; neither was capable of generating specific economic policies but they were important in the internal political struggle over Sandinista rule, i.e., the struggle for legitimation.

However, even among supporters of the revolution, this legitimation effort was faulty. Father Uriel Molina, a Franciscan priest who came into conflict with the Nicaraguan Church hierarchy for his liberation theology pastoral activities, maintains that his religious perspective

> is not something vogue, as critics like to characterize liberation theology, but it is in tune with basic Franciscan teachings "that recognize the fraternal character of all creation" (Murphy and Caro 2006:121).

The roots of the "preferential option for the poor" can be seen in another Franciscan priest of the previous generation, Azarías Pallais.

Father Azarias Pallais (1884-1954) spoke out on behalf of the poor, criticizing the Church for being indifferent to the "social question" and for excessive emphasis on the sacraments (Arguello 1987:233). Historian José Arguello (1987:231) says Pallais "walked backwards into the future" (*marchaba de espaldas hacia el provenir*). Pallais did not imagine that anyone could see a constructive relationship between Marxism and Christianity and only made one reference to Marx in his writings (Arguello 1987:236). His reference was a positive one; he liked the way Marx protested the miserable salaries workers earned, but he did not utilize Marxian theory. Among a distinct minority of priests at that time, he spoke out against the hierarchy of the Church for supporting Somoza and against the U.S. Marine occupation of his country. Somewhat like the Nicaraguan shoemaker, Francisco Berroterán Pallais was inspired by a retrospective utopian vision; however, while Berroterán looked back to his boyhood village as an ideal peasant community, Father Pallais looked back to the medieval period in Europe as the ideal society. Although Berroterán supported the revolution, he rejected aspects of liberation theology that undermined the image of a stern God whose authority buttresses the patriarchal family (Montoya 1995). The views of Pallais and Berroterán share an elective affinity with a pre-modern Catholic worldview. Liberation theology, on the other

hand, is a Catholic worldview looking forward, reading "the signs of the times" in order to engage modernity rather than reject it, as the Church had done under Pope Pius IX.[239]

The Sandinista effort to establish a new social order required an effort to include groups and individuals who did not share an elective affinity with liberation theology or Marxian ideology inspired by the Cuban Revolution. The problem facing the Sandinistas was that, when a revolutionary group comes to power, the process shifts from one in which they are an oppositional movement to a quite different project of having to configure a new status quo, a new hegemony.[240] In other words, the Sandinistas had to transition from a religion of revolution to a religion of a new status quo. They assumed a new place in the power structure of society, which means they had traded places with the Catholic hierarchy. Uriel Molina was disappointed that the Sandinistas

> never fully appreciated, or wanted to acknowledge, the crucial role played by Christians in the revolution. That is, they never really grasped the connection between pastoral work and fomenting social change, or what he calls the "pastoral structures." They praised the Christians publicly, but lacked insight into the dynamic that was unleashed by religious persons (Murphy and Caro 2006:115).

My respondents, even those who had been supportive of the revolution and appreciated the support the Sandinistas gave to folkloric dance, were critical of the Sandinistas for treating their religion as folklore rather than faith. They explained that folkloric dances for the patron saint of Masaya are performed as religious *promesas* (vows) fulfilled for the saint, i.e., true faith being performed, not "quaint" folklore or merely a cultural aesthetic.

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[239] In 1864, Pope Pius IX published the *Syllabus of Errors* in which he not only condemned certain modern principles, i.e., religious freedom and free speech, but "modernity" as a whole, rejecting the idea that the Roman Catholic Church should reconcile itself with progress or liberalism. Vatican II (1962-1965) was a significant papal move to engage modernity, i.e. to read "the signs of the times" (which is a phrase found in the *Gospel according to Matthew* 16:3 and used as a watchword to explain the shift in the Church related to the second Vatican Council).
[240] Billings (1990:25) notes that "few oppositional movements ultimately succeed at becoming hegemonic."

Looking at this process from the point of view of the Catholic hierarchy, as the legitimation crisis of the Somocista state deepened and insurrectionary conditions emerged in 1978-1979, the Church hierarchy assumed a stronger role of political opposition to the Somoza dictatorship. Yet, after the withdrawal of the bourgeois members of the post-Somoza transitional junta and the emergence of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as the dominant political force in the new government, the hierarchy's hopes faded that the National Reconstruction Government could include non-Marxian bourgeois leadership. They retained their new-found oppositional role, leading a movement against FSLN rule rather than joining the priests who served in prominent positions in the Sandinista government. In other words, the Sandinistas found themselves in an unfamiliar role as a government that needs to build a broad social consensus, while the Church hierarchy went on to develop its new role as an oppositional force, deepening mobilization efforts against the authority of the state. This position was an oppositional stance but one quite different from a religion of resistance or revolution. The hierarchy, although in some sense a deposed power, still had considerable traditional forms of power and authority. The institutional church became a center for religion of a counter-revolution.[241]

Promoting a secular state and religious pluralism, while at the same time attempting to reinterpret the Catholic religious tradition, Sandinista cultural policy contained significant contradictions; they sought to walk a cultural tightrope between the recurrent dualism of legal secular republicanism and a corporatist society.[242] They

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[241] Here I am drawing on the theory of religions of the status quo, resistance, and revolution developed by Bruce Lincoln (1985), which I discussed and elaborated in chapter 1, p. 67-74, adding an additional category, religion of the counter-revolution.

[242] This contradiction is broadly similar to the one faced by Liberals in the 18th century in which, as Bastian (1994:14) writes, "Me parece que a partir de ese momento (indepencia de España) la adopcion de las constiticiones republicanas marca el principio del dualismo recurrente entre el pais legal (republicano) y el pais real (corporativo), al que se han referido muchos autores." Translation: "It seems to me that from this moment (independence from Spain) the adoption of republican constitutions marks the beginning of recurrent dualism between the legal country

did not have a free hand in creating a new hegemony on the basis of progressive

Catholicism because the hierarchy—local and international—of the Roman Catholic

Church fought back. One of the key weapons of resistance available to the Church was

the Virgin Mary—and in this, the Church had strong allies and sympathizers among the

subaltern classes.

In 1980, just as the Church emerged as the leader of the internal opposition to

the revolutionary government (Sawchuk 1997:43), reports emerged of an apparition of

the Virgin Mary. Bernardo Martínez, a peasant living in Cuapa, a rural town in the

department of Chontales,[243] claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary several times between

May 8, 1980 through October 13, 1980 and that she brought messages for the

Nicaraguan people (Hombach 2000; Rodriguez 1999:15; Vivas Robelo 1985). The

Virgin's messages were interpreted as direct criticisms of the Sandinistas, who were

accused of being communists who had created totalitarianism, not freedom and justice.

References to other apparitions of the Virgin Mary associated with an anti-communist

message, such as Our Lady of Fatima in 1917 (Christian Jr. 1984), were also prevalent.

This is another example—from the right side of the political spectrum—of ritual as "new

history being made."

The Sandinistas made the strongest move since the government of José Santos

Zelaya (1893-1909) to reduce the influence of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy in

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(republican) and the real country (corporative), to which many authors have referred." Howard
Wiarda (1996:79-80) describes a corporative society as one in which groups (i.e., labor and
employers, or minority political power blocks) negotiate "social pacts" with the state to meet goals
of national development (79-80), which is distinctly different from the liberal democratic model
in which political parties, interest groups, civic and associational groups vie with each other to
influence public policy. Somoza negotiated pacts, and this method returned in Nicaragua after the
1990 election. During the time I was doing my fieldwork, the Sandinistas and the Alemán
government (1996-2002) negotiated such a pact, amidst considerable controversy. (Avendaño
Rojas 1996; Esgueva Gómez 1999; Mackenbach 1996).

[243] The department of Chontales is located to the east of Masaya in the central part of the country
on the eastern side of Lake Nicaragua (also called Lake Cocibolca, its Indian name). This region is
a cattle and dairy region that is less volcanic than the area around Masaya, mountainous but more
open than the deep mountains of the Matagalpa region in the northwest, and relatively dry. There
are fewer towns along the east side of the lake than the west side. Cuapa has about 10,000
inhabitants about 152 km from Managua and was raised to the level of a municipality in 1997.

the government.[244] Standing up for the constitutional principle of the Nicaraguan state

being *laico* (lay), the Sandinista Government released a statement of principles about

respect for religion and religious freedom, making an attempt to disestablish the Roman

Catholic Church as institution from its position as the *de facto* national religion (Hodges

1986:268-279). Although several priests were actively involved in the government, these

revolutionary clergy were not members of the hierarchy.[245]

　　After the end of the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, the Virgin Mary

symbol continued to be an important politico-religious symbol for subsequent neoliberal

governments under Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (1990-1996) and Arnoldo Alemán[246]

(1996-2002), who reconfigured a new neoliberal social order in which the religion of the

status quo returned to prominence. Chamorro's 1990 electoral campaign highlighted her

image as wife and mother, drawing on associations with the Virgin Mary in her theme of

reconciliation (Kampwirth 1996). After the election, the Catholic hierarchy was restored

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[244] Drawing on Bastian (1974:14 passim), the government of Jose Santos Zelaya and the Sandinista Revolution appear to me to be two historical instances in which a ruling party attempted to push a corporative country down a path towards being a secular republic. The push-back that resulted in Zelaya's overthrow in 1909, however, ushered in the occupation of the U.S. Marines rather than an autonomous process of corporative forces being restored. Mahoney (2001) concludes that Zelaya's overthrow "aborted" a radical liberal program in Nicaragua due to the Marine occupation, since a partial or truncated liberalism was maintained under the occupation and continued with more autonomy for the country under Somoza. The Sandinista government was not nominally liberal, but their Marxian economic policies sought to move peasants from a semi-proletarian class position to full proletarian status, e.g. as rural wage laborers working at state farms (Enríquez 1991; Enríquez 1997). The counterrevolution after the Sandinista decade has allowed a stronger restoration of the corporative (or "real") society because the Sandinistas were voted out of power rather than overthrown; they were strong enough to prevent the contra from winning in their counterinsurgency effort, even if the contra were funded covertly and illegally by the United States (Dunkerley 1990).

[245] The four priests who worked in high profile cabinet positions in the Sandinista government were Maryknoll priest Miguel D'Escoto (minister of external affairs), Trappist Ernesto Cardenal (minister of culture), Jesuit Fernando Cardenal (head of the literacy campaign, Juventud Sandinista, and later minister of Education), and Edgar Parrales (minister of social welfare). Other clergy served in many other advisory positions. In May 1980, the Nicaraguan bishops released an official request that priests in government resign, arguing that the national crisis had passed and these public duties were better performed by laity than clergy. They refused to dialogue on the subject with the priests. The priests refused to resign and, eventually, the crisis was resolved by the religious orders to which they each belonged withdrawing authorization to perform priestly functions (Cabestrero 1983; Kirk 1992:119-126).

[246] Members of the Catholic hierarchy were among Alemán's strongest supporters (Babb 2001:47).

to a position of high prominence in public life, regaining significant influence in education and family policy. Chamorro's son-in-law, Antonio Lacayo Oyanguren (2005), serving as vice president, documents the close working relationship between the Chamorro government and Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. He played a high profile role in the daily activities of the government at the explicit request of the government and was, consequently, present at every critical juncture during her term of office (Lacayo Oyanguren 2005:349ff).

Chamorro's electoral victory was a political restoration that created an opportunity for a new phase of Catholic integralism in Nicaragua. Norman Kogan (1966:48) defines Catholic integralism as

> a movement aiming to have all human activities, especially political and social activities, impregnated by a Catholic inspiration. It seeks to achieve a Catholic social order that would minimize and, in the long run, eliminate all social and political movements based on different inspirations, such as Marxism, liberalism, secular humanism. It is antipluralist in its ultimate objectives (cited inKertzer 1980:101-102).

John Allen, Jr. (2004:153)[247] notes that such an ideology is only sustainable in a predominantly Roman Catholic polity, such as most countries of Latin America, where it is likely that the state would find it politically acceptable to fund, protect, and promote the Church, and the Church, in its turn, would be willing to defend state policy. It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that the Catholic Church has achieved complete hegemony. In 1994, when Chamorro's Minister of Education, Humberto Belli, made an attempt to overturn the constitutional guarantee of secular public education, the Catholic Church marched in favor of Belli's action, but public opinion turned out to be strongly in favor of secular public education (Isbester 2001:115). This protest demonstrates that the principle of secular public education is quite firmly established and can be defended through the political process.

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[247] John Allen, Jr. (2004:153) defines integralism as a right-wing ideology which holds that "the politics and culture of a society should be ordered *wholly* according to the teachings of the Catholic Church."

After Arnoldo Alemán won the presidency in 1996, he tightened the high-level political relationship between Church and state in unprecedented ways (Kampwirth 2003). To mention one symbolic gesture during his term in office that is related to the theme of the Virgin Mary, Alemán commissioned the production of a large statute of La Purísima in Managua paid for through public funds, a $5 million project (Babb 1999:32; Babb 2001:54). Although Nicaraguan Protestants protested this action as a violation of the Constitution, their protests did not prevent the use of public funds for this monument (Babb 2001; Molina and Flores 2000; Reding 1984).[248]

The next few sections are a step back from contemporary Nicaraguan history in order to establish the deeper cultural context of the Immaculate Conception and other Marian devotions.

The Immaculate Conception: A History of Theological Controversy

Theological arguments about the Virgin Mary have undergone a long rationalizing process within the Catholic Church. Theology is reason brought to bear on faith, a rationalizing process within an institution that may otherwise be considered a vehicle for non-rational cultural values (Collins 1986:218).[249] As Weber pointed out, theology produces "value rationality" based on interpretations of supernatural influence in human life, whereas science and technology produce "instrumental rationality" (Boss

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[248] A monument of *Cristo Rey* (Christ the King) was also erected with public funds; and, like La Purísima, it stands at a traffic circle in Managua. These traffic circles and other infrastructure projects were undertaken during Alemán's term as mayor of Managua and, as President, he continued the development projects, modernizing the capital city rapidly. Alemán also promoted the building of a new Catholic cathedral, but the money was donated by Tom Managhan, owner of Domino's Pizza (Babb 1999:32; Babb 2001).

[249] "The courage to engage the whole breadth of reason, and not the denial of its grandeur—this is the program with which a theology grounded in Biblical faith enters into the debates of our times," writes Pope Benedict XVI, quoted in an ad for the Ave Maria University in the journal, *First Things* (February 2007). Pope Benedict XVI is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who prior to becoming Pope, was the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which disciplined several priests in its efforts to curb liberation theology (Allen Jr 2000).

2000:119; Weber 1993). Theologians have sought to create an inner coherence to their ideas about Mary's virginity.

The Immaculate Conception refers to Mary's own sinless conception, not the sinless conception of her son Jesus. Going beyond Mary as a virgin who conceives a child through divine intervention, the idea emerged that she must have been born without original sin, even though conceived through normal sexual intercourse. A story evolved that Mary's parents, Anne and Joachim, were childless, but both dreamed of angels announcing that they were finally going to have a child. A child was conceived and Mary born. Theologians[250] in the medieval Church argued that she must have been born "immaculate" (without stain) because Jesus could not have issued from a human body marred by original sin. Since all redemption flows from Christ Jesus, Mary is "the first fruits of his redeeming love" (Jelly O.P. 1986:100)—in other words, Mary was the first to be saved by Jesus. This rationalizing effort about Mary's conception was added to the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity (Abbott 1999; Boss 2000; Hamington 1995; Pelikan 1996:33).[251] Saint Jerome also argued that Joseph remained perpetually a virgin after his marriage to Mary (Abbott 1999:59).

Achieving theological and doctrinal acceptance of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was not easy (Boss 2000:123-155). The debates within the church were filled with passionate emotions. For several centuries, controversy raged over the Immaculate Conception until charges of heresy[252] threatened to divide the Church.

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[250] Medieval Church theologian, Johannes Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) argued for the Immaculate Conception; while, earlier, Augustine of Hippo (354-430) had argued against it, saying that no human being, not even the Mother of God, is free of original sin (Pelikan 1996:191-197).

[251] The portrait of Mary as perpetual virgin elevates motherhood over biological procreation, separating the sexual from the spiritual idealization of the mother's role in the Holy Family and becoming a foundation for the ideal human family within the Church's historical project of attempting to control gender roles. The obsession with Mary's virginity owes a debt to the Encratite and Gnostic views of sex and the body as corrupting and sinful, even though these views were rejected as heretical by the early Church (Abbott 1999:61-63).

[252] Randall Collins (1986:221) argues that "heresies are produced by organizational power struggles within a universal church;" they are not simply intellectual positions under debate but

However, long before the theological arguments were settled, the popular religious celebration of the Immaculate Conception flourished. Pope Sixtus IV in 1476 officially approved its celebration in the church calendar, while the theological controversy continued to rage. By 1482, Sixtus prohibited either side from accusing the other of heresy (Hamington 1995:18), but so passionate were both sides on the question that he did not attempt to resolve the theological dispute at the level of official teaching of the Church (Pelikan 1996:199).

One of the strongest proponents of the Immaculate Conception was the religious order founded by St. Francis of Assisi. The Franciscan order was closely associated with the Spanish Catholic Monarchy under Ferdinand and Isabella (Burkhart and Gasco 1996b:124; Elliott 1989:38-41), and Franciscan missionaries to the New World were the first to have sustained contact with the natives of Nicaragua (Burkhart and Gasco 1996a:163-264). Supporters of the Counter-Reformation, the Franciscans renewed the medieval spiritual practice of devotion to the sacred images of the saints, and they implanted their devotion to the Immaculate Conception among the Indians of Nicaragua from the earliest years of contact (Buitrago Buitrago 1959).

The theological status of the Immaculate Conception would not be resolved for more than three hundred years; however, in 1854, the Vatican established it as official dogma. The resolution of this theological dispute took place in a context of the Roman Catholic Church seeking ways to shore up it moral authority as it was losing its temporal political authority in the face of the emergence of the secular nation-state in Europe (Hanson 1987; Pelikan 1996; Perry and Echeverría 1988).

Moreover, the promulgation of the Immaculate Conception as official Church doctrine was associated with the first Marian apparition of the modern era. The famous appearance of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in France to a young girl, Bernadette

rather are symptomatic of disputes over political and moral boundaries, generating righteous anger rather than cool rationality (Collins 1986:213-218).

Soubirous, in 1858 took place four years after the doctrine was adopted. The young seer said that the Virgin Mary told her, "I am the Immaculate Conception." After an official Church commission investigated and declared that the Virgin Mary did appear to Bernadette, a sacred shrine was built at Lourdes.[253] The Vatican also shored up its authority by promulgating papal infallibility, this doctrine being an important outcome of the First Vatican Council in 1870—as the Church moved into full-fledged reaction against modernism.

Marxism, another threatening aspect of modernism, argued that religion was part of the problem and should be abandoned. This secular, explicitly anti-religious worldview that promoted revolution was confronted through the medium of the Virgin Mary also. The Marian apparition of Fatima in Portugal in 1917 became an important defense of the faith against godless communism after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. William A. Christian (1984) describes the Marian movement in Europe during the 1940s and 1950s as a key symbol used to win Catholic men back to the Church; in Franco's Spain, the Marian movement was promoted as a "total, emotional" event with this explicit gendered goal. Christian (1984:259) cautions against limiting analysis of apparitions to the locality where the seers live because apparitions are "movements very deep in the individual consciousness with a collective, often systemic etiology." The transnational Catholic Church, facing the challenges of secular worldviews and political movements, was proactive in its promotion of the Marian symbol in the context of the Cold War throughout the twentieth century. It is in the context that Bernardo Martínez in 1980 began famous as a Nicaraguan seer of a Marian apparition at Cuapa. Although

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[253] Dahlberg (1991) noted in his ethnography of pilgrimage to Lourdes that the Catholic Church authorities in the early1990's downplayed the theme of miracles, encouraging believers to consider the pilgrimage as a sacrificial faith journey similar to Christ carrying the cross. This is in keeping with the Vatican II shift away from a heavy focus on Marian devotion, but heated debate about how to handle Marian devotion took place at the council. Consequently, Marian devotion is defended and supported by people and groups not supporting this shift in emphasis (e.g.,Spretnak 2004). Moreover, succeeding popes have returned the Church to strong Marian devotion, beginning with John Paul II and continued with Benedict XVI.

colonial legends of Nicaragua's Purísima do not contain accounts of indigenous seers having a vision of the Virgin Mary, this contemporary event provides Nicaragua with an Indian visionary and also associates the Virgin with the last great international battle against communism of the twentieth century. Although other Marian pilgrimages exist in Nicaragua,[254] they tend to be associated with localized health crisis and miraculous healing, whereas the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Cuapa became an important politico-religious symbol in the battle over the post-Somoza nation-state.

La Purísima Festival: Ritual Practice in Masaya and Monimbó

The Purísima celebration depicts the Virgin Mary as a beautiful, young girl dressed in a blue and white gown with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars over her head, drawing on a passage from the Book of Revelation 12:1-5:

> A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky, it was a huge red dragon…Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth, to devour her child when she gave birth. She gave birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and his throne (quoted in Hamington 1995:129).

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[254] During the celebration of la Purísima in Nicaragua in 1999, an article appeared in the *Nuevo Diario* newspaper (Borge C. 1999) that described a pilgrimage tradition to a small village called Diplito near the Honduran border. Although not associated with an appearance of the Virgin Mary, the story bears a strong resemblance to Lourdes, France with themes of water, healing, and a natural place in the country as the site of a religious miracle. The pilgrimage originated in 1947, when a health crisis broke out in the area. Monsignor Nicolás Antonio Madrigal brought an image of our Lady of Guadalupe by ox-drawn cart to Diplito the remote community. When the epidemic ended, people attributed the cure to the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary. In 1953, the place became a pilgrimage site called "the Virgin of the Rock" after reports of a spring appearing in the rock and a woman being miraculously cured while bathing in this water (Borge C. 1999). This miracle associated with the Virgin Mary does not have connections to the national identity but a localized, individual concern with healing.

Although details of the symbol derive from this description of a pregnant woman commonly called the "woman clothed in the sun," la Purísima is not pregnant nor does she hold the Christ Child in her arms. This unnamed woman in Revelation is not explicitly link to the Virgin Mary in the text, but Christian exegesis since the late third or early fourth century has considered this image to be the Virgin Mary confronting evil forces in the world (Boss 2000:142-143; Hamington 1995:129).

Nicaraguan images of the Immaculate Conception share the standard Spanish iconography of a young girl standing with her arms crossed on the chest or hands open in prayer and eyes cast upward, which was developed by Spanish painters in the sixteenth century and continues to have authoritative influence (Boss 2000:144-145). Nicaragua's Immaculate Conception celebration offers few hints of an indigenous past; its elements may have subtle syncretic content, but if they exist, they are not widely discussed or promoted in Nicaraguan discourse. Her skin is white; there is no comparable story to the Mexican Guadalupe of one of a dark-skinned Mary appearing to a poor Indian at a sacred pre-Conquest indigenous site.

The festival of the Immaculate Conception is not unique to Nicaragua, being part of Catholic ritual practice worldwide. Following the international Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, Nicaragua celebrates La Purísima, starting at end of November with a 9-day celebration (*novena*) that culminates on December 8 (Ekern 1995). The amount of time and effort spent on the Purísima ritual is far greater than that spent on Christmas (Ekern 1995), largely due to the traditional Roman Catholic emphasis on the passion and resurrection rather than the birth of Jesus.[255] Thomas Walker (1991:93) claims that

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[255] The activities during Holy Week in Masaya are significantly more elaborate than the Christmas celebrations. I observed several passion plays, amateur productions of which take place every year on the streets of Masaya. These included the arrival of images of Jesus on a little burro on Palm Sunday as well as passion play. I saw three versions of the Passion Play, two elaborate adults versions that are theater acted in the streets and one group of children organized by the Salesians. Priests in the parish churches in the center of Masaya and in Monimbó began to redress this lack of attention to the Christ Child in the 1970s, encouraging *mayordomos* to develop rituals in honor

Nicaraguans lavish more attention on this nine-day celebration than any other Catholics in Latin America. "La Purísima" means "the purist," and Mary as the Immaculate Conception is affectionately call, *La Conchita,* a diminutive form of the word "conception" from the *María de la Concepción.* During the *novena* for La Purísima, celebrations take place in private homes, in the streets, in public schools, the municipal market, the tourist-oriented market in the town center, and even in different government administrations, including the mayor's office and various divisions of the court system. Floats are decorated to move the Virgin from altar to altar. Parents place little girls dressed as angels around the image of the Virgin Mary on a flat bed cart, and men pull the ensemble from house to house. In Masaya, La Purísima begins immediately after the three-month-long celebration of the city's patron saint, Saint Jerome. With hardly a moment's break from the patron saint festival, preparations begin for the Purísima.

The grand finale of La Purísima begins on the evening of December 7 with a "great shouting" (*gran gritería*) of joy,[256] a historical innovation originally promoted by Franciscans beginning in 1857 (Zúñiga C. 1996:358). The root word *grito,* translates literally as "shout," and does not carry with it an air of pomp that goes with the archaic English word, "hail" that reflects honor paid to royalty, such as in the traditional English version of the prayer on the rosary, which begins "Hail Mary, full of grace." *La Conchita* is treated as sacred but regarded affectionately, not thinking of her as a distant, regal figure.

Nicaragua's La Purísima has antecedents in the religious practice in the

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of *Niño Dios* (Child God), including an image of the baby Jesus and reenactments of the story of the birth of Jesus (Garcia Bresó 1992:309-313), but although I observed this devotion to the Child God in 1999, it was not as elaborate as the Passion.

[256] There is a small *gritería* celebrated in city of León, Nicaragua, on August 15 for the festival of the Virgin of the Assumption, which also features altars in homes and streets as well as a historical connection with a volcanic eruption of Cerro Negro, from which people believe that the Virgin Mary interceded to protect them. In Monimbó, a procession that honors the miracle of the intercession of the Virgin of the Assumption who also protected the Indians in the vicinity of the Santiago volcano near Masaya during an eruption in 1772 is held annually; a discussion of the procession is in chapter 4.

Andalusia region of Spain. The Nicaraguan historian, Edgardo Buitrago (1959), whose 1959 book on this celebration is referred to as authoritative[257] does not trace any indigenous contributions to the Nicaraguan version of the devotion. Nicaragua's religious celebrations, like those in Spain and Italy, tend to be noisy displays with shouting, music, and fireworks.

In the indigenous barrio of Monimbó, families spent much time and money decorating their individual household altars set up in a patio close to the street or built in the street in front of the house, if the house has no patio that allows access to the street. In addition, groups of neighbors in Monimbó organize themselves to carry the Immaculate Conception to altars constructed in front of houses for those who asked to host the visit of the image during the novena. Organizing themselves into a Purísima neighborhood c*uadra*, family members and neighbors gather the resources needed. Headed by a main *majordomo*, each household takes responsibility for one day of the novena in the role of minor *majordomo*.

Similar to the *cofradía* (confraternity), the *cuadra* is smaller and less formal; the groups do not seek legal recognition to operate from the government. They have autonomy to handle their fiesta (Membreño Idiáquez 1992:124), especially if one of their members owns an image of the Virgin.[258] Male or female prayer leaders (*rezadores*) say the rosary and special prayers each day for the Immaculate Conception as people gather around the outdoor altars. In addition, if the group can afford to buy "firecrackers" (*cohetes*), the celebration feels even more festive for the participants. These rocket-type flares make loud popping noises as they explode in the sky (day or night) above the altar

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[257] Although out of print and available only in libraries in Nicaragua, Buitrago's (1959) description of the festival's form and origins is the source cited by Nicaraguan newspapers and radio announcers who every year tell their readers/listeners about the coming festivities.
[258] Autonomy is limited if the group must ask the local parish priest for permission to use an image of the Immaculate Conception owned by the parish. I observed a controversy at the Magdalena Church in Monimbó over the use of the Virgin Mary image in which one of the minor *mayordomos*, who had been instructed to bring the image back to the church by a certain hour, returned the image late. More details about this incident will be treated in chapter 6.

rather than being admired for their colorful displays in the night sky. While men launch the *cohetes*, women bring out large buckets of food to give away to the children. Children gather around, loudly demanding their *gorras*, gifts given out during Purísima. The scenes I observed were very disorderly. Noisy children insistently held out their hands, demanding their gift. No adult attempted to bring order to the scene; no one made the children line up and wait their turn quietly. Large amounts of food were distributed at each location during the novena, the preparations of which represents many hours of work. Women's roles are especially important in all aspects of Purísima (Ekern 1995), in contrast to the male dominance of the Saint Jerome patron saint celebration.

Special Purísima songs, in vocal and instrumental arrangements, are an important part of the celebration. During the final *Gritería,* the singing resembles Christmas caroling as groups of adults and children go door-to-door singing to the Virgin Mary on their neighbors' altars. Many Purísima songs were written by Father Rodrigo de Jesús Betancourt, a Franciscan who developed a prayer sequence for the novena in the 18th century (Buitrago Buitrago 1959; Zúñiga C. 1996:241-242). In the traditions that have grown up in León and Granada, the words have stayed the same but different music is used. According to Edgardo Buitrago (1959), the tunes from León are solemn, but the ones in areas influenced by the traditions in Granada tend to be livelier. Masaya's tunes were lively, reflecting the influence of Granada because Masaya was formerly under its jurisdiction.

Alejandro Vega Matus (1875-1937), a composer from Masaya, wrote Purísima songs. From an elite family noted for its musical talent, Vega Matus was trained in European musical styles and became a distinguished and prolific composer of classical

and popular music (Whisnant 1995:91, 460n.38). Among his most famous Purísima songs are "Por eso el Cristianismo" and Tu Gloria, Tu Gloria."[259]

Ethnographer Javier Garcia Bresó (1992:308) observes that, in Monimbó, the celebration appears to involve more shouting than singing.

A special call-and-response phrase is shouted as a group arrives to sing to the Virgin:

> *¿Quién causa tanta alegría? ¡La concepción de Maria!*
> Who causes so much joy? The conception of Mary![260]

This Nicaraguan chant is a variation on an antiphon recited responsively before a psalm in the liturgy for the Feast of the Conception in the 16th century. An antiphon about the joy of Mary's sinless conception appeared in the 1584 Catholic *Psalterium*: "Your conception, Virgin mother of God, announced joy to all the world" (Burkhart 2001:17).

Contrasts between the various Purísima household celebrations I observed point up class distinctions. My two host families, both Catholic but differing by class and

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[259] The first stanzas of each song with my translation are presented here.
"Por Eso El Cristianismo"
    Por eso el Cristianismo
    Con grata melodía
    Repite de María
    Su nombre sin cesar.

    For this, Christianity
    With pleasing melody
    Repeats the name
    of Maria ceaselessly.

"Tu Gloria"
    Tu gloria, tu gloria
    Gozoso este día,
    ¡oh dulce María!
    Publica mi voz.

    Your glory, your glory
    How joyful this day
    'Oh, sweet Maria!'
    Proclaims my voice.

[260] Rhyming couplets spoken or shouted as a chant (*consigna*) are a Spanish cultural influence. I observed a lively tendency towards such rhyming couplets in Masaya. One informant said, "The Monimboseño people and the Nicaraguan are very much given to couplets by nature" (*La gente monimboseña y el nica en si son muy coplero por naturaleza*).

ethnicity, facilitated my participant-observation of the Purísima festival.[261] One family is an urban, upper class family living in the center of Masaya. My hostess did not participate in any religious processions in the street, considering them to be typical activities for poor Indians but not someone of her social status. When I asked the young grandchildren of my elite host family about decorating an altar for la Purísima, they disparaged the celebration as something only the poor do. An Immaculate Conception image was maintained as a family altar in the home of their great-aunt, but that image was not decorated as an altar for neighbors to come singing and shouting their praise for the Virgin.

My other host family is an urban, lower-middle class nuclear family who lives in a barrio adjacent to Monimbó. In sharp contrast to my elite host family, this family is devoted to la Purísima, throwing themselves into the celebrations with great energy. For Purísima in 1999, they shared the preparations for the *Gran Gritería* with the household of the mother's sister who live next door. They are aware that the Catholic Church counsels moderation in the veneration of the Virgin, but they say that Marian celebrations in household and barrio are independent of the Church. They explain their commitment to the Virgin Mary and the Catholic faith as part of their culture, and insistently said that it is not something that the Church can take away from them. They explained that they distinguish themselves as Monimboseños—as ethnically Indian— through the greater intensity and fidelity in celebration of Catholic traditions. Although they may participate in other Catholic groups, this does not change their devotion to the popular religious rituals. They are tolerant of different types of religious practice pursued by family members. The mother in this Monimboseño family is active in the Christian Base Community, while the sister (with whom she shared the preparations for the Purísima *gran gritería*) is active in the Neocatechumenal Way. This contrast in religious

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[261] See chapter 2 on methodology for a more detailed description of my host families.

expression within the same family, whose members share the same class position and ethnicity, is significant because, at the level of the Church hierarchy, they are diametrically opposing views of the Church. While the Christian Base Community is considered a radical expression of faith not accepted by the Church hierarchy, the Neocatechumenal Way is recognized by the Vatican as a positive "new movement" of evangelism within the Church, one that is actively promoted by the parish priest at the Magdalena Church.[262]

This Monimboseño family made the Purísima altar from natural materials, such as flowers and leaves, and they said that families living in the center of the city, if they decorate an altar at all, are more likely to use artificial flowers, commercially-produced cloth as a backdrop. My informants said the most indigenous feature of the Purísima festival (and other Catholic festivals generally) is the use of flowers. Anthropologist Louise Burkhart (2001:20) notes: "the frequent association of Mary with flowers… brought her into a realm of Nahuatl sacred discourse." Although Monimboseños no longer speak an indigenous language (Carmack 1998b; Carmack 2002; García Bresó 1992; Newson 1987), the sense of the spiritual world represented by flowers (Burkhart 2001:20) is a cultural continuity from their Mesoamerican, pre-Hispanic cultural past. Floral decorations and offerings are abundant in all religious rituals I observed among Monimboseños. Some of the natural materials used include leaves from trees such as banana, palm, or *madroño* (strawberry-tree); the greenish white flower of the *madroño*; yellow trumpet flowers (*sardinillo*); a yellow sunflower (*jalacate*); and the red poinsettia (*pastora*).

In spite of the claim about natural materials, plastic was also a common decorative material on the altar and in other places. One particularly noteworthy use of

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[262] My description of the Christian Base Community and two of the "new movements" approved by Pope John Paul II, the Neocatechumenal Way and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, is the subject of chapter 6.

plastic was to create a decoration called a "heaven" (*cielo*), a string of brightly colored

pieces of plastic cut into triangle shapes and tied to a piece of metal wires that is pulled

across the street from rooftop to rooftop. This decoration joins people together in the

process of decorating their neighborhood. Some informants in Monimbó said that

putting up the "heaven" (*cielo*) is a dying custom, while hiring a *chichero* band to play

Purísima songs, instead of marimba or guitar, is a recent innovation.[263]

My participant-observation included being part of the preparation and

distribution of the *gorra* for the Gran Gritería with the Monimboseño family. I was

instructed to give away *gorra* one item to per person. We had rice pudding, sandwiches,

and stalks of raw sugar cane to give away—and some friends were invited inside for a

drink. Generosity is socially expected. A family that has some resources, however

modest, will face criticism for being "stingy" (*pinché*). Anthropologist Roger Lancaster

(1988) concludes that La Purísima has a leveling function, based on his ethnographic

observations among poor *mestizo* households in Managua. The leveling mechanism

appears to be at work in Monimbó. Although a middle class family may be able to be

generous without harm to the household budget, poorer families may feel compelled to

demonstrate their generosity rather than save resources to build up family capital. In

Monimbó, however, an individual household does not have to assume the financial

burden alone. Monimboseño families are more likely than *mestizo* families to recruit

assistance in the form of *cuadras* that pool money, share ingredients for food, and lend a

helping hand in the preparations. Marcos Membreño (1992:136) notes that, in Monimbó,

each member of the Purísima *cuadras* surveyed had at least 3 relatives, on average,

helping to organize the festival.

If a household has not been generous, people may respond with humorous call-

and-response chants patterned on the Purísima *grito*. I heard, "For a little piece of sugar

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[263] A *chichero* band consists of five to seven musicians playing brass instruments (trumpets,
trombones, and tubas) and drums (snare and bass).

cane, I'm singing my throat out?" (*¿Por un tuquito de caña, me estoy desgalillando?*).

Receiving a piece of raw sugar cane is traditional but is increasingly looked upon as a

meager gift.[264] Buitrago (1959:28) notes another variation on the Purísima couplet:

¿Quién causa tanta feria? ¡La casa de la miseria! I did not hear this chant in Masaya,

and when I asked about the phrase, no one seemed familiar with it, but I was told that

feria is a word that could refer to the practice of having many masses offered in one day

in the same parish, which is perceived as a cheapening of the mass by rushing through it.

Thus, this couplet might mean something like, "Who causes so many cheap gifts? The

house of stinginess!"

A comparative opportunity presented itself through an invitation to attend a

Purísima celebration in the home of a middle class family in Managua. The hostess was a

young woman from Monimbó who had married a musician employed by the national

orchestra. Their poorer Monimboseño relatives described the family's living conditions

as *cómodo* (comfortable). I noticed that this was a private family gathering; no *cuadra*

had been formed with neighbors. The altar was set up in the living room, not carried

from house to house. The altar consisted of a cloth backdrop, palm-leaf bower, and a

string of small, white electric lights. The family hired a guitar duo to play and sing

Purísima songs, while the guests listened. The *gorra* consisted of giving each guest a

sandwich, fruit, candy, and a tiny basket woven from palm leaves. They were not

planning to open their house to Purísima carolers for the *Gran Gritería*. Everyone sat

politely in white plastic chaired rented for the occasion, waiting patiently to receive their

gorra. It was quite a contrast to the noisy bands of children in the streets of Monimbó

clamoring for *gorra*.

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[264] One little girl tried to sneak back in line to get another *gorra*. She held her piece of sugar cane behind her back, hoping that I would not notice that she already had received a gift. One of the women helping me distribute the *gorra* shooed her away gently but firmly. I had already seen this little girl and her mother at a Purísima celebration earlier in the week, and I observed the mother get an extra sandwich by claiming it was for her child. The child was already eating a sandwich, while the mother tucked the extra one in her pocket.

My observations of the Immaculate Conception celebration reveal a religious ritual that involves more attention to social interaction and performance than discussion of dogma or theology. Poor, ethnically marginal families delight in the material culture they produce for the festival which gives them an "intensified experience" of the Virgin Mary (cf.,Tambiah 1985:126), while middle class and elite families have a less outwardly expressive celebration.

La Purísima is but one example of the Catholic pattern of celebrating religiously through feasts or parties. Monimboseños describe their activities as "giving a party" (*festejar*) in honor of the saints. This practice shares with pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican culture an emphasis on sharing food and drink as a sacred (but certainly not solemn) communal activity (Gruzinski 1990). Indians from Monimbó place considerable emphasis on *convivencia* (living together harmoniously), which always includes the sharing of food and drink. Monimboseños perform social relations of community through this celebration of the Virgin Mary, binding themselves together as a local community, which maintains their ethnicity in contrast to the people of Spanish ancestry who live in the town center or even upwardly mobile members of their own ethnic group. Garcia Bresó (1992:289) notes that Monimboseños react to the remark, *Los indios sólo son fiestas* ("Indians only are parties"), as a backhanded compliment, indicating that non-Indians are envious of their rich traditions.

Other Marian Observances in Masaya

While La Purísima of Nicaragua is an especially prominent expression of the Marian theme as a national cultural celebration, there are other manifestations of the Virgin Mary present in Masaya (as well as the rest of the country). Being from a predominantly Protestant culture that is also significantly secularized, I had never before

experienced a culture of such pervasive Marian religiosity. Upon my return home after this period of participant-observation, I began to notice a range of existing Marian devotions active in the United States but, since they are practiced in subcultures of Catholicism, they had been invisible to me before my exposure to Catholicism in Nicaragua.

In this section, I will discuss three versions of the Virgin Mary that deepen the understanding of Nicaragua as *muy mariana* (very Marian): (1) Maria Auxiliadora, (2) the Virgin of Carmen, and (3) the Virgin of Guadalupe. Most Marian devotions that are practiced in Nicaragua have not been "translated" to support the country's nationhood. They represent religious practices deeply imbedded in intercessory prayer and healing, a tradition that has been an important source of consolation, especially for women, in a society beset by economic hardship and violent political upheaval. The liberation theology retranslation of Mary as the prophetic singer of the Magnificat bearing witness of God's power against the rich and powerful may be too new and too shallow to substitute for the older Marian tradition. I noted a common theme among women who spoke about their devotion to the Virgin Mary: her loving consolation for women grieving, whether the children were lost through illness or war. All three variations of Mary offer healing. The Salesian Mary heals with its educational mission, the Carmelite Mary heals with prayer, and Guadalupe is associated with a healing miracle commemorated through a pilgrimage to the remote village of Diplito.

Describing the context in which poor mothers in a slum in Brazil avoid bonding with sickly children who may not be able to survive, Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992:528) observed that the progressive Church was no longer offering a funeral ritual for the death of "angel-babies" (*anjinhos*). When she asked a priest about this change in church ritual practice, he replied, "In the old days child death was richly celebrated (*muito festejada*), but those were the baroque customs of a conservative church that wallowed in death and

misery. The new church is a church of hope and of joy. It is wrong to celebrate the death

of child-angels" (Scheper-Hughes 1992:528-529). Scheper-Hughes (1992:529) is critical

of liberation theology for having taken this tradition away without putting anything in its

place:

> The mothers of the Alto (barrio in Brazil) have been thrown into moral and theological confusion. The old Catholic tradition that held that angel-babies decorated the throne of God was, at the very least, consoling to the parents of a little dead *anjinho*. It rendered the suffering and death meaningful. The new theology of liberation has challenged the conventional, folk Catholic wisdom on the spiritual meaning of human suffering, on theodicy, but it has not offered an alternative. If Jesus does not want their little angels, why *were* they born, and what is the meaning of their suffering? It appears to some women of the Alto that now even the church has turned away from them, denying their dead *anjinhos* their rightful place in the communion of saints and denying the women the comfort of their once serene faith and conformity to God's will.
> Indeed, the contemporary Brazilian church is caught in the clutches of a moral double bind. The theology of liberation imagines a kingdom of God on earth based on justice and equality, a world without hunger, sickness, or child mortality. But at the same time the church, even under the new guise of liberation theology, has not modified its hostility toward female sexuality and reproduction, and so it remains mute on the theological sources of gender oppression and on the church's historical contribution to the useless suffering of mothers and infants.

Brazil has the reputation of being the most progressive Roman Catholic Church

hierarchy in support liberation theology in Latin America; moreover, prominent

Brazilian priests have show support for Nicaragua's experiment in liberation theology.

While I was doing fieldwork in Masaya, the famous Brazilian bishop, Pedro Casaldáliga

(1994), visited the Christian Base Community and has co-authored a book on liberation

theology with Nicaragua theologian, José Maria Vigil (n.d.).

Maria Auxiliadora

The *Maria Auxiliadora* image originated in Italy with the founder of the Salesian

order, an Italian priest named Juan Bosco, who had prophetic dreams in which the

Virgin Mary appeared to him (Rodríguez 1994). When his father died, Juan Bosco went

door-to-door in Turin, Italy, asking neighbors for funds in order to be able to go to school. He traced his call to the priesthood to a vision in a dream in which the Virgin Mary said he was destined to educate poor children. After he became a priest, Juan Bosco had another vision in which the Virgin asked him to build a temple dedicated to her and call her *Auxiliadora* (Helper or Assistant). The story of the founder of the Order reveals his connection with educational needs of Italian peasants in transition to proletarian status at the end of the 19th century.

In 1868, Juan Bosco started sending priests on evangelical missions. The first Salesian to visit Nicaragua came to the city of Granada in 1896. Subsequently, several Nicaraguan men studied to become Salesian priests, and a Salesian House was established in 1912 in Granada (Rodríguez 1994). The Salesians have had a major impact on education in Nicaragua, owing to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Nicaragua in 1881 (Cerutti 1984; Mörner 1965; Zúñiga C. 1996). Elena Arellano Chamorro of Granada is credited with starting the initial effort to bring the Salesians to Nicaragua in order to provide education for children of the elite families of Granada who were being educated abroad (Rodríguez 1994:38-47). Moreover, the Salesians focused on primary and high school education, whereas the Jesuit influence, when they were allowed to return, was primarily in higher education.

The image of Maria Auxiliadora is represented as the Holy Mother with the Child on her arm. Mary holds her other hand out in a helping gesture. Both Mother and Child have white skin and wear royal crowns. This regal motherly Virgin Mary is not a variation on the Immaculate Conception, but an original image created by the charismatic Juan Bosco.

It will be remembered from chapter 3 on the history of Masaya that the Salesian high school was built with assistance of the Indians of Monimbó and the elementary school annex across the street from the high school educates the poor children of the

indigenous barrio. The private Salesian high school educates Catholic upper and middle class children, including Daniel Ortega and his brothers, all of whom became FSLN leaders. The most famous Salesian priest in Nicaragua is Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, former Archbishop of Managua who was prominent in leading the anti-Sandinista opposition.

Joshua Hatton (1998:16-22) describes a split between Monimboseños about the legitimacy of claimants to the position of "mayor of the staff" (*alcalde de vara*), a tradition office of authority in the indigenous community, which first appeared in the colonial era. Hatton (1998:20) learned that his respondents explained the conflict as one in which one claimant was Sandinista, the other Catholic. The supporters of the Sandinista claimant consider their opponent to be "a puppet of the church" (*una muñeca de la iglesia*), while other faction (politically affiliated with liberal or other political parties) called their rival's supporters "Sandinista gangs" (*turbas sandinistas*) and atheists (Hatton 1998:20). The two groups disagree about the legitimacy of church and municipal government, one group swearing allegiance to church and city government and the subordination of Monimbó to these institutions and the other desiring political and religious autonomy from these same entities as exploitative. Although Monimboseños are famous for being one of the urban areas that rose up in spontaneous rebellion against the Somoza dictatorship, the community split after the Sandinistas began implementing their programs. The ideological polarization during the Sandinista Revolution produced a split in the community over the Marian image of the Salesian order.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a variation on the theme of the Virgin as the Immaculate Conception whose origin is Palestine. In Masaya, the current *mayordoma* of the Lady of Mount Carmel, took on responsibility for this saint image when the parish priest of the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in the center of town asked her to do so 47 years ago, when the previous lay leader died. The *mayordoma*, is from an elite family that lives in the city center with her husband, who in 1999 worked in the Alemán government. Working with a male co-leader, her group performs two street processions a year. About 100 families make a donation of about 20 *córdobas* each to have the Carmelite Virgin carried to their houses and a *salve* (hymn) sung. It is traditional to choose a salve that expresses the theme of healing. The majority of the people who pay homage to the Virgin through this Carmelite image live in the barrio of Pocotillo, a neighborhood of middle and upper class families in Masaya, where the previous *mayordoma* lived. In 1999, when I did my interview and observed the small street procession, about 60 families were involved, but in early 2002, the group began to reach out to Catholics in Monimbó, a conscious effort to reach across class and ethnic lines.

The Carmelite devotion puts an emphasis on individual prayer, a practice that distinguishes it from La Purísima, which uses group prayer during the novena, including praying the rosary. At the same time, the *mayordoma* is active in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement because of the group's emphasis on personal prayer. She has a small group of women come to her home once a week to practice praying in a small group. Although she is a local leader in this "new movement" within the Catholic Church, she thinks many members of the Charismatic Renewal are fanatics; in her opinion, they go too far with overly emotional prayers. In contrast, she seeks to moderate the movement through her leadership and example in the prayer circle and on the

council groups within the parish that meet monthly with the parish priest to discuss their ministries. Although the Charismatic Renewal movement tends to minimize the adoration of the Virgin Mary, she thinks that devotion to the Virgin Mary is extremely important. For her, the Virgin Mary is not an optional devotion, but a tradition which, if abandoned, would be the same as forsaking the faith. She said that women especially depend on the Virgin for comfort in facing the problems of life.

Although the Charismatic movement claims to have no political component, she said that Catholic Charismatics prayed fervently for the defeat of the Sandinistas. She supported Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, candidate of the United Nicaraguan Opposition (UNO) coalition in the 1990 elections, and felt that the prayers to the Virgin Mary helped Dona Violeta defeat Daniel Ortega. Now that that crisis has passed, her group has focused on developing their prayer life rather than politics. The devotion to the Carmelite Mary has not been split by political polarization, given that its devotees share bourgeois class status and are predominantly women.

The manner in which Maria Auxiliadora and the Carmelite Mary operate could be said to foster *marianismo*, the feminine counterpart to *machismo*. Evelyn P. Stevens' (1973) classic definition of *marianismo* is "the cult of female spiritual superiority which teaches that women are semi-divine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men." Recently, this formulation has been criticized as ahistorical: "Stevens suggested that marianimso—throughout the continent—governs the lives of Latin American women almost exclusively by its unwritten rules. She wrote as if there were no economic forces at work, political parties had never excluded women from their ranks (except as auxiliary groups), women's civil rights had never been curtailed, rural women lived in the same conditions as urban women, and the Catholic Church had never exerted power and influence over women's sexuality or had nothing to do with the role of marriage in

society. She did not see any connection between the absence of divorce legislation and the influence of the Catholic Church" (Navarro 2002:266-267).[265]

Feminist concerns do not resonant with this respondent, who is a wife, homemaker, and grandmother. Having a stable marriage, she has not worked outside her home nor faced economic hardships that might have forced her to take on a non-traditional role. Marianismo, qualified as a historically situated ideology of bourgeois womanhood, does not appear as an oppressive ideology to her.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

In Masaya, the Virgin of Guadalupe festival is celebrated by more people than the Virgin of Mt. Carmen. The street procession is much larger than for the Carmelite Mary but not as massive as the Saint Jerome patron saint processions. After the novena of la Purísima, the Guadalupe festival is celebrated on December 12 with a mass in the Basilica, drawing people from all over the city and surrounding rural areas to this church in the center of town. The main Nicaraguan theme added to the Mexican-flavored celebration is that parents bring their children to the special mass dressed in Nicaraguan peasant costumes. The folkloric costumes emphasize a mixed Indo-Hispanic identity as the basis of the Nicaraguan nation.

The history of Mexico and Guadalupe has been available as a model and inspiration for Nicaraguan dreams of nationalism. Guadalupe devotion is a combination

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[265] Marysa Navarro (2002:267-269) points out that, while Stevens was arguing that feminism was unlikely to emerge in Latin America because woman's role is "suffused with sacred significance," a second wave of feminism was already underway. The culturally and historically specific features of feminism and antifeminism in Nicaragua are being avidly researched (e.g., Babb 1996; Babb 2001; Bayard de Volo 2001; Brenes Peña, et al. 1991; Cobo del Arco 1998; Collinson 1990; Criquillon 1995; Figueroa 1996; Isbester 2001; Kampwirth 1993; Kampwirth 2001; Kampwirth 2003; Kampwirth 2004; Linkogle 1996; Metoyer 2000; Montoya 2003; Montoya, et al. 2002; Murguialday 1990; Palma 1994; Randall 1994).

of popular religious devotion and theological rationale for a cult that was thought to provide "an autonomous spiritual foundation" for Mexico as a nation (Brading 2001:5). In 1944, in the city of León, a monument of the Virgin of Guadalupe including the visionary Indian Juan Diego was unveiled. President Anastasio Somoza Garcia was present, welcoming the guest speaker, Lauro López Beltrán, a prominent Mexican promoter of the seer's canonization (Brading 2001:333).[266] In contrast to Guadalupe, la Purísima does not have its origins in a Marian apparition connected to an Indian visionary. Her image does not bear any resemblance to the dark Indian features of Guadalupe; however, miracle stories and nation-building are intertwined in the stories of the Immaculate Conception icon in Nicaragua.

Miracles Stories and La Purísima

A legend is told about a miracle associated with the Immaculate Conception's first arrival in Granada. According to Nicaraguan scholar Edgardo Buitrago (1959:101-104), a mysterious box appeared, floating against the current of the San Juan River in 1675 and, miraculously, an image of the Immaculate Conception was found within and carried triumphantly into Granada. Other stories of the miracle of La Purísima began circulating in the colonial period when the Spanish were battling the British along the Caribbean coast as well as the rivers leading into the interior. A fortress named after the Immaculate Conception was built on the Río San Juan to protect the city of Granada and

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[266] Pope John Paul II visited Mexico in 2002 for the canonization ceremony for Juan Diego amidst controversy because no credible historical data to prove his actual existence exists (Steinfels 2002). Anthropologist Andrew Beatty (2006) describes Pope John Paul II's visit to Mexico for this canonization. He writes that the papal visit "turned into a de facto state visit organized to the glory of the new leader," President Vicente Fox recently elected (Beatty 2006:329). The Pope's arrival was treated as a party-political event, but the canonization the next day was less politicized; however, the Mexican First Family was in attendance. Beatty (2006:328) notes that the Pope's homily described Juan Diego and the miracle of Guadalupe as "a model of perfectly inculturated evangelization" (John Paul II 2002), an analysis that owes a debt to anthropological interpretations of this devotion for Mexican *mestizo* identity (e.g., Wolf 1957).

other parts of the interior of Nicaragua against the British, who were not only political and military rivals but also religious enemies being Anglican Protestants. This story of the miraculous appearance of la Purísima is frequently retold in September during Nicaragua's National Independence Day celebration in Granada and in December during the week of la Purísima.

Pablo Antonio Cuadra (1997:82-84) relates a different version of the Purísima miracle, attaching a date over one hundred years earlier than the one given by Buitrago. In 1554, washerwomen saw two boxes floating on the lake near Granada. They were unable to catch the boxes; however, when they asked Franciscan priests to help them, miraculously, the priests were able to grab hold of the boxes without difficulty. When the boxes were opened, each contained a religious image: the Immaculate Conception that went to Granada, and the Virgin of the Assumption taken to Masaya (Cuadra 1997:83). Given Masaya's importance as a large Indian town previously under the jurisdiction of the colonial city of Granada and Cuadra's role in Nicaraguan folklore studies, his story helped feed the imagination of a people trying to develop a sense of nationalism. The growing importance of Masaya as an autonomous city can be glimpsed in its equal billing with Granada, expressed in terms of divine favor in receiving its own patroness. Although these stories are legends rather than historically reliable accounts, Cuadra's story is meant to account for the presence of the Virgin of the Assumption in Masaya in the early years of the colonial period. The Virgin of the Assumption miracle story of deliverance from volcanic eruption in 1772 (Zúñiga C. 1996) has already been recounted in chapter 4 in reference to this annual Marian devotion in Monimbó. Although the number of devotees of this particular ritual appears to be small, the tenacity of generations performing this *promesa* in honor of the Virgin's intercession to save them from the volcano's fiery destruction is merely one more example of the time depth of Marian devotion.

In Nicaragua, legends about mysterious floating boxes that contain divine images are not unique to Granada or Masaya. Another such legend comes from Carazo, the department that borders Masaya to the southeast. Alberto Guevara Salazar (2003:144-145)[267] tells a legend in which two saint statutes were discovered floating in wooden boxes in the Pacific Ocean not far from the town of Diriamba in 1752. There were allegedly two boxes; one held an image of San Sebastian, destined for Diriamba, and the other San Santiago, which went to Jinotepa, the capital of the department of Carazo. Reports of Marian apparitions are much rarer in Nicaraguan history than legends in which a sacred image is discovered. Nicaraguan Church historian, Edgar Zúñiga (1996:214), notes that telling miracle stories about the image of the Immaculate Conception found floating on rivers is a tradition that can be dated to the 1760s.

Zúñiga (1996:214) associates the significance instances of turning to the Immaculate Conception in time of threat and violence. The Spanish colonists, when they were under attack in 1762, turned to ritual prayer before an image of the Immaculate Conception to ask for victory in battle against the British. The governor of Nicaragua, Melchior Vidal de Lorca, credited their subsequent victory to the fact that the women were praying constantly before the Immaculate Conception during the fight. During this battle, Rafaela Herrera, the daughter of the Spanish captain of the fort, allegedly fought in her father's place, after he died in battle. This story of Rafaela's heroism is part of the Independence Day celebrations on September 15[268] and is highlighted in children's school books (Escobar Morales 1991:14-16). Rejected the revolutionary message contained in the texts used during the Sandinista period, including the texts for the 1980 Literacy Campaign, which highlighted heroes and martyrs who fought to depose Somoza,

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[267] Guevara Salazar (2003) cites as his source the writings of a local historian from Diriamba, Luis Sanchez Mojica (1997:23).

[268] Arellano (1986:46) mentions the story of Rafaela Herrera but gives the date of 1772, ten years later than the one given by Zúñiga (1996). There are many errors in Arellano's book; I tend to trust Zúñiga's church history. Schoolbooks use the same date of 1762 that Zúñiga cites (Escobar Morales 1991:14).

the political counterrevolution after the 1990 election of Violeta Chamorro prepared new textbooks that returned to previous non-revolutionary stories of heroes and heroines, such as Rafaela Herrera (Arnove 1994). One example is Escobar Morales' (1991) elementary school civics and moral formation text that selected a few "great men" of Nicaraguan history, including Augusto Sandino but ending with the martyred journalist Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the only hero of the 1979 revolution.

La Virgen de Cuapa, Marian Apparition, 1980

Given the cultural repertoire of Marian devotion available to the Catholic imagination in Nicaragua, it is not surprising that in 1980, a Nicaraguan peasant, Bernardo Martínez, would report visions of the Immaculate Conception and that this Marian image would become associated with a fight against the revolution. Without declaring that a supernatural appearance actually occurred, church leaders catapulted the messages into an anti-Sandinista message and the seer's vision was concurrent with the Church hierarchy's understanding—the Sandinistas were communists and atheists, enemies against whom the Virgin Mary had appeared to this humble peasant in order to carry warnings to the Nicaraguan people. Then-archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo and other members of the Nicaraguan Church hierarchy led groups to Cuapa, saying only that the petitions of the Virgin do not oppose the teaching of the Church (Rodriguez 1999:124). However, since actions speak louder than words, many Catholics flocked to the site, believing that the Virgin had indeed appeared and was giving them important messages about the crisis through which they were living.

Bernardo Martínez claimed he saw a series of visions of the Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception while walking in the countryside near his rural town of Cuapa in the department of Chontales. When Bernardo stated the messages he received from the

Virgin Mary were directed against communist atheists who had taken over the country, the Sandinistas responded with charges of counterrevolution. Leading the internal opposition to the Sandinista Revolution which was given a strong boost by the Marian apparitions, the Church leaders introduced a new chant (*consigna*) in their open-air masses that connected the Virgin Mary with their counter-revolutionary effort: "*Maria de Nicaragua, Nicaragua de Maria*" (Rodriguez 1999:120).

Martínez, a peasant working as a sacristan in the small church in Cuapa, testified that the Virgin Mary appeared to him on May 8, 1980 and four more times until September of that same year. The Virgin asked the Nicaraguans to pray the rosary, reunite within the families, to love, and to make peace. Some of the messages had specific political implications: "Nicaragua has suffered a lot since the earthquake and will continue suffering, if you do not change. If you do not do it, you will shorten the arrival of the Third World War" (Rodriguez 1999:124). This message referred to the 1972 earthquake that destroyed large areas of Managua, which is significant in the events leading up to the overthrow of Somoza because it was Somoza's corruption in the use of relief funds and awarding reconstruction contracts that galvanized even stronger cross-class opposition to his rule. Another message attributed to the Virgin at Cuapa was: "Make Peace. Don't ask Our Lord for peace because, if you do not make it, there will be no peace." When asked what he thought of the Sandinistas, Bernardo replied, "They are atheists, communists, and for this I have come to help the Nicaraguans" (Rodriguez 1999:124). Bernardo lead people to the site and had more visions of the Virgin, while these observers were with him. Other pilgrims to the site claimed they saw miraculous sun phenomenon in same spot in the countryside where the Virgin had appeared (Rodriguez 1999:184).

The priests at the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center[269] charged that the claims about the Marian apparition at Cuapa were being used for counterrevolutionary activities, while the hierarchy fought back by condemning the Center for promoting a liberation theology-informed version of a novena for la Purísima (Ezcurra 1984; Rodriguez 1999). In November of 1982, the Nicaraguan Bishop's Conference accused the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center of "serious errors of Catholic Doctrine," specifically charging that the Center did not accept Jesus Christ as God and accepted only two of the four dogmas relating to the orthodox view of the Virgin Mary (Murphy and Caro 2006). Father Uriel Molina, Director of the Center, denied that the Center was advocating erroneous doctrines and explained that the Center affirmed all the Church's official teachings without reservation.

The attack on the Valdivieso Center's theology did not directly challenge any of the tenets specifically related to liberation theology but, instead, shifted the theological ground to accusations about the Virgin Mary. The bishops stated that they did not consider the Center to be an official organization belonging to the Catholic Church. They were especially outraged by and did not approve the Center's novena for their Purísima celebration. They charged that the Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center was not sufficiently under obedient to the authority structures of the Church. The internal struggle was over moral and political boundaries—i.e., who has legitimate authority to speak and in what manner about Church teaching. Father Uriel Molina (Murphy and Caro 2006) defended the Center's right to be an independent, lay organization, not an

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[269] The Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Center is named for a Dominican bishop, Antonio Valdivieso, who was a close associate of Bartolomé de las Casas and a co-defender of the Indians in Nicaragua along with this famous priest accused by his opponents of fomenting a "black legend" about the horrors of the Spaniards' treatment of the Indians (Durán Luzio 1992; Hanke 1953; Phelan 1969; Wagner and Parish 1967). Bishop Valivieso was assassinated by the grandsons of the first Spanish governor of the Nicaragua, Rodrigo de Contreras, in 1550 (Arellano 1986; Kinloch Tijerino 2005:53-55; Zúñiga C. 1996:53-74). The Center named for him was established after the 1979 Revolution and supported the Sandinista revolutionary project. Accounts of his pro-Indian advocacy and martyrdom are frequently reiterated in the pro-Sandinista newspaper, *El Nuevo Diario* (e.g.,El Nuevo Diario 2006; Guido Martinez 2004; Sanchez 2001).

official part of the Church but still able to make a legitimate contribution to Catholic theology. The offending prayers in the Center's novena for la Purísima included the following themes: (1) addressing God as "Good Father and liberating God," (2) calling on the Church to "be simple, be Mother of the poor and animator of their hopes," and (3) calling on the Virgin Mary to "give us protection from the powerful dragons that daily threaten us with invasion and war" (Ezcurra 1984:218). The appeal for Mary's protection from the "dragons" of war and invasion was a direct reference to the contra war being waged by the United States, ex-National Guard officers, and other supporters of the counter-revolution. At the same time, Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo and other members of the Bishops' Conference were continuously denouncing Sandinista "persecution of the Church," while remaining silent about contra attacks against the civilian population, including schools and health clinics among other non-military targets (Kirk 1992).

Visionary Bernardo Martínez became a priest, ordained in 1995, at the age of 64. His biography, as related in documents collected by Church historian, Jorge Rodriguez (1999:39-59), indicates that he was a devotee of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception from his early teens, when he helped to raise donations to buy an image of the Immaculate Conception for his small church in Cuapa. Raised by his grandmother, a very pious Catholic peasant woman, Bernardo grew up to work as a sacristan, tending the small church in Cuapa, while also working as a peasant-farmer. He never married and was 49 years old in 1980 when he received the visions of the Virgin Mary.[270]

Nicaraguan artists have painted what Martínez says he saw in his visions of the Virgin. These paintings and the icon in the chapel at Cuapa show an image that combines

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[270] Silvio Sirias (2005), a Nicaraguan writer currently living in Panama, has written a novel about Bernardo and the visions of the Virgin Mary. Written in English and published by Northwestern University Press in its Latino Voices series, the novel is based on research that included interviews with Bernardo Martínez (Chamorro 2006). Bernardo died in 2000 (Robleto and Sequeira 2000).

the iconography of the traditional Immaculate Conception and the Salesian Maria

Auxiliadora (Rodriguez 1999). La Auxiliadora de Cuapa does not hold the Christ Child as

is typical of the Salesian Mary, but like la Purísima, she is a young woman, trampling on

the head of the serpent. Her arms are held out with hands open, palms up—a helping-

hand gesture that is part of the Maria Auxiliadora theme.

Monsignor Pablo Antonio Vega, then-bishop of the diocese in Juigalpa,

Chontales where Cuapa is located, indicated in *La Prensa* newspaper in 1982 that he

personally thought the appearances of the Virgin Mary in Cuapa reported by Bernardo

were real (Rodriguez 1999:120-121).[271] An editorial in *La Prensa* stated that the

apparition showed "in a visible form, Nicaragua will be of Mary and Mary of Nicaragua"

(*de una forma visible, Nicaragua sera de María y María de Nicaragua)* (Rodriguez

1999:121), a slogan central to the message of the counter-revolution. The symbol of the

Virgin Mary contributed significantly to their efforts to oppose the Sandinista

Revolution; they imagined the nation as a Catholic bulwark against a revolutionary

national identity the Sandinistas were attempting to forge.[272] Thus, the Church acted in

oppositional mode as a religion of the counter-revolution, rebelling against state

authority it deemed a communist threat to its authority as the Church and as an

important social force called into action during a crisis.

Twenty years after the Marian apparitions at Cuapa, thousands of people are still

making the pilgrimage to the site. The Church built a sanctuary at the site and there, in

2000, while accompanying members of the Magdalena Church in Monimbó on one of

[271] Jorge Rodriquez (1999:120-121) collected newspaper articles, photos, and other documentation related to the 1980 apparition at Cuapa. He includes an article from *La Prensa* that says Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega "gave implicit approval of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary" (*darle una aprobación implícita a las apariciones de la Virgen María*), although the Vatican has not officially declared it a true apparition, as was done for Lourdes (1854) or Fatima (1917).
[272] Luciano Baracco's (2005) study of the "imagining a nation" in Nicaragua through history and literacy does not mention religion at all, not even liberation theology. I argue that the nation cannot be imagined without understanding this struggle as expressed through the symbol of the Virgin Mary.

the many days of pilgrimage to the area that are still on-going, I observed an open-air mass conducted by Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. The image of the Virgin of Cuapa was placed on the right hand side of the altar near the front. As the crowd waited for the mass to begin, a man led chants that included this rhyming couplet:

> *¿Quién es más guapa? La Virgen de Cuapa*!
> "Who is the most beautiful? The Virgin of Cuapa!").

The structure of which recalls the Purísima chant discussed earlier:

> *¿Quien causa tanta alegría? La concepción de Maria!*
> Who causes so much happiness? The conception of Mary!

Another chant was also prominent:

> *María de Nicaragua, Nicaragua de Maria*
> Mary of Nicaragua, Nicaragua of Mary.

My previous ethnographic experiences of *consignas* (chants) in Nicaragua came while observing a Sandinista political gathering. I assumed that the practice was a secular political behavior, but I became aware of my mistake while participating in the pilgrimage to Cuapa.

In 2000, Bishop Bernardi Hombach (2000) of the dioceses of Juigalpa where Cuapa is located, objected to news coverage that accompanied the release of a new book on the apparitions at Cuapa (Rodriguez 1999) which had implied that Hombach had testified that the Virgin really appeared in 1980. Hombach (2000:10A) wrote:

> *Yo en ningún momento di testimonio de que la Virgen efectivamente apreció en Cuapa* (I at no time gave testimony that the Virgin effectively appeared in Cuapa).

The Vatican is silent about whether the claims of apparition at Cuapa are authentic; but, nonetheless, local Nicaraguan priests encourage participation in a pilgrimage. The official message continues to be a cautious one about believers deepening their devotion to the Virgin through the pilgrimage and asserting only that the messages Bernardo reported do not contradict church doctrine.

Gramsci, Folklore, and the Nicaraguan Nationalism

Doug Brown (1990:56) says that the Nicaraguan Revolution had "a strong Gramscian flavor"[273] because it combined religion and nationalism rather than eschewing them as "bourgeois" concerns. "Sandinismo is not a case of the assimilation of religion and nationalism by Marxism," Brown (1990:56) concludes but rather "Marxism itself is changed in this process and becomes nearly post-Marxism as it is reconstructed." An important Gramcisan flavor in the Nicaraguan Revolution was the promotion of folklore as part of their national cultural project.

The connection between folklore and Nicaragua's national identity was not invented by the Sandinistas. Folklore was already present in bourgeois scholarship about Nicaragua's Indian past, situated within a larger Latin American folklorization process of imagining *mestizo* national cultures. The Sandinista approach to folklore has its roots in Pablo Antonio Cuadra's folklore project as part of the literary *vanguardia* that started in the 1930's. Trappist priest and poet, Ernesto Cardenal, was of the same bourgeois class background and city, Granada, as Pablo Antonio Cuadra. Although his poetry was rooted in the same romantic indigenism, Cardenal took it in a revolutionary direction as Minister of Culture. In contrast, Pablo Antonio Cuadta, having also been an strong opponent of the Somoza dictatorship going all the way back to the beginning of the family dynasty in the 1930's, Cuadra moved quickly to establish his opposition to the Sandinistas (Berman 2002).

Gramsci believed that folklore is "valuable because of the opportunities it offers us to observe something of potentially oppositional 'conceptions of the world and the life' of subaltern people," but its romantic version as "the 'authentic' reflection of the 'soul' of

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[273] A number of scholars have found Gramsci useful in theorizing Nicaragua's revolutionary experience; e.g., Sawchuk (1997); Montoya (1995); and Field (1999).

a nation" needs to be fought (Crehan 2002:106-108). As already seen, Edgardo Buitrago (1959) had been promoting a romantic version of la Purisima as the authentic soul of Nicaraguan nation since the 1950's. In Masaya, this romantic folklore remains prominent. The magazine, *Tata Chambo* (Rojas 1999), whose editor is Carmen Rojas, is an example of educated, middle class professionals, projecting the city as the "cradle of folklore" (*cuna de folklor*).

Masaya's claim to being the *cuna de folklore* encapsulates not merely a bid for tourists but also a cultural arena of power struggles between *mestizos* and Indians over identity on local and national levels (Borland 1994). The folklore approach to religious ritual has been an important part of the promotion of an Indio-Hispanic *raza* (race), a *mestizo* (mixed) ethnic homogenization (cf.,Cuadra 1968; Cuadra and Pérez Estrada 1997), but since hegemony is never complete, Indians have asserted their identity through folklore in opposition to the professional or elite approach to folklore. The acculturation forces at work on the Indian population on the Pacific Coast have pushed the Indians toward assimilation, but the religious framework that strives to keep the national community together is also an arena of struggle for articulating their sense of identity, while also having tools with which to assert their presence as an important part of the culture to the national community.

Zoila Mendoza (2000:48-55) characterizes the history of the development of folklore in Latin America generally as a cultural process of the *mestizo* populations, attempting to find "authentic" emblems that foster national identity, while the ritual performance of the folkloric dances are an important site for observing ethnic conflict. In Masaya, this is evident in the competition for recognition among and between groups that are non-Indian and the Monimboseños (Borland 1994; Borland 1996).

Mendoza (2000) describes "folklorization" as a historical process in which *mestizo* middle classes in Latin American have configured national identity. Folklore

became a field of study in Europe, when social knowledge, appropriated as a "civilizing" tool, was turned inward to deal with problems of political disunity and a desire to build a nation (Linke 1990:118).[274]

Nicaragua has not been isolated from this cultural legacy in Europe and Germany, specifically. Links between Germany and Nicaragua have roots in the first development of coffee in the 1880s as an export crop, which was an economic endeavor advanced by the German immigrants (Herrera Balharry 1988; Stone 1993; Stone 1990; Von Houwold 1975). Cultural links continue in the present, as some Latin American liberation theologians have studied in Germany and been exposed to the writings of Catholic Johann Baptist Metz and Lutheran Jürgen Moltmann, who developed European versions of Christian theologies that seek to bring theology into dialogue with contemporary social and political issues. Metz, in particular, wrote about the Christian Base Communities in Nicaragua and admires the work of Ernesto Cardenal, who has been honored in Germany for his poetry. Cultural exchanges with Germany have also enriched other Nicaraguan writers such as Sergio Ramírez, who lived with his family in Germany from 1973-1975 as a guest artist involved in an Intercultural Exchange program.[275] None of these cultural exchanges can be reduced to a one-way influence in which Nicaraguan thought, theology or artistic work could be characterized as simply derivative of German culture. Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in his crusade against liberation theology in the 1980s has tried to undermine the integrity of

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[274] Anthropologist Uli Linke (1990:118) characterizes folklore in Germany as a literary movement of cultural protest that built into a movement of romantic nationalism with "revolutionary force." This description suggests a theoretical pattern of folklore applicable to Nicaragua where a bourgeois literary *vanguardia* developed their anti-Somoza cultural protest in part through folklore and was transformed into a romantic nationalism with revolutionary force; however, although the trajectory may have been similar, it was a different set of social actors who carried the folklore project forward under the Sandinista government.

[275] Information about Sergio Ramírez found on an official webpage maintained by the author, http://www.sergioramirez.org.ni/indexbiografia.html. His time in Germany is also explained in his memori about the Sandinista Revolution (Ramírez 1999)

Latin American liberation theology by dismissing it as derivative of German political theologies, which he also opposed vigorously (Allen Jr 2000:137-140). [276]

Enrique Peña Hernández (1968) continued the work, including much material about Masaya. David Whisnant (1995:472, n.2) judges these writings as lacking in critical analysis, but Sergio Ramírez notes that Pablo Antonio Cuadra's aim was to develop a much-needed Nicaraguan cultural identity. In an introduction to Pablo Antonio Cuadra's *Narrativa y Teatro*, Ramírez writes, *El gran legado de Pablo Antonio a esa cultura, es precisamente la búsqueda permanente de nuestra identidad en sus raíces populares y en los elementos tan variados del mestizaje.* ("The great legacy of Pablo Antonio to this culture is precisely the permanent search for our identity in the people's roots and in the varied elements of *mestizaje"*).[277] Weaving the contribution of folklore into the contemporary political and cultural context was essential for capturing the "authentic" Nicaraguan character. Cuadra and other poets of Nicaragua's literary *vanguardia* developed Nicaragua's folklore as a literary movement of cultural protest in opposition to the Somoza dictatorship. They considered Somoza an uneducated boor and they sought to develop a sense of national pride through literary productions and a study of folklore, a three-way amalgamation of religion, ethnicity, and the "authentic" past into a romantic nationalism of a mestizo Catholic nation (Whisnant 1995).

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[276] John L. Allen, Jr. (2000:139) writes "For the liberation theologians, however, the perception that they are doing no more than tracing out the consequences of German ideas is deeply frustrating. They insist that the origins of their movement lie in the experience of poverty in the Third World. Indeed, most Latin American liberationists take it as a point of pride that although political theology in Europe is an 'academic' matter, in the Third World liberation theology is a popular phenomenon closely tied to pastoral work. Many liberationists have chided Metz and Moltmann for writing endless prolegomena to action without ever doing anything. The liberationists are, of course, aware of the important figures in Catholic theology, and they may even recognize certain sympathies, but this is a far cry from asserting that liberation theology is derivative from European thought."

[277] Found at Sergio Ramírez's website in an essay called "El Maestro de Tarca" (15 May 2003), http://www.sergioramirez.org.ni/indexprologos.htm

La Purísima as the "National Soul" of Nicaragua

La Purísima is a national festival that reflects the "national soul," according to Edgardo Buitrago (1959). La Purísima's elaboration as a festival in the Catholic calendar has figured as an important cultural tool used by elite political actors struggling for control of the state and seeking a way to "imagine" a national community, but the symbol is much more deeply rooted in Nicaraguan culture than a focus on elite uses of the symbol alone can provide.

A symbol fundamental to a transnational institution (Della Cava 2001), the Virgin Mary is a symbol from a "great" tradition, but it has also been adapted to "little" traditions around the world. The natives of Nicaragua, subordinated by Spanish Catholic conquerors imposing their religion, have fought back, transforming the tools of the oppressor. They appeal to the compassionate mother figure for comfort and guidance; however, at the same time, the symbol keeps them in dialogue, controlling the rebelliousness that persists as subalterns whose interests are regularly blocked.

The first "translation" of the Virgin Mary for Nicaraguan natives was not into a symbol for a nation. At first contact, Spanish chroniclers recorded Chorotegan religious beliefs, including worship of the volcano as a god and human sacrifice to appease the fiery god (Esgueva Gómez 1996:178-187). When the volcano erupted in 1772, a priest led a procession with the image of the Virgin of Assumption from the Magdalena Church to pray for the volcanic eruption to stop (Zúñiga C. 1996:217). In contrast, Spaniards, citizens of a Catholic monarchy living in colonial Nicaragua, who, in 1762, ten years prior to the eruption of the volcano near Masaya, asked the Virgin Mary of the Immaculate Conception for protection against British attacks against Granada (Zúñiga C. 1996:214). Colonists of Spanish heritage associated the Virgin Mary with the defense of the colonial project, while conquered Indians were concerned with natural dangers and supernatural

powers needed for protection, a local rather than national concern. No "imagined"

community existed at the time that included both Mesoamerican natives and Spanish

colonists as citizens of Spain.

Not until after Nicaragua was recovering from Walker's destructive filibustering

(1855-1856) that came about through city-state rivalry did another significant

opportunity present itself for finding ways to imagine Nicaragua as a nation-state. In

1857, the Pope, after years of argument, decided that the time had finally come to accept

the theological idea of the Immaculate Conception as official dogma. In celebration of

the new dogma long promoted by his religious order, a Franciscan priest in León

introduced an innovation in the Immaculate Conception festival: the *Gran Gritería* as a

finale to the nine-day prayer vigil on December 8, aiming to bind the community

together after the destruction of National War against Walker (Zúñiga C. 1996). Starting

the Gritería in León, Father Gordiano Carranza suggested that other communities adopt

the celebration (Buitrago Buitrago 1959). Due to Franciscan presence in both Masaya

and Granada, the practice quickly spread to these two cities. Monsignor José Antonio

Lezcano started the G*ran Gritería* in Managua in 1858 but interest flagged; however, by

1865, President Tomás Martínez and his wife Jacoba revived the celebration with the

help of Nicaraguan historian, Nicolás Buitrago Matus (Zúñiga C. 1996:357-358).[278]

Not content with merely supporting a religious festival, Martínez went further.

He symbolically united church and state by declaring the Virgin Mary as the Immaculate

Conception as Nicaragua's patron saint and he also made Mary the "General" of the

Nicaraguan Army (Zúñiga C. 1996:358). The conquistadors had conquered the New

World in the name of *la Virgen de los Remedios* (Burkhart 2001), and Martínez also

incorporated Mary as *la conquistadora*. This political move ideologically isolated the

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[278] For his account of this development of the Immaculate Conception celebration during the reign of General Tomás Martínez, Edgar Zúñiga (1996:357-358) replies on the scholarship of Buitrago Matus (1998 (1963)).

Indian communities as conquered subjects; he did not include them as citizens of the "imagined" nation. Moreover, the natives related to Mary as their compassionate advocate, not a militarized Mary.

Meanwhile, Tomás Martínez also negotiated a Concordat between the Vatican and the Nicaraguan state in 1861-1862, establishing the Roman Catholic religion as the official church of the state (Arellano 1986:60-61). The Concordat provided the legal basis for the teaching of Catholic doctrine in all the central offices of the state as well as the universities, high schools, and elementary schools with the Bishops having the right to censure any books. The State could present candidates to fill vacancies in the church hierarchy. Bishops and priests were required to swear an oath of loyalty to state as constitutionally established, expressly stating they would not participate in any activities that would threaten Nicaragua's national independence or the public peace. Christendom cultural basis for the emerging nation-state was an elite construct that did not penetrate into the remote rural areas.

The presidency of Joaquín Zavala began to unravel what stability had been created during the Conservative 30-year period. Zavala's expulsion of the Jesuits in 1881 weakened the Conservative consensus, while also breaking trust with the Indian communities in Matagalpa. The breach was also felt in Monimbó, which was also the site of protests against the ouster of this religious order (Cerutti 1984; Zúñiga C. 1996). The Jesuits had been blamed for an Indian rebellion in Matagalpa, but the Indians' grievances were related to actions taken by President Joaquín Zavala to force them to work on modernization projects aimed at expanding the infrastructure need for the agroexport of coffee (Gould 1993; Gould 1995b; Gould 1997; Gould 1998; Konrad 1995; Téllez 1999).

José Santos Zelaya's Liberal Revolution of 1893 took several actions that aimed to undo the foundations of Nicaraguan Christendom. Although Zelaya, like most Liberal

leaders in the nineteenth century, was more anti-clerical than anti-religious, he took provocative actions against the Church. He nullified the 1862 Concordat, forbid the celebration of patron saint festivals, and forbid priests to wear their priestly robes outside of the church. He expelled priests that spoke out against his actions, including the Bishop of Nicaragua, Simeón Pereira y Castellón (Zúñiga C. 1996:475-506).

Deposing Zelaya required, as had the routing of William Walker, external assistance—this time from the United States, just beginning to emerge as a world power. The United States aimed to keep the European colonial rivals of France and Britain away from the Western Hemisphere. Zelaya ruled for sixteen years, internal opposition grew to his authoritarian in leadership. He sought independence from the United States, desiring to exercise sovereignty, which is an important part of being a modern nation-state (Stansifer 1977). Zelaya's ouster resulted in a loss of sovereignty for Nicaragua, as the occupation by U.S. Marines stretched on for close to a quarter century. After Sandino's "crazy army" had forced the Marines to leave, Anastasio Somoza Garcia, head of the U.S.-trained National Guard, usurped power (Clark 1992; Millett 1977; Walter 1993). Due to a change under President Franklin Roosevelt to the "Good Neighbor" policy, the United States decided not to intervene (Bermann 1986; Pike 1995),[279] beginning a period of indirect rule in which the Somoza family maintained their dictatorship in large part by supporting the United States' policy.

Although Catholic bishops in Nicaragua did not support Sandino's resistance to the Marines, arguing that he and his followers were disobedient to God from whom all authority receives its legitimacy (Arellano 1986; Arellano 1997; Kirk 1992), the oligarchs in Granada were inspired by his anti-American stance. Although they were repeatedly rebuffed by Sandino who was suspicious of their political opportunism, these eminent Caballeros Católicos had been advocating a Catholic corporatism since before World War

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[279] Interventions did occur, in spite of the Good Neighbor policy in Argentina (MacDonald 1980) and Cuba (Benjamin 1977; Cronon 1959).

I. Although their differences finally prevented a true alliance against U.S. intervention, Gobat (2005) traces the way Catholic cultural anti-Americanism shared an affinity with Sandino's anti-U.S. intervention. Sandino's ideology of "anarcho-Spiritism" (Hodges 1986) was hardly likely to inspire an "elective affinity" among Catholic clergy for his anti-imperialist struggle.

Somoza's political party was Liberal, but he and his two sons did not challenge the power of the Catholic Church; they dropped the anti-clerical element of nineteenth-century Liberalism. In keeping with modern ideas of freedom of religion, Somoza allowed Protestant groups to operate in the country, while the dictatorship maintained the state's association with Catholic symbols. Archbishop Lezcano crowned Somoza's daughter Lillian "Queen of the Army" with a crown from the image of the *Virgen de la Candelaria* (Arellano 1986; Arellano 1997; Kirk 1992:41). They allowed the Catholic Church to remain dominant in the spheres of family and education. Moreover, the Somoza family dynasty did not have a nationalist agenda (Dashti 1994); instead, they developed the state through control of over the means of coercion, the National Guard, and did so without understanding a nation-building project. The regime enjoyed the complicity of the Catholic Church, whose actions were an important part of political legitimizing the Somocista state. Yet, conservative Catholics in Granada, such as Pablo Antonio Cuadra and José Coronel Urtecho, were at first supportive of Somoza because he brought order to the country. They were sons of men who had been active in the *Caballero Católico* (Gobat 2005:222). Their "nonconformist" political stance came after the 1928 elections supervised by the United States, in which the Conservatives lost the election. They felt that the democracy project was undercutting their power and authority.

The institution was finally unable to tolerate the brutally repressive actions of the second son, Anastasio Garcia Debayle. After the Somoza dynasty was overthrown, the

Sandinistas made a second effort—akin to Zelaya's effort—to transform Nicaragua into a secular nation-state, while at the same time attempting to walk a cultural tight rope on the issue of religion by supporting liberation theology and the Christian Base Community movement. The struggle over the national direction took place through the medium of religious symbols, such as liberation theology highlighting Mary's *Magnificat* about God dashing the powerful from their thrones against the conservative view of Mary calling for peace and reconciliation along with the visions of the Immaculate Conception with an anti-Sandinista message from the village of Cuapa. The Sandinistas developed groups of mothers of the heroes and martyrs to honor the sacrifice that the families had made to the revolution (Bayard de Volo 2001), but, the symbols related to these groups were newly created and not grounded in the Catholic Church's worldview. The Sandinista state awarded secular honors of mothers, but the draft and the continued suffering from the contra war and economic boycott made women in Masaya and elsewhere in the country doubt that the worth of their sacrifices.

The Sandinistas tried to create new symbols based on revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle, seeking to substitute a new revolutionary content in already existing symbols. Similar to the French revolutionaries of the 17th century (Hunt 1984:55), the Sandinistas "found themselves in the midst of revolution before they had the opportunity to reflect on their situation." When Carlos Fonseca died at the hands of Somoza's National Guard in 1976, the FSLN was at a low point in terms of numbers of people organized into cadres. Without enough resources to fight back against the dictatorship; however, Somoza's repression drove more and more people, especially young people, to do something to resist the repression, even without being officially members of the FSLN clandestine guerrilla cells. Insurrectionary phase of the revolution was a spontaneous uprising that surprised even the Sandinistas. The rapid collapse of the National Guard once Somoza had fled the country was an unexpected event that ushered the FSLN into

power.[280] With a monopoly on coercive power, the FSLN through its newly unified nine-man National Directorate consolidated its power to direct the aftermath of the overthrow of the dictatorship. The overthrow was the result of a loose multi-class coalition united only by opposition to the brutal repressiveness of the long-running Somocista family dictatorship (Everingham 1996:3). Fonseca had argued for the development of a political program, but factionalism among the various guerrilla groups and their clandestine mode of operation limited the potential for developing such a political program, let alone its development in the general population. Before his death, Fonseca, as the organic intellectual of the FSLN, had only barely begun to think about the possibilities of liberation theology as part of the political program that could guide the Sandinistas once they held the reigns of power (Zimmermann 2000).

La Mística, Carlos Fonseca and La Purísima

In 1964, Carlos Fonseca was arrested by the Somoza dictatorship. During the student demonstrations that were organized to protest his imprisonment, a traditional religious chant was transformed into a political chant. Students chanted: "What is it that brings us such delight? Carlos Fonseca and his guerrilla fight!"[281] The radical student movement supporting the revolutionary, socialist, non-religious Fonseca used the format of the famous Purísima slogan to demand his release from prison. Why would radical

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[280] Members of the National Guard would resurface later, having sought and obtained the assistance of the newly elected Reagan administration in the United States to mount a counter-revolutionary effort. The National Guard's loyalty to the caudillo rule of Somoza rather than to the military institution as a professional organization protecting the state probably accounts for its rapid collapse, once Somoza had fled the country. The authority of the National Guard derived from the Somoza family dictatorship, which would not have existed without U.S. support; therefore, external support was sought as a first order of business for resisting the new revolutionary regime.

[281] Matilde Zimmerman's (2000:84) graceful translation of the Spanish phrase, *Quién causa tanta alegria? Carlos Fonseca con su guerrilla,* which she (2000:241, n.38) cites from the July 2, 1964 issue of *La Prensa.*

students adopt and transform a religious expression from this *Gran Gritería* for the Virgin Mary to express their support for a *compañero* in the struggle to overthrow Somoza? Is it an example of sacrilege? Probably for some participants, it was an audacious expropriation of a sacred image and profaning it through such use. But, there may also be something else going on here that reflects a people beginning "to see through their culture toward political goals in such a fashion that their religious discourse and practices become oppositional" (Billings 1990:9).

This incident may be one clue to the way in which the Immaculate Conception is indeed the "soul" of the Nicaraguan nation. If a people are steeped in a cultural matrix deeply infused with the cultural power of the Virgin Mary, then they are operating within a frame that shapes how they see the world.[282] This frame is not easily penetrated by an oppositional reinterpretation, but if the context changes, a breakthrough may happen. When using a frame that matches a particular worldview, more is conveyed than a few, isolated words. "When we negate a frame, we evoke the frame," according to Geeorge Lakoff (2004:3). An oppositional theology, using the Virgin Mary selectively in the process, evokes a frame that has been part of the worldview the students were questioning and trying to change.

Carlos Fonseca was a secular revolutionary. Biographer Matilde Zimmermann (2000:33) writes that, by the age of seventeen in 1954, Fonseca "no longer accepted the teachings of the church."[283] Yet, I will attempt to demonstrate that Fonseca's secular revolutionary ethic shared a great deal with the religious culture planted in fertile indigenous soil by the Franciscans, the Christian order that introduced this Marian devotion and which is now deeply rooted in popular religiosity.

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[282] I am thinking of the cognitive model theories, e.g., George Lakoff's (1996; Lakoff 2004) research on framing, or cognitive anthropology (D'Andrade 1995; Strauss and Quinn 1994).
[283] Although otherwise excellent, Zimmermann's biography does not adequately analyze Fonseca's thinking on religion; this remains an important topic for future research.

Carlos Fonseca, born in 1936 in Matagalpa, was killed forty years later in the mountains east of Matagalpa by Somoza's National Guard along with two FSLN guerrilla companions. It was hard for FSLN supporters to believe that he was really dead. Prior announcements of his death by the dictatorship had proven to be false. A mystique had grown up that Fonseca could magically transform himself into a bird or a monkey to escape being killed (Zimmermann 2000:205). His ascetic approach to revolutionary struggle was also a mystique with, at least, a quasi-religious sensibility, even though the content was secular. Although new ideas (such as socialism) were beginning to compete with traditional Catholic ideas, such as the Immaculate Conception being the "soul of the nation," liberation theology—a religious response to the suffering of the poor—had not yet been crafted in 1964. Only after Vatican II (1962-1965) and the meeting in 1968 of Latin American bishops and theologians in Medellín, Colombia, would the elements of liberation theology and the Christian base community begin to emerge (CELAM 1978; CELAM 1987; McGovern 1980).

Fonseca was inspired by the 1959 Cuban Revolution, which took place before the transformations in the Catholic Church inspired by Vatican II. Cuban revolutionaries largely rejected the Catholic faith as irrelevant to their cause, even if raised in nominally Catholic families (Kirk 1989; Randall 1983). The plan Fonseca worked out for Nicaragua was based on socialist ideas and his analysis of Nicaraguan history. Fonseca focused on recovering the history of Augusto César Sandino's struggle to end the occupation of Nicaragua by U.S. Marines in the 1930's, a struggle ended by Sandino's assassination at the hands of the National Guard headed by Anastasio Somoza García. Fonseca suggested that the newly created National Liberation Front name itself after Sandino, creating a second generation of Sandinistas (Zimmermann 2000). He thought that if the FSLN could recruit people who would make a commitment to revolutionary action in the struggle for both national liberation and justice for the poor and oppressed, they would

be transformed into better people who could make a better society. "Although similar in some ways to religious concepts of self-sacrifice and individual fulfillment, "Fonseca's biographer Matilde Zimmermann (2000:192) writes, "Fonseca's view of the 'new man' had more to do with patriotism and social class than with theology." For Fonseca, this is no doubt true; for his followers, they were more likely to look at him through their religious worldview. His leadership stressed a revolutionary *mística* that has roots in Nicaraguan popular religious practice.

Mística, Ethic of Revolutionary Nicaragua

While conducting fieldwork, I began to notice that the term *mística* pervaded the political discourse of Sandinista supporters. Given that I was in Nicaragua nearly a decade after the revolution had ended,[284] the term was used to speak of loss. They spoke with sadness that the *mística* was gone. Those who supported the revolution but were critical of the FSLN separated the ideals of the revolution from the FSLN as a political party, managing to preserve the pure ideal. They said the leadership of the National Directorate of the FSLN had lost the *mística*, leaving open the possibility that new leaders could come forward and take up the *mística* again.

My respondents in Masaya said that the word *mística* meant true commitment to the revolution as a spiritual transformation, not merely a political one. In Cristina María Van der Gulden's *Vocabulario Nicaragüense* (1995:237), *mística* is defined as the "attitude or commitment that motivates a human being to struggle for an ideal." She included an example of the word *mística* by quoting from a volunteer's account of his

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[284] By this I mean that the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had been voted out of office in 1990. Daniel Ortega peacefully transferring power to Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in 1990 and Arnoldo Alemán had won the election in 1996, meaning the country had been living for nearly 10 years with neoliberal economic policies and a strong political effort to erase the gains of the revolution.

participation in the 1980 National Literacy Campaign, the first major program

undertaken by the Sandinistas after coming to power. A young volunteer talks about how

he resisted a desire to go home to escape the harsh conditions of living in the remote,

rugged mountains:

> So, although I wanted to go back home, I understood that I
> could not give up because it is for *mística* or discipline
> or duty that any solider with integrity will bring his emotional
> impulses under control in order to stay in the trench he's been
> assigned to defend (Ocampo 1984).

The ethic espoused in the literacy campaign appears to be the same one demanded of

FSLN guerrilla fighters in the mountains, even though the young people involved in the

campaign were civilian volunteers in a non-military project. Robert Arnove (1986:17)

notes that the Sandinistas viewed the literacy campaign as a "cultural insurrection,"

following hard on the heels of the armed insurrection that toppled the dictatorship.

Thus, *mística* is understood as a discipline, a military duty but strongly tinged with a

religious ethic of commitment to a cause.

A Nicaraguan liberation theologian, José María Vigil (n.d.)[285], gives more insight

into the meaning of *mística*:

> The typical middle class virtues and qualities (efficiency, hard work, competition,
> responsibility) will be definitively surpassed only by the New Man and the New
> Woman. The middle class, capitalist person is motivated by egoistic self-interest,
> and that is a very powerful motivating force. A revolution will surpass capitalism
> only if it makes use of a yet more powerful force: the mystique of the New Man
> and the New Woman. The New Person, man or woman, does not grow like
> mushrooms after a structural change, nor is that New Person brought into
> existence by revolutionary decree. It is a question of mystique (*mística*).
> Socialism, the revolution, the collective or cooperative economy can not move
> forward by means of political decrees or state measures but rather through a
> mystique (religious or political or ideological but, in any case, a mystique).[286]

Vigil does not limit *mística* to a religious meaning but applies it equally to a political or

ideological commitment. However, at the end of the article, Vigil concludes that the

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[285] Although not dated, internal clues within this article suggest that it was written after the 1990
national election.
[286] This document by Vigil (n.d.) is translated from the Spanish by F. Donald Murphy.

challenge of the future requires *mística,* which is the "spirituality of liberation." She

writes:

> the utopia of the poor can be implemented only on the basis of the
> mystique and maturity of humanity, not on the basis of simple
> structural reforms of an economic nature. Without the mystique of
> the New People, individual egoism will always be stronger (Casaldáliga and Vigil
> 1994; Vigil n.d.).

Fundamental to her conception is the notion of utopia. The development of new

behaviors must aim to achieve an ideal society through social or collective action, but the

motivation required comes from within, not prompted by external commands by

government, party, or church. Inside of a turning inward to find the divine, the

revolutionary struggle calls for a group transformation understood as sacred activity

where the individual is joined with the group.

Within orthodox Marxism, the use of a philosophical or mystical guide for political

action is rejected, but Nicaraguan political culture is infused with religiosity causing an

overlap between secular and religious modes. Fonseca had an important role in

developing this commitment to the revolution as a vision of a higher goal suffused with a

mystical sense of purpose.

Carlos Fonseca, a Secular Left Mystic

I propose that Carlos Fonseca can be understood as a secular left mystic, a non-

believing socialist with an underlying *mística*, or a culturally religious ethic of self-

sacrifice on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Fonseca tapped into popular religious

beliefs and practices more than theological arguments. His secular theories of revolution,

though informed by the Cuban experience, were rooted in Nicaraguan experience—not

only the struggle of Sandino against the occupation of the U.S. Marines but also a

Christian tradition of identification with the "holy poor" derived from a deeply rooted

Franciscan tradition.   Fonseca grounded the revolutionary effort in indigenous thinking.

He chose Augusto César Sandino as the hero, but a deeper—perhaps largely unexamined—source of his thinking is the Franciscan model of small group solidarity.

In the Sandinista National Liberation Front, guerrilla fighters formed small clandestine groups to fight against the repression of Somoza and his National Guard. This small group formation guided by the *mística* of revolutionary socialist commitment to poor peasants and workers can be illuminated by using Victor Turner's concept of "communitas," that fleeting liminal modality of human social relationship in which a relative lack of social structure forges bonds of equality and comradeship (Turner 1996:96). Building on Turner's application of his concept to the early history of the Franciscan order, a strikingly similar ethic of poverty and identification with the "holy poor" can be detected in Fonseca's personal and political practice.

St. Francis of Assisi conceived of his friars as "liminars" on the way to heaven and, to achieve this transition, he emphasized "doing without" (Turner 1996:144). He believed in radical poverty, preaching that the brothers should rejoice when among the poor and the weak, beggars and lepers. St. Francis wanted his friars to beg—hence the name "mendicant" order—so that their source of money for the necessities of life would be always be insecure and require a greater reliance on God (Turner 1969:144).

A similar existential "communitas" was created by FSLN revolutionaries who endured deprivation and hardship in the mountains. When recruiting students, Fonseca insisted that they identify with peasants and workers. Going to live in the mountains with the peasants was an important part of the transformative experience. Only those who proved themselves capable of this kind of self-sacrifice were to be trusted and given more responsibility in the movement. The guerrillas were taught to rely on their *compañeros,* building solidarity in small clandestine groups based on a revolutionary ethic that required discipline and high moral standards (Zimmermann 2000:88). This revolutionary experience in the mountains had some qualities of a ritual

experience. Those undergoing a ritual transition are expected to do without elements of social structure, such as property, social status, privileges, material pleasures, and clothing (Turner 1969:143).

Carlos Fonseca lived an exemplary life; he was an "organic intellectual" (Gramsci 1971) whose writings and life exuded charisma, inspiring people to become militants against Somoza. Obsessed with analyzing Nicaraguan reality in order to liberate his country, Fonseca was not interested in accumulating possessions. He always had more books than clothes (Zimmermann 2000:42). He emphasized doing without for all revolutionaries. Those in the mountains received donations from organizers in the city or asked for supplies from sympathetic peasants. Hence, like Franciscan brothers, FSLN guerrillas were expected to beg. They were mendicant revolutionaries, dependent on the support of sympathizers. Fonseca conceived the struggle as more than a process of taking power away from a dictator. It was a process of personal change as ordinary participants became "new" men and "new" women through the struggle (Zimmermann 2000:192-193).[287] Radical students from bourgeois families in the city who experienced solidarity with poor peasants in the mountains would undergo a radical transformation, if they lived the struggle with integrity. In a liminal transition from oppressed, disorganized people to a free, well-organized revolutionary force, FSLN fighters would liberate Nicaragua from Somocista repression and economic exploitation.

Fonseca led an ascetic life and was conservative in terms of marriage and sexual relations (Zimmermann 2000:192-193). He insisted that relations between men and women should not be individualistic seeking temporary pleasure. In part, Fonseca's sexual ethic was his response to how his mother had been mistreated (Zimmermann 2000:14). Augustina Fonseca was a single mother with children by several different men.

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[287] Fonseca was inspired by Ernesto (Che) Guevara's total dedication "to the suffering of the people" (Zimmermann 2000:179), but Fonseca's ethic for the "new" man required stricter standards of personal behavior than Che's (Zimmermann 2000:193).

Carlos' father was a rich coffee plantation owner, who eventually acknowledged Carlos as his illegitimate son. When Carlos Fonseca applied to university, he identified his mother as a "servant." The college admissions staff asked him to change that to "housewife," but he refused because his mother never enjoyed the status of housewife, being forced to earn a living as a washerwoman without the honored status of married woman (Zimmermann 2000:14).

Fonseca insisted on *mística*, an ascetic ethic of personal discipline in which one subordinated self to the larger calling of the revolution. He called it the "proletarian spirit" in keeping with the terminology of socialism (Zimmermann 2000:180), but his revolutionary ethic has an underlying religious character. He shares with St. Francis of Assisi the religious charisma of an exemplary life lived on behalf of the poor and oppressed.

Some informants think that the Sandinistas in power betrayed their revolutionary ethic, but understanding the temporary nature of the charisma of communitas and the inevitable return of social structure, we can see that Fonseca's commitment to the *mística* could not have been sustained once the Sandinistas were in power.[288] Aside from the fact that not all of the revolutionaries may have shared Fonseca's ascetic ethic, Fonseca inspired many Nicaraguans struggling against Somoza, perhaps because of the resonance with an "ethical" prophetic role, protesting injustice and oppression. Yet, just as the Franciscans found it difficult to maintain the radical poverty envisioned by their founder as the order was forced to institutionalize by the Catholic Church hierarchy (Turner 1969:146), even if Fonseca had lived to participate in the revolutionary government in the 1980s, he would have had difficulty translating his *mística* into

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[288] After the fall of the dictatorship, Fonseca's image as a martyred hero of the revolutionary struggle carried great charisma. On the third anniversary of the revolution, the Sandinistas decided to rebury him in the capital. They brought his remains from where he had been buried in Waslala to Matagalpa, his birthplace, and then to Managua. This event generated a response from hundreds of peasants who came to the ceremony in Waslala, 50,000 in Matagalpa, and people stood on the highway as the caravan carried his bones to Managua (Zimmermann 2000:1).

running a government. Scaling up from small clandestine groups to running a national government, social structure returns and "communitas"—always fleeting—would have been hard to sustain.

Conclusion

Nicaraguan culture is still "enchanted" by its religious worldview based on Catholicism, an important authorizing discourse that resists, not only secular political ideologies, such as Marxism and communism, but also non-Catholic religious worldviews. Marian symbols in Nicaragua have been used throughout Nicaragua's history to bind together a weak state and is a relatively unexplored basis of national identity.[289]

Sandinista efforts to revolutionize Catholicism through liberation theology and the "oppositional" potential of popular religion were weak ideological tools for transforming the Roman Catholic Church. The religion of revolution, as prophetic critique from within the hierarchical organization of the Roman Catholic Church, had few tools with which to turn the Sandinista counter-hegemonic worldview into a new dominant hegemony. In contrast, the religion of counter-revolution, as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church in Nicaragua, had all the strength of its ideological symbols deeply rooted in the culture, plus its external legitimacy as a religious institution. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo was able to work with powerful external allies who

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[289] Mestizaje has been more explicitly a source of national identity. Augusto Cesar Sandino referred to the Indo-Hispanic identity of the Nicaraguan people in his anti-imperialist struggle against the occupation of the U.S. Marines, but his spiritualism was hostile to Catholicism (Dospital 1996; Navarro-Genie 2002; Wünderich 1995a). Pablo Antonio Cuadra (1997 (1968); Whisnant 1995), a conservative in opposition to the Somoza dynasty, waxed romantically about the mestizaje identity from the 1940's through the 1990's. Jeffrey Gould (Gould 1995a; Gould 1995b; 1997) has focused extensively on the "myth of mestizaje," pointing out that it was build on elites trying to abolish the indigenous communities.

willingly provided material and diplomatic support, so that the Church could work against efforts to consolidate a Sandinista revolutionary ideology (Lernoux 1989).

In Nicaragua in the late 1990's, the restoration of neo-Christendom continued through symbolic actions that used Marian images in support of the neoliberal state, i.e. the government-funded construction of a large statute of La Purísima in Managua in 1999, the Immaculate Conception recognized as Nicaragua's national patron saint by the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church in 2001, and "restoring" the Virgin Mary as the General of the Nicaraguan Army in 2001.

Parallels can be seen between the Catholic reaction to the aggressive liberal reforms of the Zelaya period (1893-1909) and the counter-revolutionary response to the Sandinistas (1979-1990). The Zelaya period ended with direct U.S. intervention that brought the Catholic Church back to its position of de facto cultural hegemony in matters of education and family, even though the formal separation of church and state remained. With the aid of indirect U.S. intervention against the Sandinistas, the Catholic Church in the contemporary period emerged again with a restoration of its hegemony on education and family, but also as a stronger political actor in the polity, able to speak forcefully against the state and weight in on elections, veiling its partisan bias in heavily metaphoric religious discourse. Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo strengthened the legitimacy of the institution as a mediating force from the first mediation between Somoza and the clandestine FSLN guerrillas to the new round of pact-making process between Liberal and Sandinista parties.

This chapter illuminates the Catholic faith through the Virgin Mary symbol as a powerful cultural resource for growing the strength of the Catholic Church's hegemonic hold on key nation-building cultural elements. This focus on Catholic ideology and its practices supplements the scholarship that interrogates the nation-building myth of Nicaragua as a *mestizo* nation. The Somoza dynasty spent little time promoting a sense

of nationalism, while the Conservative opposition developed folklore as a romantic cultural opposition to Somocista state, weaving together *mestizo* identity and popular religious practices (Stansifer 1981; Whisnant 1995). Promoting Catholicism as a key nation-building force aims to overcome ethnic and class differences, imagining a nation as united and unified through Roman Catholicism. The Catholic myth of nationalism competes with other religious and secular currents offering alternative worldviews and visions of change in the social structure. The restoration of a Catholic cultural hegemony at the end of the twentieth century means that Nicaragua expresses itself as a "modern" nation-state in religious idiom similar to "fundamentalism" as a modern phenomenon, an attempt to resist secularization and meld capitalism with traditional religious values (Coleman S. J. 1992; Deiros 1991; Kaplan 1992). Neither fundamentalism nor Nicaragua's Catholic integralism are throw-backs to the past but rather they are modern reproductions of religious worldviews, modified by struggle against secularization, socialism, and competing religions in a plural world.

Carlos Fonseca is set within this Catholic cultural framework with its deep roots in Franciscan mendicant asceticism. His model of the "new" man or "new" woman transformed by participation in this moral battle on behalf of the poor is an ascetic model. Although Fonseca consciously rejected religion and worked in the secular theories of socialism and nationalism, his followers responded by transforming the central Purísima chant into one that substitutes Fonseca for the Virgin Mary. Although no doubt branded as sacrilege, borrowing this chant indicates a battle within the same cultural framework, drawing on a deeply held worldview.

Chapter 6

"Sect-like" Groups in the Roman Catholic Church in Masaya: Christian Base Community, Charismatic Renewal, and Neocatechumenal Way[290]

Introduction

Catholic saint processions, such as the patron saint celebrations or La Purísima, are not the only religious ritual forms that flourish in Nicaragua. Before doing my fieldwork in Nicaragua, I had heard most about Catholic liberation theology and the Christian Base Community movement and the challenge that Protestant and Pentecostal religious practices presented to the dominant church.[291] The controversy about Nicaragua that was most visible to me while in the United States was between the Vatican and certain high profile liberation theologians, including the four priests who served in the Sandinista government in the 1980's.[292] When I arrived to carry out fieldwork in 1999, however, the extent of activity in competing religious currents within the Catholic Church quickly became evident, prompting me to begin exploration of these alternative movements.

My fieldwork experience brought me into contact with three recent innovations within the Roman Catholic Church that are active in Masaya: the Christian Base Community of Masaya, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the Neocatechumenal Way. Originating in the second half of the twentieth century, they are modern trends that

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[290] This chapter was presented at Rutgers University, Livingston Campus, Piscataway, New Jersey, on December 13, 2006 at a meeting of the faculty Emeriti Assembly.

[291] The literature about the Protestant and Pentecostal movements is vast, e.g. (Bastian 1986; Bastian 1990; Bastian 1993; Bastian 1994; Bastian 1998; Chesnut 2003; Cortés 1992; Gama Navarro 1987; Garrard-Burnett 1997; Garrard-Burnett 2004; Goldin and Metz 1991; Goldin and Metz 1997; Madrigal Mendieta 1999; Martin 2002; Martínez 1989; Pak 1996; Paredes 1995; Stoll 1990a; Stoll 1990b; Swatos Jr. 1994; Zub Kurylowicz 1993; Zub Kurylowicz 1996).

[292] The controversy about priests serving in the Sandinista government was widely covered in the media, especially Pope John Paul II's public rebuke of Ernesto Cardenal in 1983 for not resigning his position as minister of culture (E.g., Kinzer 1991; Kirk 1992; Lernoux 1989).

tend to de-emphasis the saints and ritual processions in the streets. They each claim

authority from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) for their focus on new forms of

prayer and fellowship, but they differ from each other considerably in the ritual forms

used as well as in the aspects of Christianity they emphasize. At the risk of

oversimplifying, I will begin by saying that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal emphasizes

heart-felt prayer and healing; the Neocatechumenal Way emphasizes the sacraments and

deepening adult learning about the faith; and the Christian Base Community emphasizes

ethical action, responding to the prophetic Biblical message to care about the poor and

oppressed. They share the goal of increasing the commitment of the laity to the Roman

Catholic Church, using new religious music in popular styles, new pastoral methods,

encouraging lay people to read and study the Bible, and gathering in small groups that

create worship-centered mini-congregations.

My Catholic informants in Masaya called these new Catholic groups *corrientes*

("tendencies" or "trends"), while news reports from the Vatican called them "new

movements." In May 1998, Pope John Paul II recognized several "new movements":

> VATICAN CITY, MAY 31, (ZENIT) - Future Church historians will have to
> distinguish between "before" and "after" Pentecost 1998. In fact, this celebration,
> with all its profound and suggestive moments, has served as the occasion for the
> Pope to publicly recognize the "coming of age" of new movements, communities,
> and ecclesial realities of Christian living that have blossomed in the wake of
> Vatican II (Zenit 1998).

Although the Charismatic Renewal and Neocatecumenal Way were among those

recognized, the Christian Base Community was conspicuously absent in this public

recognition of new "ecclesial realities."[293] The ZENIT reporter acknowledges that the

new movements that received official acceptance in 1998 have caused "tensions" within

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[293] ZENIT (1998) reported that more than 50 movements were represented at this 1998 Papal
gathering, but the article listed only ten: Communion and Liberation, Regnum Christi, Focolare,
Christian Life Movement (MVC), Charismatic Renewal, the Neocatecumenal Way, Schönstatt,
Cursillos, Legion of Mary, and Emmanuel Community. The three movements I focus on in this
chapter are the most prominent "ecclesial realities" I observed in Nicaragua and were the ones
with which my respondents in Masaya seemed to be most preoccupied.

the Church but none have caused as much tension as liberation theology, which underpins the Christian Base Community movement. Although the Vatican promotes "new" forms of evangelism, the hierarchy of the institution wants to remain in control, as the ZENIT article makes clear. The new movements

> certainly were not the result of any overarching pastoral plan, and at times they have provoked certain tensions, but nevertheless, they are a clear witness to the action of the Holy Spirit on the threshold of the third millennium…John Paul called the Movements to become the leading protagonists of the new evangelization in the midst of a materialistic world: "In the Christian formation offered by your Movements, never forget to include the element of faithful obedience to bishops, the successors of the apostles, in communion with the Successor of Peter" (ZENIT 1998).

Vatican II writings contained significant passages about the Holy Spirit, but this aspect of the famous council has not received the same attention as those passages that support the themes of liberation theology. The documents from the Council allow divergent interpretations and are the result of compromises during the Vatican II sessions. Any assessment of Vatican II as a clear victory for any particular theological emphasis, such as liberation theology, overstates the case.

Of particular note in the Vatican news article quoted above is the reminder about the obligation of obedience to the bishops and the Pope ("Successor of Peter"), which underscores the fundamental source of tension related to the new movements—ongoing political struggles about the authority structures of the institution. Although only liberation theology (often called "progressive" Catholicism) has come close to being labeled a heresy, the other two movements also have aspects that may be heretical (which I will discuss below). Each one poses potential challenges to the authority structure of the institution.

Internal and external pressures are pushing the Roman Catholic Church to allow new forms of religious expression. External pressure comes from growing Protestant and Pentecostal groups in Latin America, where once the church had a cultural monopoly—

challenges coming from the historical descendents of the original Christian sects that broke away from the church in the 16th century in Europe during and after the Reformation and the more recent emergence of charismatic Pentecostal groups.[294] Internal pressures are coming from lay people with new ideas for "renewing" the church and borrowing some of the forms of worship that they see in the Protestant and Pentecostal groups, while remaining loyal Catholics. Before describing and analyzing the significance of the new movements within the Catholic Church, I will set the stage by explaining the development of Protestantism in Masaya. An examination of Nicaragua's history shows a dramatic growth of religious competition from the 1960's on.

Protestantism in Nicaragua

Although Protestant groups have been active in Nicaragua since the Liberal government of José Santos Zelaya defended the freedom of religion (1893-1909), the years of the Somoza family dictatorship were ones of relatively quiet growth and development for the Baptist Church (Pixley 1999:125). Like their Catholic counterparts for the most part (Arellano 1986; Kirk 1992), official Baptist publications in Nicaragua were silent when Augusto César Sandino was assassinated in 1934. Baptists celebrated the election of Anastasio Somoza Garcia in 1936 because he promised political stability and freedom of religion (Pixley 1999:122). They joined Somoza's party and won elections

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[294] Some of the general works on the growing Protestant and Pentecostal religious movements and its challenge to the Roman Catholic Church include: Deiros (1991), part of the massive study of the world-wide phenomena of fundamentalism in many religious groups spearheaded by Marty and Appleby (1991); Stoll (1990b), a controversial early study by an anthropologist who asked if Latin America was undergoing its own version of the Protestant Reformation; Bastian (1994; Bastian 1998), an important French historian of Protestantism in Latin America whose works have not been translated into English yet; Martin (1990; 2002), a prominent sociologist studying the Pentecostal movements; Chesnut (2003), a sociologist working the "religious economy" school; the works of Latin American scholars on Pentecostalism are included in the edited volume by Boudewijnse (1991); and an anthropological review of the state of the field of study on Charismatic Christianity (Robbins 2004).

as Liberal *diputados* to the National Assembly. They tended to gravitate away from the Conservative Party because it was seen as the "political arm" of the Catholic Church (Pixley 1999:124).

Somoza's Liberal government, although it made accommodation with the Catholic hierarchy, nonetheless allowed Protestant missionaries to enter and operate in Nicaragua (Millett 1977; Walter 1993). The Catholic Church found itself having to confront evangelism by non-Catholic groups without political support for maintaining its monopoly by exclusion of competitors, which they had enjoyed in the past. The Nicaraguan state was no longer willing to use legal means to shut out non-Catholic religions (Gill 1998).

When an ecumenical Protestant and Pentecostal march was held in 1960, organized by Latin American Mission (LAM), 7000 evangelicals walked past the national Catholic Cathedral in Managua (Pixley 1999:177), and then-president Luis Somoza Debayle (oldest son of the original Somoza) spoke to the crowd (Gill 1998:112). He lent his political legitimacy to religious freedom at a time when the quiet growth of religious competition suddenly burst into public visibility.

Sociologist David Martin (1990:50) includes Nicaragua among those countries of Latin America that have experienced the "deepest penetrations" of evangelical[295] Protestantism. The growth began in the 1950's; by 1990, self-reported data from the emerging non-Catholic religious groups indicated that close to 15% of the population professed some form of Protestantism or Pentecostalism.

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[295] In Latin America, the term typically used to refer to non-Catholic religious groups is *evangélico* (evangelical) rather than *protestante*; rather the terms has a much broader meaning, encompassing historically mainline Protestant Churches (such as Baptist, Presbyterian, or Methodist), Pentecostalism, Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, and Moravian (Stoll 1990b). Some local churches that are technically aligned with mainline Protestant churches (e.g., Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist) have adopted Pentecostal styles of worship in Latin America. I conducted participant-observation for several weeks in a Methodist church in Buenos Aires, Costa Rica in 1994 where the people were worshiping in a Pentecostal style; however, I noticed that the Baptist Church in Masaya did not appear to have adopted any elements of this fervent, emotional style.

In 2000, data indicate that the earlier figure may have been inflated. Those who are pursuing non-Catholic faith practices may only number about 10%. *La Prensa* (Ocón Rodríguez 2000) reported on a self-study commissioned by the Instituto Nicaragüense de Evangelismo a Fondo (INDEF) that put the national rate at 12% based on 1997 data. On the Western Pacific side of Nicaragua, the rate varied from 14% Protestant in Managua to 10% in Masaya.[296] Caution is required in interpreting these data because there are difficulties in getting an accurate count (Zub Kurylowicz 1993:18). INDEF explained that people are moving around between congregations and that previous reports may have double counted people (Ocón Rodríguez 2000). Even if the numbers are not as high as had been previously thought, the "protestant" trend has nonetheless been dramatic in Nicaragua. Moreover, the rate continues to grow (Gooren 2005), meaning that Nicaragua is participating in what some have called a new Protestant Reformation in Latin America (e.g., Stoll 1990b).[297]

It is the growth of Protestant religious groups that Anthony Gill (1998) hypothesizes as a strong factor for explaining change during the second half of the twentieth century in the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America.[298] Gill's hypothesis

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[296] The Atlantic Coast has a much longer history of Protestantism. The US State Department (2001), in the 2001-2005 annual reports on International Religious Freedom, reported on "an ecumenical spirit" on the Atlantic coast among the three dominant churches (Moravian, Episcopal, and Catholic), but on the Pacific Coast, "ecumenism is rare, and there is continuing and energetic competition for adherents between the Catholic Church and the evangelical churches." The International Religious Freedom reports can be access: http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/.

[297] This "Reformation" in Central America has been strongly Pentecostal since the 1960's (Anderson 2004; Boudewijnse, et al. 1991; Martin 2002; Robbins 2004; Stoll 1990b). Mainline Protestant churches in Nicaragua, such as the Baptist Church, have felt the impact of the Pentecostal "irruption" (Pixley 1999:177-238). Bastian (1994) argues that the democratizing trend of the historical mainline Protestant churches that grew out of the European Protestant Reformation are not having as much impact as the Pentecostal groups, which rely on forms of leadership that are traditional and charismatic in the Weberian sense. They are animated by corporatist, authoritarian, and antidemocratic factors (Bastian 1994:293).

[298] Although North American scholars (Finke and Stark 1998; Iannaccone, et al. 1995; Stark and Glock 1968; Stark and McCann 1993) have been applying microeconomic theory to the study of religion since Peter Berger's (1967) pioneering study, Anthony Gill is the first scholar to apply microeconomic theory to the analysis of Latin American religion (Chesnut 2003:7). Andrew Chesnut (2003:151) notes that some anthropologists have criticized Gill's use of the market model

provides a stimulating hypothesis with which to interpret my ethnographic description of the modern religious movements within the Roman Catholic Church.

Political scientist Anthony Gill (1998) argues that the emergence of Roman Catholic "progressivism" is best explained by the growth of evangelical Protestantism and Pentecostalism in Latin America. He connects political opposition to authoritarian regimes of the national hierarchies of the Catholic Church in Latin America with changes in their pastoral strategies in the years from 1939 to 1979. I explore Gill's fascinating argument and, then, take the discussion in an anthropological direction, informed by Weberian theory, as I interpret my data about these three Roman Catholic religious currents in Masaya, Nicaragua. My analysis looks at the internal tensions within the church in which the laity have come to the fore as leaders of new movements that have adopted some pastoral methods that are protestant-like in form, if not always in substance. Not only are some of the religious styles similar to those pioneered by religious groups that the Church labels "sects" (break-away groups that are heretical because they are departures from Catholic doctrine and practice), but they are also exhibiting sect-like qualities in that they challenge priestly authority. I see these sect-like challenges occurring in both "progressive" and "conservative" pastoral movements. Max Weber's ideal type pairings of church-sect and charisma-routinization are especially

as reductive (Burdick 1993:8) or as not applicable to the developing world since it was articulated to explain advanced capitalist societies (Pattnayak 1995:7). I see nothing inherently objectionable to using microeconomic theory to study the actions taken by religious institutions. From the point of view of Weberian social theory, this is not a new idea, although Weber's research was historical rather than model-building. Randall Collins (1986:7-8) illuminates Weber's analysis of the transformation of the original Christian charisma through routinization into an institution: "The principle ground for the routinization of religious charisma is the acquisition of property and the sources of income" rather than mere feelings of charisma; hence, the formation of an economically viable organization that has staying power creates stability but also introduces economic considerations that may conflict with religious values. Not limited only to his thesis of the Protestant Ethic and its relationship to the emergence of modern capitalism, Weber also found seeds of capitalism in the economic activities of various Catholic religious orders who acted as economic entrepreneurs in the Middle Ages (Collins 1986:52-54). Weber's theoretical linkage of politics, economics, and religion is evident when he concludes that the "downfall of the medieval economy was linked with religious politics, which is to say, with the failure of theocracy and the decline of the Papacy" (Collins 1986:10).

useful for studying Catholics in Nicaragua who are becoming avid followers of these new movements. These internal Church changes are more ways in which new history is being made. The laity is exerting a strong role in redefining local religiosity through their participation in these new movements, re-inventing and re-interpreting their "Great Tradition"[299] to meet the challenges of their time and place.

Gill's hypothesis is most relevant to an analysis of the behavior of the Nicaraguan Catholic Church hierarchy in the years leading up to the 1978-1979 legitimation crisis that ended in the violent overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, but it also has implications for understanding what happened after that time. Gill (1998:107) places Nicaragua and El Salvador among the most "progressive" of the national Episcopal conferences in Central America during this period. Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo received death threats when he spoke out against Somoza's repression and was vilified for his mediator role between the government and the Sandinista guerrillas, while Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador paid the ultimate price for speaking out against the brutal repression of the regime in his country when he was assassinated in 1980. Placing Nicaragua and El Salvador in the "antiauthoritarian" column as national episcopacies that spoke out against the violence and abuse of power by their respective authoritarian governments, Gill seeks to explain this phenomenon of the church breaking with the government as correlating significantly with relatively high rates of religious competition.[300] In Central America, Gill determined that the level of religious

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[299] Redfield's (1956) theory of "little traditions" set off against the "Great Tradition" has turned out to be a false dichotomy. Trying to isolate the oral traditions embedded in village folk religious culture from the written tradition reserved for urbanized, educated elites has turned out to be a false dichotomy because "villagers have turned out to be rather avid 'Great Traditionalists' themselves... Studying Catholics without the Mass, Muslims without worship, or Buddhists without the Pali canon is a bit like studying the Ndembu without the milk tree or the Azande without witchcraft" (Bowen 1993:185-186).

[300]Gill (1998:118) notes that Guatemala does not fit his model because this country had a high level of religious competition (the rate given is 6.3%, which is higher than either Nicaragua or El Salvador), and yet the national episcopacy was extremely conservative, not breaking with the authoritarian regime during the period in which Cardinal Mario Casariego was archbishop of

competition was 5.6% in Nicaragua and 5.5% in El Salvador's. In contrast, Gill finds, "proauthoritarian" Honduras had a lower rate of religious competition, 3.1%.[301]

Gill's (1998:1-8) research question is: Why did some national Catholic episcopacies take the progressive stand of defending the rights of the poor and speaking out against violent repression, while others did not? This is an analysis of differential actions by the Church as an institution understood to be making rational choices. Some national Church leaders continued to focus on their alliances with high-ranking government officials and on ministry primarily with the urban elite and middle classes, while others broke their alliances, distancing themselves politically to the point of launching critical opposition to military rule. Gill seeks to link the new "progressive" political position of the Church and the emergence of Christian base communities as a pastoral program aimed at the poor as a response to the Protestant challenge of the cultural hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church. Gill's (1998:77) argues that, although a pastoral strategy emphasizing the preferential option for the poor may anger an authoritarian regime suspicious of organizing among the poor, if religious competition is strong enough, bishops may be willing to risk conflict with the state to prevent the loss of members to Protestant or Pentecostal churches.

Gill notes that much of the literature on Latin America tends to explain this trend by reference to such variables as the influence of international Church reform (primarily the 1962-65 Vatican II Council and the 1968 meeting of Latin American bishops in

Guatemala City. If the local diocese (rather than the national episcopacy) were used as the primary unit of analysis, Gill (1998:119) contends, the regions of greatest Protestant competition within Guatemala suggest that there might be a correlation with the most progressive Catholic bishops at this level; however, he found it was not possible to pursue this refinement in operationalization of his hypothesis due to a lack of sufficient data from the regions.

[301]One problem with Gill's statistics on percentages of religious competition is that they do not track increasing non-Catholic religious competition but is a static percentage not clearly connected to the time frame of the study. It is notable that these rates of religious competition given for Nicaragua (5.6%) and El Salvador (5.5%) are considerably lower than the rates for Chile (15.5%) and Brazil (12%), where the depth of progressive Catholicism is greater, including progressive bishops and archbishops in their national episcopacies.

Medellín, Colombia), increasing poverty, or repression by authoritarian rulers. Gill

argues that these explanations do not adequately explain the Catholic Church's official

political strategy because most countries had similar high rates of poverty, repressive

regimes, and a growing number of younger priests, whom Gill presumes were more likely

to be open to Church reforms. In contrast to these explanations, Gill concludes that there

is a significant correlation between religious competition from below—growth of

Protestantism and Pentecostalism—and the emergence of the "progressive" response of

the Catholic Church. Religious competition is as an important factor because he believes

it is a stronger push factor than any of the other variables; in other words, religious

competition is likely to be a stronger motivating force for the Church to do something

about the problems of political repression and poverty.[302]

An official Church position of progressivism, emerging under a military

dictatorship, creates the potential risk of alienation from the state. Clergy are at risk of

becoming targets of the regime's repressive actions, which did happen in Latin America.

From 1939-1979, repressive governments were responsible for the deaths of many

diocesan priests as well as men and women in religious orders (Lernoux 1982:468),

which was often accomplished indirectly through paramilitary "death squads" for whom

governments claimed no responsibility (Campbell and Brenner 2000). Governments

targeted clergy and nuns, who addressed social issues related to poverty, as if they were

subversives, even when there was no evidence of political violence taken in opposition to

the regime. Since a few priests publicly took up arms and claimed to be acting as

Christians, however, the fear of subversion was not totally unfounded.[303]

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[302]It should also be noted that Gill (1998:120) hedges his argument by acknowledging: "It would be myopic to say that the need to compete with Protestantism was the only factor affecting the bishops' decision to oppose military rule."

[303]The Somoza government threatened, arrested, and expelled several priests, including two who were killed. One of these two priests was Gaspar García Laviana for whom the first Christian Base Community in Masaya was named. A priest, Gaspar Garcia Laviana joined the armed struggle and was killed fighting with the Sandinista guerrillas against the National Guard (Arellano

Gill's hypothesis is productive for suggesting this alternative research question that places the Catholic Church in the context of religious competition. However, the Christian Base Community movement was not the only pastoral strategy available in the period from 1939-1979 for countering the appeal of non-Catholic faiths to the poor and marginalized in Nicaragua. Strategies that focus on different spiritual practices offer innovative religious practices that may be effective in ministering to the needs of the poor and, thereby, blunt the impact of religious competition without requiring a "progressive" stance on political or economic issues. The Neocatechumenal Way and Catholic Charismatic Renewal are two such pastoral strategies.

Descriptions of Three Catholic "New Movements"

Originating in the second half of the twentieth century, the Christian Base Community model has its origins in Latin America and Europe (1960s), while the Charismatic movement began in the United States (1970s); and the Neocatechumenal Way originated in Spain (1960s). However, in spite of their origins in different cultures, all three forms of worship are attracting the participation of people in Masaya, Nicaragua, including indigenous people living in Monimbó.

My interviews with lay leaders and priests involved in these movements in Masaya reveal that each group believes that its form of religious expression is firmly

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1986:147-149; Mulligan S. J. 1991:99-112). Members of the Salesian religious order joined the opposition to Somoza but did not use violence or join the armed revolution. According to Salesian brother Fernando Murillo (Rodríguez 1994:179-180), Salesian priests of the Colegio Don Bosco (located at the entrance to the barrio of Monimbó on a main street in Masaya) were targeted by the National Guard as the crisis deepened into insurrection in 1978-1979. The Don Bosco high school was occupied by National Guard soldiers one month, and then, the next month occupied by the Sandinistas as the city became a "liberated" zone during the insurrection. In July 1979, when 7,000 civilians accompanied the Sandinistas out of Managua, walking 20 miles to Masaya in the middle of the night during the famous "tactical" retreat, the Colegio Salesiano was used as a dormitory to shelter this large group, but the priests stressed that they were not, thereby, supporting the Sandinista revolutionaries but simply providing refuge in a chaotic and violent situation (Rodríguez 1994:180).

rooted in Catholicism. They seek to create small groups within the larger institution to increase stronger social bonds between participants, while also offering their own approaches to educating adult Catholics beyond the basic catechism designed for children. Leaders and participants in each movement consider their approach to be essential for revitalizing the Roman Catholic Church. By their new methods, they mean to deepen the commitment and identification of nominal Catholics with the Church in daily, lived practice. Each brings its own unique variation on the best way to invigorate the institution, while sharing certain similarities. They seek to transform the church from a focus on professional clergy to greater participation of the laity, encouraging leadership by non-professionals. Each group is acutely aware of the competition for the loyalty of the laity, both from other Catholic currents and their non-Catholic evangelical rivals.

Father Orestes,[304] a young priest assigned to serve the Magdalena Church, which serves a section of the barrio of Monimbó, told me that he encourages lay participation in the parish. Emphasizing that he is "a pastor of souls, not groups" (*soy pastor de almas, no de grupos*), he said he seeks to preserve the unity of the Church as a faith community open to all people living in the parish. He supervises four groups and requires the lay leaders of these groups to meet regularly as a church council. He identified the four groups as *Renovación* (Catholic Charismatic Renewal), *Catecumenado* (Neocatechumenal Way), *Congregación de Santísimo* (Holy Congregation), and *Corazon de Jesus* (Heart of Jesus). He said the Christian Base Community sets itself apart, threatening the unity of the church, but he did not think the other movements posed

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[304] Father Orestes is Nicaraguan, although he is not from Masaya. Although the church was formerly under the authority of the Salesian religious order, authority for the Magdalena parish in Monimbó has been transferred authority to the diocese, since Orestes and other priests now assigned to the parish are "secular" rather than "religious" priests, i.e. they are under the authority of the ecclesial structures which are composed of the bishops appointed by the Pope rather than the authority of a religious order. This means that they are more closely associated with the national episcopacy, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference and its bishops, including the archbishop of Managua.

such a threat. I noticed that he worked especially closely with the lay leaders of the Neocatechumenal Way in the parish.

One of the most fascinating ethnographic observations I was able to make was of one of the celebrations of a special Neocatechumenal Way Eucharistic Mass on a Saturday evening during the time of the Immaculate Conception novena in December 1999. Father Orestes was the priest officially celebrating the Mass, assisted by lay leaders. There was no mention of the Immaculate Conception celebration, but some sort of conflict erupted as the image of the Virgin Mary was being brought back to the church during the time the special Neocatechumenal mass was in progress. I would learn more about this conflict in the weeks afterwards. This incident is discussed later in this chapter, but before I relate more about this incident, I will describe the three "new" movements within Catholicism in more detail.

Christian Base Community

Of the three Catholic groups compared here, the Christian Base Community is the most distant from the church hierarchy, having been embroiled, since John Paul II began his Papacy in 1978, in a struggle over liberation theology. This larger struggle within the transnational church is reflected in the positioning of the Christian Base Community as a religious movement in Nicaragua. They are sect-like more by exclusion than deliberate effort by its adherents, since the Vatican came close to declaring this branch of theological interpretation a heresy.

David Martin (1990:286) notes that the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical base communities (*comunidades eclesiales de base or CEB*) are lay-led and Protestant in form and style, creating "moral solidarities" for its members. However, being linked to a church that disapproves of their brand of theology and worship, they have been forced to

the margins of the institution. The base community movement, consequently, meets in locations outside the control of the official Catholic Church. In Masaya, they have their own building in the center of town, donated by an elite family participating in the movement, and they receive their funding through donations, primarily from Spain. Christian Base Community gatherings are prayer services in which participants pray, sing songs, and discuss Biblical texts. They are small gatherings, attracting 30-40 people on an average Sunday afternoon, while a hundred or more may attend when special Church festivals are celebrated.

My respondents in Masaya told me that the original base community in their community was called Movimiento Cristiano "Gaspar García Laviana," named in honor of a priest who died fighting to overthrow Somoza.[305] Several members of the Christian Base Community were prominent among the signatories to a public statement published in *El Nuevo Diario* in 1983, responding to the Nicaraguan Bishops' statement against the military draft instituted by the Sandinista government (Nicaraguan Christian Groups 1984). The Christian Base Community of Masaya remained active as a religious community during the first years of the Sandinista government, but many of its participants gave less time to the religious community because they joined Sandinista mass organizations.

Philip Williams (1992) describes the transformation in the Nicaraguan Christian Base Communities after the overthrow of Somoza:

> After 1979, when the hierarchy became preoccupied with asserting its authority over the institution of the church, CEBs increasingly were seen as being overly politicized and a threat to the bishops' authority. The hierarchy's less tolerant attitude toward the CEB movement fueled tension. In some parishes, CEB members occupied churches to protest the hierarchy's removal of priests and religious supportive of the revolution and publicly criticized the bishops' more controversial pastoral letters. Instead of focusing on redefining their role within

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[305] Gaspar García Laviana was a worker-priest from Spain who came to Nicaragua in 1970; he decided to join the Sandinista guerrillas as a soldier, releasing a public letter in December 1977, explaining his decision to take up arms as a *Christian* decision, an outgrowth of his commitment to the poor and social justice (Arellano 1986:147-149; Mulligan S. J. 1991:99-112).

the revolutionary process, the CEBs devoted much of their energy to an ideological struggle against the hierarchy. Because of their criticisms of the hierarchy, some of the bishops no longer considered CEBs to be in communion with the institutional church. Although CEBs insisted on their loyalty to the bishops, some found it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain their ecclesial identity. On an individual level, this led to a feeling of isolation and confusion on the part of some members. Consequently, many CEB members no longer felt themselves accepted as part of the church.

In Masaya, no occupation of churches took place, but the lack of leadership and the draining away of participants to the secular mass organizations or other Sandinista activity caused the CEB to wane. Williams (1992) summaries the general situation, based on his research in Managua:

During the insurrection, the urgent tasks of the armed struggle permitted very little time for any serious theological reflection; as a result, CEBs came to function more like political action groups than Bible reflection groups. Even after 1979, many CEBs continued to focus primarily on sociopolitical issues. This led some CEB members to turn to such movements as the *catecumenado* (intense religious instruction), in hopes of rediscovering the spiritual element that seemed to be lacking in their base communities.

A similar process was being felt in Masaya, which is located about 28 kilometers south of the capital of Managua, just a short bus ride away.

One respondent, Bernardo Fuentes, who was active in the Christian Base Community of Masaya while I was doing my fieldwork, explained that he dropped out of the CEB for a time because he objected to the way the Sandinista Party treated the Movimiento Cristiano "Gaspar García Laviana" as if it were an arm of the Sandinista political party. Although he had been one of the signatories to the letter defending the right of the Sandinista government to have a draft and being critical of the Catholic hierarchy for opposing the draft, he became disillusioned when the Sandinista Party expected them to turn out whenever they were holding mass political rallies to shout political slogans. Don Bernardo was interviewed by Mari Pau Trayner (2000:114-116)[306]

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[306] Mari Pau Trayner's (2000) report on the Christian Base Communities in Nicaragua was prepared for the Comité Cristiano de Solidaridad "Oscar Romero" de Aragón, one of the Christian Base Communities in Spain that provides funding for their counterparts in Nicaragua. She was working on her report during the same time I was conducting my research in Masaya. Her

about his experience. As the church-state struggle intensified in the 1980s, he was

appalled by the Sandinista mobs (*turbas divinas*)[307] that attacked a Salesian priest, Pepe

Morataya, and several lay leaders in Masaya. Although he said he had been "a committed

Sandinista" (*un sandinista comprometido*), they called him a "traitor" for his resistance

to their actions. Bernardo left the base community, becoming a member of a Catholic

Charismatic Renewal group.

Don Bernardo rejoined the CEB in the 1990s. What changed for him was an effort

to revitalize the CEB in Masaya. This began with the assistance of Christian Base

Community support in Spain. A Spanish laywoman named Dolores Gomez came to

Masaya and grant money from Spain has sustained the organization now for about 10

years. In the attempt to move away from being closely associated with a secular political

party, they approached the priest of the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in the

center of town, Reverand Roberto Belas Matamoro, asking for diocesan support, but he

refused. They continued to be unhappily marginalized by the official Church, when I

conducted by fieldwork in 1999-2000.

Lay leaders elected to an *Equipo de Servicio* (Service Team) share facilitation of

the prayer group meetings, but occasionally guest clergy lead the services, mainly Jesuits

who come from Managua to worship with them and to perform the Eucharist and other

sacraments. Guest priests also came from other countries, including Brazil and the

United States, to lend their solidarity. Jesuits were frequently under attack by the

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interviews with the lay leaders of the base community in Masaya corroborate the insights I gained
through participant-observation, informal discussions, and interviews.

[307] The term "turbas divinas," translated as "divine mobs," was also used to describe the gangs
(*turbas*) directed by a woman, Nicolasa Sevilla, who supported Somoza in order to intimidate his
political enemies who were demonstrating against the dictatorship. Victoria González (2001:59)
reports that la Nicolasa "symbolized the unrestrained manifestation of lower-class women's
political passion. While the Ala (a middle-class women's group) was charged with tactfully
gaining women's support for the Somozas, Sevilla and her followers, both men and women,
heckled, tormented, humiliated, and attacked those who refused to be swayed by 'polite' tactics."

Vatican and the secular bishops in Nicaragua because the religious order had radicalized under the influence of liberation theology.

In 1999, the CEB in Masaya made another attempt to bring themselves into closer association with the official church. For a short while they thought it might be possible that the church would open its door to a CEB-led weekly prayer gathering. Monsignor Tano of the San Jerónimo parish in Masaya invited them to hold their prayer group one afternoon a week in the church sanctuary. Dolores Gomez said that protests from lay leaders in the Charismatic Renewal group reportedly led to the closing of this opportunity and a return to "exile" from the official church (Pau Trayner 2000:118-119).

My participant-observation on a typical Sunday afternoon in the Christian Base Community showed that the order of service included opening hymns, Bible readings, and reflection on how the Biblical themes illuminate their lives, always including something about the current socio-economic and political context in which they were living. Playing acoustical guitar for accompaniment, the group sang from a small photocopied booklet.[308] Most prominent among the songs sung at every base community Sunday gathering were those from the famous mass, *Misa Campesina Nicaragüense* by Carlos Mejia Godoy (Mejía Godoy 1996; Mejía Godoy and El Taller de Sondio Popular 2000; Meneses 1999) that incorporates images of Nicaraguan life with liberation theology themes. Traditional hymns are also sung, especially during feast days, such as the celebration of La Purísima.

The *Misa Campesina* was written specifically to capture the insights of liberation theology in a Nicaraguan idiom (Meneses 1999). The opening song, *Vos Sos el Dios de*

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[308] The songs used in worship were also influenced by people in the United States, such as one tune being the Simon and Garfunkel song from the 1960's called "Sounds of Silence," using Nicaraguan lyrics on a Catholic religious theme. When I asked about the tune, the musician, Isidoro García, who often played the guitar to accompany the base community in worship, did not know the origin of the tune.

los Pobres ("You are the God of the Poor")[309] is sung as the Introit, which traditionally

and canonically requires a psalm verse, antiphon, and the Latin doxology. Mejía Godoy's

(1996:9) chorus goes like this:

> You are the God of the poor
> The down-to-earth human God,
> God who sweats in the street,
> God with a sunburnt face.
> That's why I can talk to you
> The language my own people talk,
> Because God, you're a worker (*obrero*), too,
> Christ, you're a working man (*trabajador*).

That this song speaks of God and Christ as "workers" is a marker of liberation theology.

The mass also includes features of the Nicaraguan ecological and cultural landscape,

including indigenous leaders, place names, and marimba music. When I was in Masaya,

the ban on singing this Mass in the official church continued, 23 years after the

Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference prohibited its use in 1976 (Obando y Bravo 1976).

The Sunday afternoon discussions on the Biblical text waxed and waned in terms

of the number of people who spoke up. Sometimes a lay leader, such as Dolores Gomez,

did most of the talking and few others added their thoughts; other times, people were

more talkative. Older women, who were often the mothers of the heroes and martyrs

from the insurrection and the contra war periods, attended faithfully but only rarely

added their comments. Middle aged and younger members participated most in the

discussions; they were the ones who demonstrated by their ability to read that they had

received some education, either elementary school or high school.

Priests, Jesuits included, when they were present, stressed that individual lay

people should not attempt to interpret the sacred texts without a priest to guide them.

This admonition was frequently articulated as the correct Catholic approach against the

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[309] This song, "Vos Sos el Dios de los Pobres," contains an example of the informal "you" pronoun, *vos*, which is more prevalent in Nicaragua than the *tu* form. Linguist Ralph Penny (1991:125) argues that the use of *vos* came to predominate in areas that have a history of being culturally "distant" from Spain, citing as examples the Central American countries, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.

Protestant or Pentecostal one, which give too much license to the theologically unprepared. Although the guest priests tended to minimize their status difference from the lay participants (e.g., dressing informally in jeans and wearing priestly robes only during sacraments), they nonetheless emphasized gently and consistently that they had special expertise as clergy to guide interpretation under the official teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

Although the majority of the base community participants supported the Sandinista revolution, several people articulated that the base community should continue to develop its activities independent of the FSLN Party. Most still felt a strong allegiance to the ideals of the revolution but expressed disillusionment about the current political landscape, especially corruption, loss of the revolutionary *mística* (mysticism, meaning self-sacrificing dedication and commitment to living the ideals of the revolution), and fragmentation of the FSLN party.[310]

The Christian base community offered a wide range of social services, in addition to the prayer services. They provided economic opportunities (e.g., growing fruit as a cash crop) and medical services (e.g., herbal remedies or massage). These non-religious projects sometimes caused controversy within the base community. One example centered on what a Spanish researcher would say in his report to the funding agencies in Spain. Respondents expressed the fear that he would make a negative report to the Spanish Christian Base Community for which he was conducting the study. He questioned an economic project in which base community members grew *pitahaya* (a

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[310] The FSLN Party began to lose some of its high-profile members in the mid-1990s. In 1995, I had an initial interview at the base community with María Bertha Jarquín, the widow of Boris Vega, who had been a co-leader in revitalizing the base community with Dolores Gomez. He also co-founded (with Gomez) the legal aid office for the poor, a project that grew out of the activities of the base community; the people's law office (*bufete popular*) was named for him after his death in 1993. In 1995, Sergio Ramirez, former Vice President (who had been elected and served from 1984-1990 with President Daniel Ortega) withdrew from the FSLN Party, becoming one of the founders of a new party called MRS, *Movimiento Renovación Sandinista* (Sandinista Renewal Movement). At this time, María Bertha and other members of the base community, such as Nidia Escobar, were reluctant to talk about the impending split.

tropical fruit) and sold it from a sidewalk produce stand set up outside the base

community building in the center of town. As it was explained to me, the researcher

questioned the group undertaking an agricultural project because the participants were

city dwellers, not farmers. Some unemployed participants who worked in the project felt

that their economic livelihood was threatened by his evaluation of the project, and their

fears were born out because the funding was discontinued.

Actively evangelizing, the base community continues to hold prayer groups and

start new ones in poor barrios on the periphery and in the countryside near Masaya. This

evangelizing is not without its difficulties. I observed a lay leader express to a member of

the *Equipo de Servicio* that she did not know what to say when potential members of a

new group said they welcomed a Catholic prayer group but did not want to talk about

politics. The perception of the Christian base community as "too political" was still

problematic for the growth of the base community movement in 1999.

During the Sandinista decade (1979-1990), the church hierarchy felt threatened

because they were pushed to the sidelines, while the Sandinistas gave more attention to

those who were part of the so-called "popular" Church (although never formally

constituted as a separate entity). A "parallel" church was developing within the Church

with more access to state power than the church hierarchy. Consequently, the promotion

of liberation theology, although part of the ideological justification for the revolution,

was also a weakness for the Sandinistas. It challenged the orthodox Church hierarchy

head-on through utilizing a theology repudiated by the Vatican. Liberation theology was

considered by the Vatican to be a projection of the false Marxian notion of class struggle.

Liberation theology challenged the ideological grooves in which the transnational parent

institution had been working since the advent of Marxism. Connor Cruise O'Brien

(1990:145) describes this situation in 1986 at the height of the struggle between the

church and state:

> What the Sandinistas had failed to realize was that their friendly overtures (to the church) would be more frightening to many bishops—including those of Managua and of Rome—than the normal degree of doctrinaire hostility to be expected from a purely marxist government. With proper marxists, churchmen knew where they stood: marxists in one sphere, the Church in a quite different one: a tidy and tenable state of affairs. This new stuff was quite different. Not that liberation theology in itself was all that new; by 1979, liberation theology had been around for a little over a decade, since its beginnings in Germany in 1967. What was new in Nicaragua—most alarmingly new—was that for the first time liberation theology had the *backing of a State*....As he (Obando y Bravo) saw the matter, not merely was a temporal sphere encroaching upon the spiritual, but a revolutionary State was making use of a fifth column within the Church in order to subvert the hierarchy, and promote schism and heresy.

O'Brien's description, a polemical piece written as the ideological battle was raging in the United States in response to then-President Reagan's policy regarding Nicaragua, is sympathetic to the Sandinistas and does not describe the wider cultural matrix, including other religious currents, developing in Nicaragua. Opponents of socialist transformation argued that the Sandinista revolution was about promoting totalitarian power, not the ideals for which the people fought when they were ousting Somoza.[311] As O'Brien describes it in the quote above, the Church hierarchy felt that the liberation-theology-promoting priests serving in the Sandinista government were attempting to undermine the church from within—a heresy-in-the-making with secular political resources backing an illegitimate appropriation of spiritual authority.

The ideological battle reached a peak in 1985 with two religio-political "sociodramas" (Kertzer 1988:108) competing against each other for allies, both internal and external: Obando's "Crusade for Peace" and D'Escoto's "evangelical insurrection." In June of 1985, Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, newly appointed Cardinal and after having served mass to counterrevolutionary Nicaraguans in Miami, Florida, embarked on an ambitious round of pastoral visits to 72 parishes in the country. In his "Crusade for

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[311] The distinction between "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" was picked up to rationalize US policy, originally when the first Somoza came to power and again by the Reagan administration after reading Jeane Kirkpatrick's (1979) policy critique that made an argument that supporting regimes based on this distinction was not an unwarranted double standard (LaFeber 1993:267-77). Consult (Linz 2000; Puddington 1991) for conservative analyses of these terms.

Peace," Obando called for an end to atheistic, totalitarian ideologies and insisted on the need for dialogue with the counterrevolutionaries (*contras*) without mentioning that they were funded by the United States or that the contra attacks were brutal, often targeting civilians (Kirk 1992:185).

The archbishop, who had been denounced by the Somoza newspaper *Novedades* as "that uneducated Indian" (Lernoux 1982:89), extended his politically significant role of opposition leader during the last years of the Somoza dynasty into the new revolutionary era, becoming the de facto leader of the internal political struggle against the Sandinistas. Following a decade of pioneering autonomy from the revolutionary state, Obando's oppositional leadership to the Sandinistas allowed the consolidation of the church hierarchy's autonomy from secular authority. He demonstrated that the Church was able to participate in high-level politics that effectively opposed the state. Opponents of the Sandinista government characterized it as "totalitarian" rather than "authoritarian," (Cuzán 1989; Kirkpatrick 1979), and this polemical terminology resonated with Pope John Paul II, whose own life had been profoundly shaped by church opposition to the Polish communist state (Johnston and Figa 1988). Obando's leadership was supported by Pope John Paul II, most visibly in 1985 when the Pope promoted him to the postion of Cardinal at the height of the *contra* war.

Miguel D'Escoto, Foreign Minister in the Sandinista government and Maryknoll priest officially suspended from his priestly functions, launched a ritual drama in response to Obando's "Crusade for Peace" (Cabestrero 1986b; O'Brien 1990). Carrying out his political sociodrama as an "evangelical insurrection," D'Escoto mobilized supporters of the revolution to rise up against the counterrevolution in a symbolic insurrection in defense of the revolution. He undertook this massive exercise in an effort to build hegemony for the revolutionary process. As an important official in the Sandinista government, he was consciously aiming to legitimate the Sandinista

government as the rightful agent for carrying out a social revolution that sought to change fundamental structures of society.

In contrast to Obando's four-month campaign, D'Escoto's campaign lasted ten months with many different types of sociodramas combined into a complex package. He started with a 40-day fast, proceeded to conduct a "Way of the Cross" for Peace and Life, and concluded a pilgrimage march from a small town in the north-central region on the Honduran border (where armed *contra* attacks were intense) to the capital city of Managua. This sociodrama drew on Christian symbolism. The 40-day fast, in addition to using the spiritual discipline of fasting, drew on the symbolic number "40"—the Jews wandered 40 years after their liberation from slavery in Egypt and Jesus fasted in the desert for 40 days before embarking on his ministry. The "Way of the Cross" is the deeply rooted ritual re-enactment of the Passion (or suffering) of Christ on the way to being crucified (Murphy-O'Connor 2003), a traditional religious sociodrama performed in the streets by community actors in Masaya as well as most other Nicaraguan cities, towns and villages every year during Holy Week (as is true in Catholic communities around the world).

Brazilian Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga visited Nicaragua during this controversy, bringing a message of support from his superior, Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Casaldáliga's visit lent greater international impact to D'Escoto's message and placed the priests in the Sandinista government "squarely in the broader context of the 'church of the poor' in Latin America" (Equipo Envio 1987). This is one especially dramatic time in Nicaragua in which liberation theology was used in ideological struggle against the counterrevolutionary political campaign; it was embodied in politico-religious ritual and projected to audiences inside the country and out.

Steeped both in Christian spiritual idiom as well as secular insurrectional political culture in which power is demonstrated through mass actions in the street, the

sociodrama was D'Escoto's effort to construct a counter-hegemonic ideology. Caught in the transition between being a religion of revolution that needs to develop into a religion for the new status quo, this effort to consolidate the authority of the Sandinista government faced strong opposition from a religion of the deposed status quo that was not reduced to a powerless position. The religion of the previous status quo hadu lost its privileged access to secular governmental power, but it did not become a religion of resistance but rather a religion of the counterrevolution. The church hierarchy received external support from powerful international allies; e.g. the Vatican and the government of President Ronald Reagan, who broke U.S. law in order to support covertly the counterrevolutionary fighters.

A very public and high-stakes political campaign was being waged with politico-religious ritual as its medium. The Catholic Church argued relentlessly that D'Escoto's sociodrama was an illegitimate politicization of the religion. Meanwhile, adopting a exemplary prophetic approach in their pastoral activities, two other Catholic "new movements" were sending a counter-message that they were properly spiritual in orientation and did not mix religion and politics. Although the archbishop might be required at his level in the hierarchy (archbishop of the capital city) to make a statement during this political crisis, the laity could and should concentrate on their respective chariamas (healing prayer or adult cathecism), concentrating on their own faith formation as individual Catholics gathering in small groups.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (*Movimiento de Renovación Carismática Católica*) focuses on healing prayer. This spiritual renewal movement is a lay group within international Catholicism which traces its origins to the United States in

1967 but has a growing presence in Nicaragua. Those Catholics who were not part of the movement used the term, *los carismáticos*, while insiders call their group the *Renovación* (the Renewal).

The Charismatic Renewal Movement draws on Vatican II, especially references included in the documents about the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus after his resurrection in the form of the "wind" and "tongues of fire" as described in the Book of Acts. The Catholic charismatic movement encourages individuals to gather together in small groups in order to learn how to pray more effectively. Rather than reciting traditional prayers by rote, participants learn to pray spontaneously. The selectivity of practices was evident in that they emphasized the gift of prophesy more than the gift of glossolalia ("speaking in tongues"). Glossolalia is central to many non-Catholic Pentecostal groups (McGuire 1977:135). Encouraing the laity to read the Bible for themselves (an innovation allowed for the first time by Vatican II), the Catholic charismatic movement also supports greater emotional expression in prayer but leaves teaching of doctrinal matters to higher Church authorities. My observations reveal that Catholic Charismatic Renewal as a form of corporate worship is a special event added to the other liturgical offerings that take place in church buildings. It creates a feeling of spontaneity and fellowship, but the group is a supplement to regular participation in the mass, not a substitute.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement also has weekly gatherings in several local parish churches in Masaya. The service is a special type of alternative prayer service, offered in addition to the regular or traditional mass rather than as a substitute. I observed several Thursday evening charismatic services in the Magdalena Church in Monimbó. The music was lively, using pop musical styles, including electric guitar, electric keyboard, drums, and singers using microphones to lead the congregants in song. The praise songs include a special set of contemporary hymns written for the Charismatic Renovation movement. The Charismatic worship services are led by laity,

not priests. The sacrament of the Eucharist is not provided during such a service because parishioners can participate in that important sacrament in a regular mass.

Although they meet in the church parish sanctuary in Magdalena Church for weekly gatherings and these gatherings regularly attracted two hundred or more worshipers, the heart of the Charismatic Renewal movement is prayer gatherings in small, lay-led groups that meet in participants' homes. They learn to pray and practice praying fervently. Respondents explain that they feel the small group format helps promote a feeling of belonging and encourages each member to renew their faith through a focus on the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual gift of healing is a strong theme among Catholic Charismatics, one that focuses more on fervent intercessory prayer than the traditional Catholic pilgrimage to sacred shrines that are also famous for miraculous healings. Although pilgrimage opportunities are available in Nicaragua, the message of the Charismatic Renewal Movement is that faith renewal is available in everyday settings through praying in ways that are spontaneous.

Respondents told me they do not discourage saying the traditional rosary, attending mass, participating in saint processions, or going on a pilgrimage. The new charismatic prayer practices are added to the diverse set of approved worship forms, rather than substituting for approved forms. Although my respondents told me that Catholic Charismatics prayed for the defeat of the Sandinistas during the 1990 election; they distinguished themselves from the Christian base community movement by saying they did not engage in any political activities or economic projects. They stressed that they have a spiritual message, appealing to the hearts of members who want to draw near to God through prayer.

I also attended Catholic charismatic services held in Our Lady of the Assumption Church in the center of town. The crowd in the center of town was light skinned and well

dressed.[312] No electric instruments were used in the Charismatic service at the Church of the Assumption; participants clapped to the same songs but the music was acoustic and subdued compared to the Magdalena Church.

The roots of the charismatic phenomenon in Masaya are traced to a man from the barrio of San Jerónimo in the 1970's who began to promote charismatic worship in his parish. An elderly indigenous male parishioner in the Magdalena Church in Monimbó attended the gatherings and wanted to start such a group in his parish. A respondent, active in the Charismatic movement, an artisan/merchant with a family bread-making business, told me that, as a child, she remembered seeing this man praying in a charismatic style with a few older women in the plaza of the Magdalena Church. He had been refused permission to meet in the sanctuary, so the group prayed in the plaza in front of the church. She said that her family was not part of this early movement, but she joined as an adult in the 1980s. She said that she joined because of a medical concern she had for her new-born daughter. The healing promised through fervent prayer attracted her to the movement. Although the group is generally non-political, she said they gathered to pray during the 1990 election, praying fervently for Dona Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's victory over the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega.

Another respondent, a young man, who is a shoe-maker living in Monimbó, explained that he joined the Charismatic movement because he felt an emptiness in life that the regular mass did not fill; he had grown up attending the traditional mass and found it monotonous. In the early 1990s, at the age of 23, he felt that he was living a "miserable life" (*una vida arrastrada*) due to economic hardships as a wage worker in a shoe-making workshop when the domestic market for shoes was being hurt by competition from imports. To get his mind off his problems, he became active in a charismatic group that met informally in the homes of the participants, praying fervently

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[312] Journalists have reported that the class composition of the Catholic Charismatic groups in Latin America is generally middle class (Fraser and Paul 2004).

and building bonds of harmony and fraternity. They began as a spontaneous group of lay people with no connection to the Catholic Church, but they decided to seek permission to function within the Church. They felt they were offering a better "climate" for those who belong to the church, reviving a sense of "personal conscience" in individual believers. He said that, at first, the priest did not accept their request. Their style of worship was very different from traditional religious practices. It included holding your arms high with palms open to God during prayer, clapping along to praise songs in lively popular music styles, such as *salsa* and *meringue*. They practiced the laying on of hands to cure the sick and speaking in tongues. They were especially inspired by the gospel of Mark in the New Testament which recounted stories of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, driving out evil spirits.

The priest was suspicious of the new group because they were independent and used forms of worship that were too much like evangelical and Pentecostal groups. They persisted and finally began to be accepted within the Church. Things went well for a time; however, recently, new leaders have taken control of the group. My respondent claimed that envy began producing conflicts. He thought people were competing with each other over how much *charisma* (spiritual gift) they had. His evaluation is that a small minority seized the opportunity to dominate the group and, being more conservative than the original founders, they received support from the priest because they were willing to follow the priest's directions. My respondent continues to attend regular masses, where he is frequently called upon to be the lay reader of the Bible passage, and he often attends the large charismatic gatherings on Thursday evenings. His complaints about the Charismatic Renewal Movement did not motivate him to join a non-Catholic charismatic group.

Neocatechumenal Way

The Neocatechumenal Way focuses on renewal of the church through spiritual development emphasizing adult catechism, a question-and-answer method of teaching but also discussion in small groups to produce an understanding appropriate for adults. The "Way" (*camino*) provides a structured small group experience in which participants move through pre-arranged steps towards Christian perfection.

El Camino Neocatecumenal (often shorted to *los catecumenados,* or "the Catechumenates") originated in Spain in the 1960's. The founder, Francisco Argüello (known as Kiko), an artist and musician, explains that he was inspired by the idea that Christ is present among the poor (Zenit 2002). He felt a calling from God to share the core (*kerygma*) message: "Jesus loves you" (*Cristo te ama*). Thus, he went to live in a poor neighborhood in Madrid in 1964 and started the Way, promoting his method for lay people to grow into more mature Christians. Kiko began this work with a guitar and a Bible in the poor barrio of Palomeras Altas in Madrid, blending the modern spirit of 1960's popular culture in which the guitar was seemingly ubiquitous with Vatican II encouragement to the laity to read the Bible themselves rather than to rely on a priest to explain the text without being able to reference it directly and think along with the spiritual guide. Priestly interpretation was still necessary to provide the teaching officially approved by the Church, but adults could begin to read Scripture, removing one of the distinctive features that had separated Protestantism and Catholicism. He met Carmen Hernández, a former nun, who was doing similar work and they began working together. Their emphasis has been liturgical and sacramental. They feel their call from God as a "pure" spiritual experience for small groups of the faithful. They do not engage in economic or social service projects—and this emphasis is reflected in the manner in which the group operates in Masaya. They embraced Vatican II liturgical reforms; e.g.,

saying the Mass in Spanish, new music, and new ways of receiving the central sacrament

of Holy Communion. They developed new forms of singing, while keeping an orthodox

perspective, i.e. commitment to Church teachings, the Pope's authority, and emphasizing

the importance of lay participation in the full complement of seven sacraments.[313] With

the core values of humility, simplicity, and praise of God, the movement considers liturgy

and a Christian moral life to be "one single thing." Hearing the good news proclaimed

and integrating the message into one's life unites what they claim others consider as

separate activities. However, their vision of the Christian moral life focuses more on

family and sexual values rather than social issues of justice and liberation from

oppression. The poor are by embracing the faith and leading a moral life, which will help

them to work hard to provide for their families, which will eventually result in less

poverty.

Leaders train as missionaries to reach out to those who are only nominally

Catholic, having been baptized and confirmed as children but not participating from a

strong base of adult understanding of the faith. They believe that adults need to move

beyond their limited childhood understandings of Catholicism. The Way provides

rigorous instruction and priestly oversight for this adult spiritual formation. This focus is

called "evangelizing" Catholics, but this was not Kiko's original vision. In 1979, Pope

John Paul II instructed the group that baptism must come before the catechumenate

(instruction). Kiko, at first, thought it was a mistake to put baptism before beginning on

the "itinerary" (*camino*) of Christian formation through the Neocatechumenal Way but,

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[313] The seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church are the Eucharist (Holy Communion),
baptism, confirmation, holy orders, marriage, reconciliation (previously known as confession),
and anointing of the sick (formerly called last rites). Protestant churches recognize only two
sacraments: Holy Communion and baptism (Felton 2005:16). A sacrament (from the Latin
sacramentum, a promise or vow) is a ritual that Christians believe to be a means or vehicle for
receiving God's grace (Felton 2005:16). The Christian Base Community and Catholic Charismatics
recognize the seven sacraments as well, but the progress of participants on the way to Christian
perfection in the Neocatechumenal Way is marked by the willingness to present oneself for the
sacraments.

by the time the provisional statutes of the Neocatechumenal Way were approved by the Vatican in 2002, Kiko had yielded to the Pope's instruction (Argüello 2002).

Controversy has accompanied the growth and development of the Neocatechumenal Way. In 1983, Pope John Paul II warned participants in this movement not to isolate themselves from the parish or the diocese (L'Osservatore Romano 1983). He warned them against the tendency (beginning to emerge in many parishes around the world) to create an exclusive group. This exclusive quality was especially evident in that they began celebrating Holy Communion as a closed worship service only for members of the Neocatechumenal Way.

The formation of Neocatechumenal Way study groups departs from Catholic tradition because age cohorts are not the basis for forming a group. They are intentionally formed small communities of 30-50 individuals from different social conditions, cultural backgrounds, gender, age, and "mentalities" (which is a euphemism for political perspectives, broadly speaking). Like base communities and charismatic prayer groups, the groups of the Neocatechumenal Way meet weekly to hear Scripture passages read and, then, they discuss what light those readings shed on their lives. As opposed to the base communities, the "light" shed is rarely related to understanding the socioeconomic or political context. A priest or lay presbyter trained in the Way reflects on the comments made by the catechumenates, offering correction and instruction. Extensive study is expected of each participant as the members of the group work together to grow in perfection enough to be able to move progressively through the steps in the *camino*. Kiko and Carmen have written a Neocatecumenal Way catechesis (religious instruction), which they consider to be a special theological-catechetical synthesis suitable for adult instruction. In the past, the Catholic Church assumed that the basics taught to children at confirmation was all the education needed, but the realization that adults need to understand their faith at an adult level began to

emergence in the context of Protestant and Pentecostal attention to adult spiritual formation.

The Eucharist or Holy Communion (receiving the bread and wine consecrated as the body and blood of Jesus) is celebrated in local parish churches in a distinctly Neocatechumenal style. On December 4, 1999, at the Magdalena Church in Monimbó, I observed a *catecumenado* Eucharist Mass. It took place on a Saturday evening, according to the instructions given by Kiko for all Neocatecumenal groups. I was invited to observe the Mass by a woman who is a member of the group, a sister of the mother in my host family that lives near Monimbó.[314] My respondent explained, as we walked to the church, the most important information she thought I would need in order to understand what I would be observing. The elements for the Eucharist differ from that used in a regular Catholic communion service. The host is a large, round loaf of unleavened wheat bread rather than the traditional thin wafer. She explained that the bread tastes somewhat sour and many people do not like the taste. It is real bread that must be chewed, unlike the traditional Host that quickly dissolves in the mouth. She explained that I would not be invited to share in the Eucharist because I am not a member of the Neocatechumenal Way. Only people who are members of the group can take communion because people who are visiting might not understand the ritual. Specifically, she said, if they tasted the bread and spit it out because it tastes sour, then the sacred elements would be profaned. She also informed me that only those adults who have received the sacrament of marriage in the Church are allowed to take communion; if they are married by civil or other religious authority or living together without being married, they cannot receive the sacrament.

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[314] I observed many families divided in terms of which religious groups they attend. Even if all are of the same class, they do not necessarily pick the same way to express their faith. My respondent was trying to encourage more of her family members to belong, but her sister was firmly committed to the Christian base community and another sister had converted to the Baptist faith.

This Neocatechumenal Way Eucharist was celebrated at the Magdalena Church in Monimbó by the diocesan priest of the parish, Father Orestes. Pews are not bolted to the floor in this church, so they were moved to achieve a special arrangement for communion.[315] When my respondent and I entered the sanctuary, I noticed a large rectangular table draped with a white tablecloth located near the back of the sanctuary with a U-shaped arrangement of pews around it. Three elegant chairs were placed at open end of the U. The priest sat in the middle chair with the other chairs for lay leaders. On the table, I could see a loaf of bread, a chalice, and a pitcher as well as a centerpiece of flowers arranged around white candles. The worship service included a Bible reading and three lay people who spoke, giving witness to the faith or their prayer concerns. One of the women talked a long time, nearly crying, confessing that her family was not responding well to her efforts to evangelize them in the Neocatechumenal Way. The priest gently asked her to stop, so they could go on with the Eucharist. Later, when communion was served, I noticed that the lay leaders distributing the elements of bread and wine passed her over. The rigorous demands can also cause emotional pain of being exclusion because they cannot complete the steps on the Way.

After the priest blessed the bread, four laymen broke the bread into small pieces as they moved from person to person seated in the pews. As the lay leader gave the congregants a piece of bread, they said quietly, *Cuerpo de Cristo* ("Body of Christ"). The priest was served a piece first, but he held it in his hand until everyone had a piece and, then, they all ate the host at the same time. The wine was served in four large chalices. Lay leaders passed the cup and murmured quietly, *Sangre de Cristo* ("Blood of Christ").

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[315] This functionality is not the result of the presence of the Neocatechumenal Way because the pews were moved for other celebrations. One I observed was the celebration of St. Lazarus' Feast Day when parishioners bring their pets to receive a blessing. The pews are removed, and a mixture of straw and topsoil covers the floor of the sanctuary. Carnivalesque, animals are dressed in clothing and other decorations, while their owners bring them before saint statues, light candles and say prayers for their animals—dogs, cats, goats, pigs. Dogs predominated in the celebration I observed at Iglesia Magdalena in keeping with the Biblical story of dogs licking St. Lazarus' wounds.

I noticed that my respondent was among those who were passed over, not receiving communion. I am aware that she is not married in the Church. At that time, she and her husband were estranged due to his excessive drinking and other arguments.

After the Eucharist, the group sings. A young man played guitar and the hymns were lively with much hand clapping. I noticed a call-and-response pattern in which the song leader would sing a line, and then the congregation would repeat that line together. No one had hymnals or songbooks. They closed the worship service by saying the Lord's Prayer in the same manner as in a regular mass, except that the catechumenates stood with their hands open, palms up. Moreover, they spoke the words of the prayer slowly and distinctly without mumbling. Often in a regular mass, the prayer is spoken quickly and mumbled.

There are six groups of *catecumenados* in the Magdalena parish. Each group has five lay leaders (*responsables*), two married couples and one single person. There is a trained Neocatechumenal Way catechist (a lay missionary) who supervises all six groups under the supervision of the parish priest and the bishop. The groups meet to prepare themselves for each step on the path to Christian perfection, and each step can take years to complete. Each group has a different number of people. Some have as few as 30 members, while my informant's group has 90 *integrantes* (members). Both men and women are lay leaders. She explained that God is "love, mercy, and power" (*amor, misericordia y poder*). She said the devil is real, an evil force in the world always trying to lead believers astray. She explained that the path of the catechumenate is one that discourages people from drinking and acting crazy. She objected to people who use religious processions in the streets as an excuse to get drunk and party all night long. The Neocatechumenal Way does not object to the tradition of carrying the images of the saints or the Virgin Mary in the streets or to drinking in moderation, but they do object to excessive drinking and the sinful behavior that can result.

I interviewed a youth leader of the group. Twenty-five years old and attending university, Fernando is not yet married, but he has a girlfriend, who was the young woman who read the Bible in the service. He explained the origins of the group in Spain, telling me about Kiko Argüello and Carmen Hernández. The Neocatechumenal Way first arrived in Nicaragua in 1970, when a Spanish team of catechists (missionaries) came to Managua. Fernando explained that his whole family participates in the Way. The family started participating in 1990, when he was sixteen years old. He told about the personal trials of his family. The family bread-baking business was not doing well. His father drank too much, ran around with other women, and was occasionally violent. When they started attending this group, his father began to change his ways. He credits the Neocatechumenal Way with helping his father become a better husband and father, now acting as a responsible head of the family and household.[316] The young man said that he thinks the church and government are getting along together very well now because President Alemán is Catholic. He considers the Alemán government to be better than the Sandinistas because, then, the government was communist, and Obando y Bravo was fighting communism.

The Neocatechumenal Way structures its path for adult members as a period of Catholic formation, passing through several stages that may take at least eight to ten years to complete. Although having a significant role for lay leadership, the Neocatecumenal Way maintains the strongest link to the clergy of the three movements. Parish priests direct the group study sessions and the retreats. On completion of each stage, the group meets together for a weekend retreat, where a board of catechists examines participants to determine if they have passed the test (*escrutinio*). These steps are designed to form the participants as members of a corporate group, not as

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[316] My respondents participating in the Neocatecumenal Way in Masaya were artisans, lower middle class, but their children, like Fernando, were finishing high school and some were going on to higher education.

individuals in isolation. The bonds created in the small group become deeply established, and social control is exercised through the commitment to the long-term process. Each member of the group must pass the *escrutinio* in order for the group as a whole to pass on to the next step. The retreat includes public confession as well as demonstrating that one has taken a particular action specified for that stage. For example, to demonstrate that one's treasure is in heaven rather than material possessions, each participant is called upon to give up a material possession to the Church. Members are expected to participate in the sacraments, such as getting married in the Church. If an individual member does not pass a stage, he or she must drop back to a different small group at a lower level on the path towards Christian perfection. This corporate form of spiritual direction produces strong social pressure to conform to Catholic doctrines and teachings. The Neocatechumenal Way emphasizes that a structured and rigorous religious education is needed to help adults move beyond the level of understanding they acquired as children. The "way" is based on looking back to the early Church for the essential elements of what is needed for this instruction. Somewhat similar to Opus Dei (Estruch 1995),[317] the Neocatechumenal Way looks back in order to go forward, selecting certain elements of the past to preserve, while making new forms for bringing the rigorous method to laity. The Neocatechumenal Way is not a separate religious order. Lay members are expected to engage in their respective economic activities, incorporating the "way" into daily life, while priests trained in the Neocatechumenal Way are expected to be obedient to the diocesan bishops.

Controversy has swirled around the group because the formation of small groups has tended to be closed. The actual teaching texts and demands at each stage are a

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[317] Joan Estruch (1995:260-281) concludes her historical sociological study of Opus Dei with a reflection on the paradoxes of Opus Dei in which she notes that it is at the same time innovative (modern) and reactionary ("integralist" in classic Catholic terms). One comparative point of similarity between Opus Dei and Neocatechumenal Way is that both emphasize lay leadership, while at the same time encouraging the development of a priesthood (virtuosi) that follows the unique spiritual formation path (charisma) developed by their respective founders.

guarded secret, and full participation in the Eucharist in the Neocatechumenal Way is reserved for members only. Critics within the Catholic Church charged that its pastoral strategy is "sect-like" because the process tends to shut the participants off from the rest of the Church. Some participants have told others that the Neocatechumenal Way is the only way to be truly Catholic. Other critics say the formation process takes an excessive amount of time—15-20 years—much longer than my respondents (who are participants in this movement) say is actually true. Members are no longer participating in the regular life of the parish but are setting themselves apart from others. One informant, who is critical of the Neocatechumenal Way, objected because he knew a poor widow who gave her house to the Church when asked to store up her treasure in heaven. Her family was upset because that house was the only property they had as a family. Those with greater economic resources could afford to give up something without making themselves destitute.[318]

The controversy has caused Pope Benedict XVI (Magister 2005) to instruct the Neocatechumenal Way to transition away from their non-canonical method of sacrament of the Eucharist and return to using the dedicated altar in the front of the sanctuary rather than the cloth-covered table away from that altar. They have also been instructed not to separate themselves from the larger Catholic community but to participate, at least, one Sunday per month in a traditional mass.

A conflict broke out during the Neocatechumenal Way Eucharist previously described in which I was a participant-observer that reveals competition between the expression of faith through saint processions in the street and the Neocatechumenal Way. In the middle of the Neocatechumenal Way ritual, shouting and banging on the church door could be heard by the group seated around the communion table. The priest quietly explained that there was a problem with the person who was the minor

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[318] This is not the first time that the Church has been known to encourage the transfer of property to the Church, interfering with family inheritance (Goody 1983).

majordomo for that particular day of the Purisima novena. Later, I made inquiries about

the cause of the commotion. The priest explained that he had instructed the Purisima

group to return the image of the Virgin to the church before a certain hour. They had not

returned the image by the appointed hour, so the priest had locked the church door in

order to avoid being interrupted in the middle of the Neocatechumenal Way mass. The

preist said the minor mayordomo for the day had pounded on the door and, not gaining

admittance, threw the image of the Virgin Mary on the ground, saying if the priest was

going to behave as he did, he would repay the insult with the gesture of throwing "that

doll' (*esa muneca*) in the dirt. The priest regretted the incident but he considered the

behavior typical of Sandinista supporters in the barrio.

Church-Sect Ideal Types and Different Forms of Prophets

The church-sect pair of ideal types is useful for analyzing and comparing the

behavior of the three currents I analyze, even though they have not broken away from

the parent organization in full-blown charismatic rupture (or schism). This conceptual

pair refers to a general process by which a "church" grows out of a "sect" (Oden 1991). A

sect is formed when people leave a church to create a new group. The inspiration for the

new group is a charismatic leader or leaders, i.e. those who communicate a new religious

vision and exhort people to follow. Sects preach an exclusive religious ethic, believing

that their way of understanding religious truths is the right one. Drawing on the

spontaneous charisma of a founding leader, a sect is anti-institutional. They have few

structures. Charisma resides in the person of the leader, not the office. How the original

charisma will be sustained after the death of a founder is a fundamental problem that

must be solved, if the group is to have staying power beyond the first generation.

A "church" refers to an institution that has solved the problem of succession. An authority structure is established; the group depends less and less on the personal charisma of a leader. As routinization develops, children grow up in the group and fewer new adult members are added; the voluntary decision to join the group becomes a decision made at set times in life, i.e., confirmation for children of a certain age. As church membership becomes closely aligned with the social structure of a particular place, belonging to a particular church appears to be obligatory based on one's social group. A church strives to be universal, staking a claim to moral authority for a whole community, preaching an inclusive ethic.

A note must be made that the Roman Catholic Church emphatically rejects the term "sect" to describe the "new movements" it has recognized as "ecclesial realities," reserving the use of the term "sect" for Protestant and Pentecostal groups, which are frequently referred to in Latin America as the "invasion" of the sects. This official objection from the Roman Catholic Church is understandable, given the context of emerging religious competition. If one were to limit the definition of a "sect" to its potential for schism in an institution, then none of these three movements is a sect because they are not breaking away from the mother church and emphatically deny any such intention. Although it is true that the Christian Base Community is frequently called the "Church of the Poor" and they experienced a very public battle with the official hierarchy of the Church in Nicaragua in the 1980's, they insist that they have no intention of forming a separate church. Even as the Vatican stripped prominent liberation theologians of priestly authority, the priests stated their intention to continue a "prophetic" witness within, maintaining their commitment to working within the Church to promote their vision for the Church as a whole, albeit from an increasingly

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marginal position. They take comfort from the Bible passage in which Jesus says that prophets are honored everywhere except at home.[319]

Nonetheless, as an anthropologist trying to understand the behavior of the three new movements, I use the classic terminology of "church" and "sect" as neutral analytical terms to explain patterns of behavior, not to make judgments. I use the terms as Weberian ideal types with the full knowledge that they are a "one-sided" conceptual pair rooted in previous historical analysis of Christianity. If we are careful to use them heuristically, they can be useful in illuminating tendencies in the contemporary Roman Catholic Church. I believe that the Catholic Church is experiencing a historically significant period of "priestly" versus "prophetic" tensions. The clergy who hold priestly office within the Church's clerical hierarchy are being challenged to share some of their sacred authority with various groups of laity. The Vatican began recognizing the charismatic energy behind movements within Catholicism in the 1990's and has hopes that a measured amount of acceptance of certain alternatives may stem the tide of conversion away from the Catholic Church. The external Protestant and Pentecostal challenge to the Roman Catholic Church may have added impetus to Pope John Paul II's decision to allow the new religious movements to have greater legitimate space under the umbrella of the institution.[320]

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[319]This is a reference to the gospel of Matthew (13:57b): "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house" and in the gospel of Mark (6:4): "Then Jesus said to them: 'Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.'" Both quotations are from the New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Coogan 2001).

[320] This is not a new practice. Richard Kieckhefer (1979) describes how, after first attempting unsuccessfully to suppress heretical movements, the 13th century Papacy instituted "a policy of cooptation through which it absorbed and legitimated certain heresies as a bulwark against the rest." The quote is from Jane Schneider (1990:38) summarizing Kieckhefer's work. This policy made acceptance of the mendicant orders, i.e., the Dominican and Franciscan preaching orders, possible as well as setting the groundwork for the Inquisitorial courts dominated by the Papacy. The mendicant orders were "carriers of the reformist ideal that lay populations should not have to depend for their salvation on a restricted elite of monks and clergy but could seek it on their own" (Schneider 1990:39, citing Kieckhefer 1979).

The Roman Catholic Church has historically confronted such challenges by recognizing religious orders, so that sect-like behavior has been recognized and used for revival and reform for nearly two millennia. Roger Finke and Patricia Wittberg (2000) argue that the severity of the challenge of modernization stifled this internal mechanism for innovation (McDonough 1994; O'Connell 1984, cited by Finke and Wittberg 2000). The new lay movements represent a new openness to innovation in the Church, but they are different from previous such movements because they resist recognition as religious orders. They are lay movements by and large, although priests are being trained in the Neocatechumenal Way, there is still a strong emphasis on lay leader in partnership with the priest. The resistance to formation as a religious order is a challenge to the Vatican in terms of means for controlling the expression of their charismas.

At the heart of Christian doctrine is a historically and theologically understood prophetic outburst, a spiritual "charisma" (meaning "gift" in Greek). The Catholic hierarchy has long been wary of the excesses that can arise if believers are allowed too much latitude to follow the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. The Church became "church" when the authority of a trained and educated priesthood was established as the direct channel for correct interpretation of these spiritual gifts.

Creative process can shake up and renew an institution or cause a break and the formation of new institutions, independent of the old. The spiritual power of the Holy Spirit in Christian history has been a source of emotional and theological justification for challenges to institutional structures and practices throughout its history. The history of Christianity is a series of demands for renewals and splits, the slowness of internal change and the formation of new institutions that break off and remove themselves from the authority of the previous institution. Since Martin Luther's break with the church that sparked the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church continues to defend itself as the one, true Church that has eternal truth deriving from an unchanging

transcendent God. Yet, changes in the world relentlessly press the church to change in order to stay relevant. Where the Church has had a cultural monopoly, it has taken for granted the adherence of individual members, especially the poor. With competition, it can no longer afford to ignore the parishioners who are leaving the Church.

An important conceptualization within this charismatic-routinization process is the role of prophecy. Talcott Parsons (1993: xliii) summaries Weber on this point:

> The prophet is above all the agent of the process of breakthrough to a higher, in the sense of more rationalized and systematized, cultural order, an order at the level of religious ethics, which in turn has implications for the nature of the society in which it becomes institutionalized.

What is significant here is the "ethical" prophet understood as an agent of rationalization who intends to have an impact on the socio-cultural order. Weber recognizes, however, another type of prophet who is not an agent of ethical rationalization. This is the "mystagogue"—an "exemplary" prophet who seeks personal, inner transformation. He described the mystagogue as one who encourages the faithful to lead an individually virtuous life, achieving an inner spiritual breakthrough by imitating a prophet's example. This is in sharp contrast to an ethical prophet who proclaims the need for a new social structure in the normative community (Parsons 1993: xlv). While the ethical prophet acts as an "instrument" of God's will, an exemplary prophet becomes a "vessel" embodying spiritual charisma coming directly from God (Parsons 1993: xlv-xlvi). Utilizing the ideal types of ethical and exemplary prophecy as larger social processes (rather than only about individual prophetic callings) illuminates the tensions between the three Catholic movements highlighted here. Liberation theology, as an "ethical" prophetic approach challenges the Church to take oppositional positions against economic and political policies, which may be more threatening than the "new" movements that take an "exemplary" prophetic approach.

Liberation theology is a development specific to the Latin American experience in tandem with the growth of dependency theory and Marxism. They selectively incorporated elements from secular analyses into the Christian theology of "good news for the poor." They have focused on the gospel according to Luke, which contains a stronger emphasis on material poverty as opposed to the gospel according to Matthew, which has an emphasis on the "poor in spirit." Spiritual poverty has long been the mainstay of the Church hierarchy.

The "prophetic" message of the Christian Base Community is a charismatic outburst of this-worldly concern, stressing the importance of ethical action.[321] Promoting an ethical "prophetic" vision, they have Protestant rationalizing tendencies, while doing the least of any of the three movements in developing a parallel priestly structure. They have not set up seminaries specifically to train priests in liberation theology. They rely on individual religious priests, whose orders have been receptive to or instrumental in developing liberation theology. The Jesuits are an example of a religious order with a predominance of priests working in this theological vein, but there are mechanisms within these previously existing religious orders to control its development. Theologians are vulnerable to the authority of the Vatican that has censored several practicing theologians of liberation.

The Neocatechumenal Way is not specific to Latin America, having originated in Spain in the 1960's. It is the most "Catholic" of the new movements because its charisma is based on enforcing the system of sacraments of the institution. They rely on their sect-like moral authority to insist on adult compliance, using corporate methods of social control that are rigorous. They are "protestant-like" in forming small groups, but they also support the priestly role. They are forming their own seminaries and challenging the

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[321] It is noteworthy that CEPAD, a Protestant coalition which formed initially to help victims of the 1972 earthquake in Managua, became a strong supporter of the revolution and resonated, as did many liberal Protestant groups in the United States, to the themes of ethical action in the public sphere found in liberation theology.

authority of bishops who resist priests following the new way in their dioceses. They are holding their own separate masses only for members of a Neocatechumenal small group. They exhibit sect-like behavior in arguing their masses are superior to a regular mass.

Decentralized Pentecostal churches have been a strong push from the outside to provide a charismatic experience within the centralized Roman Catholic Church. There are more lay leaders in the Catholic Charismatic movement, which meet in small groups in individual homes more often than they meet in public worship. When they do worship, they sing and pray without having a priest present; however, they do not eschew the official church, encouraging members to attend regular masses and participate in the sacraments.

This situation in the Roman Catholic Church can be understood within the larger theoretical framework of developed by Max Weber (1993), namely the process of charisma and its routinization into a stable institution. Recognizing that charismatic authority is always ephemeral, Weber's theory posits that charisma tends to decline when structure or a new permanency develops. Turner's (1977:64) theory of ritual process adds that "the seemingly fixed is really the continuously renewed"—or, in other words, routinization "means a loss of creativity but not an absence of process" (Andelson 1980:731).

Applying the theory to interpretation of the current Catholic situation in Nicaragua, I perceive a hierarchy attempting to recognize internal charismatic impulses and incorporate them into its structure, i.e., attempting to renew without making drastic changes. In its effort to control its flock, the hierarchy of the institution runs the risk of dampening the religious enthusiasm of the laity and losing the struggle for members. However, a greater risk to the Church is losing members to non-Catholic religious groups and this concern may be underlying the attempt to make institutional room for the "new" movements. Yet, this move also involves risk. The acceptance of the new groups may also

present the risk of eroding the authority of the hierarchy due to the emergence of contradictory theologies. My ethnographic examples of religious behavior in Masaya, Nicaragua reveal insights into this process of constant renewal, fear of schism, and competition for the loyalty and energy of parishioners in the context of religious competition.

Conclusion

The Christian Base Community, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the Neocatechumenal Way are contemporary forms of congregational worship for small groups, designed to revitalize enthusiasm for Catholic faith. All three movements draw on the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council as the source of their unique expressions of the charisma of faith, encouraging lay participation and the development of lay leadership. My juxtaposition of these three movements is framed by Anthony Gill's hypothesis that the growth of evangelical Protestant and Pentecostal religious competition may be a better explanation for the emergence of progressive action and ideas in the Latin American Roman Catholic Church. While Nicaragua is generally cited as an example of Catholic Church responding to the needs of the poor and marginalized suffering repression under an authoritarian dictatorship, my ethnographic data and historical research opened by eyes to the presence of other movements within the Church that emerged at the same time, but do not embrace a radical critique of social and economic injustice, while also attempting to pay attention to the poor and marginalized. All three groups show various aspects of "protestant-like" practice being incorporated into the life of the Catholic Church in Masaya. Religious competition may be a significant component in accounting for the emergence of different charismas within the Church as this

complex, multifaceted institution strives to incorporate changes that will allow it to maintain its cultural hegemony; however, the charismatic outbursts coming from the laity have "sect-like"qualities that pose new challenges to the Church's authority structure.

The Christian Base Community's challenge to the Church's authority structure involves a this-worldly prophetic vision that calls for taking ethical action in the world to address social and economic issues. Its willingness to bring secular political economic theory inspired by Marxism into dialogue with Catholic social teaching challenged the long-standing position of anti-modernism and anti-communism of the institutional church. They encourage this more rational approach to Bible study, emphasizing the application of "prophetic" themes to contemporary economic and political conditions. At first, the ecclesiastical base community movement in Latin America was encouraged by the institutional church because it brought the Catholic faithful together in small groups to pray and study the Bible, an early "protestant-like" adaptation within the Church. Later, participants in the base community were inspired by a new orientation in theology pioneered by Latin American theologians known as liberation theology. In Nicaragua of the 1970's as the legitimacy of the authoritarian state was questioned, participants in the base community movement played a key role in the 1979 revolution, inspired by the religiously-based ethical call to action and caught up in the political crisis engulfing the country. Although liberation theology became part of the overarching ideology used to justify the new revolutionary government, the base community and liberation theology were contested within the Catholic Church and Nicaraguan society as a whole. A new liberation theology liturgy with Nicaraguan themes written by a secular musician, *Misa Campesina* by Carlos Mejia Godoy, was a lay-inspired innovation in these prayer gatherings, but the church hierarchy refused to allow this mass to be sung in the official church.

Observing the base community in Masaya in 1999-2000, I found that the base community adjusting to changing political circumstances. They were distancing themselves somewhat from the political process and the Sandinista Party (but not entirely). They focused on specific issues as a prophetic faith-based partner with local community groups. During the 1980's, the Christian Base Community's association with the Sandinista was a throwback to a high-level church-state alliance, albeit with a revolutionary state and priests from religious orders rather than under the authority of the episcopal structure that links the local bishops and archbishops to the Pope. Moreover, being a theology for a revolution is a harder task than maintaing a traditional church-state alliance because it offers a much greater challenge to the fundamental structure of the social order. Yet, the base community movement was also self-critical, realizing that they had often supported the Sandinista government rather than providing it with critisim and a clear, prophetic Catholic witness in awareness of the human tendency towards sinful behavior.

The Charismatic Renewal is similar to Protestant evangelical and charismatic Pentecostal groups in that it provides an emotional expression of the faith and places emphasis on the theology of the third "Person" in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Catholic Charismatic Renewal contributes a form of pastoral response that is clearly an active Catholic response to religious competition in Latin America; it is sect-like in terms of offering an emotionally fervent style. In contrast to the Christian base community strategy of challenging the structural conditions of economy, society, and politics, the Catholic charismatic pastoral response is to create new liturgical and congregational experiences within the church, particularly energetic, often ecstatic, small group worship with a focus on healing as a spiritual practice. Its ritual forms are more like Pentecostal groups, the strongest non-Catholic competitors in Latin America.

The Neocatechumenal Way is a disciplined method of developing adult understanding of the faith, especially the importance of participating in Catholic sacraments. This marks the Neocatechumenal Way as the most "Catholic" of these three groups. The Way ("*camino*" or itinerary) seeks to raise the moral standards of the community, insisting on actual compliance with goals built into the group process that members must reach in a corporate body in order to continue participation. This marks it as the most sect-like, creating an exclusive space within the Church.

I am juxtaposing these three movements in order to bring out ways in which these innovations are "sect-like" behavior to clarify how laity is challenging church authority by demanding new approaches in their religion. All three of these innovations in the church are experiments in small congregational groups. A view that the Charismatics and the Neocatechumenals are heretical could grow within the Church, although the level of controversy is not likely to be as public or as tightly associated with secular political struggles as the Christian Base Community. They, however, could face greater criticism and possible censure by the Pope and other levels of his hierarchy because they divide parishes by spiritual arrogance, harming the unity of the church.

The Christian base community is, internally, the least likely group to be grouped under the heading of "sect" because they want to be a "prophetic" force within the institution, transforming the whole Church. They have been pushed out of the institution, when they would prefer to be considered a leavening agent within.

During the period of my fieldwork, the Christian Base Community of Masaya was still seeking rapprochement locally with church leader. The hierarchy considered them potentially schismatic, but the members of the base community movement did not want to leave the church or form a separate "Church of the Poor," as they often accused of doing. Calling themselves a "Christian" base community rather than a Catholic one, they have an inclusive social ethic. This-worldly concerns with economy and politics

344

demonstrate a greater acceptance and support for pluralism in society, including

working with Protestant groups such as CEPAD[322] (coalition of several evangelical

Christian churches in Nicaragua) on specific projects. The Catholic Charismatic groups

practice a form of worship that is decidedly not traditional for the Church; they appear

more "Pentecostal" than any other of the new movements, yet they are the least sect-like.

Although they were not initially welcomed by the local priest, as the example of the

group in Monimbó described above, they do not exclude people from their movement.

Being spontaneous and open to the movement of the "Holy Spirit" in prayer and praise

songs, they exhibit more of the anti-structure features for which sects are known. An

international structure is growing for the Catholic Charismatic movement, so they are

forming some church-like features, formations that are acceptable to the Vatican. The

Neocatechumenal Way is most sect-like in its exclusivity, yet perhaps the most Catholic.

They emphasize the sacraments more than either the Charismatics or the Christian base

community, making the thresholds for continuation on their path toward Christian

perfection the willingness to participate in these Church-sanctioned forms of grace.

There is little overt "charismatic" emphasis in terms of spontaneity or free-form

emotional prayer. Teaching the basics of the faith for adults and insisting that being

among the faithful requires specific behaviors makes them exclusive and sect-like; they

are certain they have the right method and consider Catholics not in their fold to not be

on the right path towards being true Catholic Christians. There have been many disputes

with local bishops over who controls the movement with some bishops becoming

alarmed that Kiko has more authority with some of the members of his group than the

Pope (Fraser and Paul 2004; Urquhart 1999). Locally, in the Magdalena Church, Father

Orestes works closely with the Neocatechumenal Way. He was less prone to

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[322] CEPAD was formed in 1972 to assistance in the recovery effort after the devastating
earthquake in Managua. Afterwards, they transformed themselves into a general mission
organization as a coalition of Protestant groups working together in ecumenical cooperation.

accommodate the more "traditional" procession of the Virgin Mary during La Purísima, as the dispute described in this chapter revealed.

Yet, I would predict that none of these three movements described is likely to be the source of schism in the church as institution. They take offense when accused of being schismatic; for Catholics, the reformation has already happened. They have heard too much about the "invasion of the sects" to want to hurt the Church by adopting a schismatic approach. They want some room within their own church for creative new ways to worship, but they are still fundamentally schooled in obedience to the Church, even if they are sometimes not willing to buckle under immediately when the Pope or the Vatican demand change without collegial dialogue. The Church hierarchy is actively attending to these groups, attempting to reign in their sect-like qualities. Church hierarchy wants groups that they can work with, a group they can absorb and legitimate, even though somewhat heretical, because they need "a bulwark against" something more threatening (Schneider 1990:38), such as liberation theology. As I said at the beginning, "the seemingly fixed is really the continuously renewed" (Turner 1977:64)—or, in other words, routinization "means a loss of creativity but not an absence of process" (Andelson 1980:731). These "new" movements require much more study, especially in a local setting such as Masaya, to see which people are attracted to which movements and why.

Conclusion

My overarching research question has been: How may ethnographically observed patterns in Catholic religious practices in contemporary Nicaragua be understood in historical context? My data reveal the role of religious and ritual within the history of Nicaraguan efforts to imagine a nation-state.

Implications for Theory

Conducting my ethnographic research a decade after the revolution had been voted out of power, I find that anthropological theory about religion and ritual continues to be useful for observing behavior, especially when updated with attention to the historical context. Ritual is indeed a window for observation of people making their own history (Kelly and Kaplan 1990); as they perform their faith, the behavior seen through a historical anthropological lens illuminates a complex articulation of economic class, social status, and political party. Combining Victor Turner and Max Weber is a solid foundation for interpreting ethnographic data in historical context.

This dissertation explored the Weberian tradition seeking guidance on how to move beyond postmodern deconstruction towards positive theoretical development. There is much to be said in favor of Asad's (1993) deconstruction of the theory of religion and ritual in symbolic anthropology. Asad's genealogy is important theoretical work— and clearly articulates the heart of the postmodern epistemological critique of anthropological foundations. His essays on religion and ritual are meant to discover historical changes in the discourse that make our contemporary anthropological concepts appear reasonable to us, while at the same time problematizing the idea of

transhistorical definitions. However, Asad rejects developing new definitions, since they will be tainted by being developed at a particular time and place. The distrust of definitions, however, does not mean that Asad fails to suggest reasonable concepts for understanding religion and ritual. On the contrary, he suggests several concepts; e.g. power, discipline, authorizing processes. My question is, Why demonstrate the existence of a problem, if little attempt is made to formulate possible solutions?

I acknowledge that any theory will have limitations, yet it may nonetheless produce fruitful research questions. From a Weberian perspective, the "ideal type" is an alternative to "definition." Long before postmodernism, Weber recognized the impossibility of developing theoretical concepts free from the influences of their time and place. Arguing that ideal types are heuristic guides, Weber described them as "one-sided" exaggerations. The ideal type has been misunderstood as a normative ideal, when it is more properly understood as an analytical tool that teases out insights rather than imposing a preference for best "fit" between theory and data. I am quite sure that Weber would have agreed with Asad that religious symbols "cannot be understood independently of their historical relations with nonreligious symbols or of their articulations in and of social life, in which work and power are always crucial" (Asad 1993:53). Putting great value on empirically validated descriptions of particular societies at particular times in history in which the various aspects of social life are interrelated, Weber also searched for larger patterns articulated in historically particular contexts.

Summary of Findings

The city of Masaya was founded by Spaniard conquistadors in close proximity to the Mesoamerican Indian community of Monimbó in the early 1500s. During 500 years of domination, the Indians resisted and, then, gradually assimilated, adopting the language, religion, and clothing of their conquerors. Monimboseños have maintained

their distinctiveness as a people, through the continuity of living on basically the same land that was known as Monimbó prior to contact with Spaniards, but also through adaptation of the Catholic religion of their conquerors to serve some of their own purposes. The faith has also been a sustaining force.

Consolidating an effective state apparatus and achieving political stability have been difficult for Nicaragua since its emergence as a republic in 1838. It was this pattern of instability that led to U.S. intervention in the first place. Although some Nicaraguan political leaders sought and welcomed U.S. intervention when President José Santos Zelaya was overthrown in 1909, the longer the occupation of the U.S. Marines went on, the stronger resistance grew, even among those who initially thought it was necessary.

Augusto Sandino's peasant and working class troops resisted U.S. occupation tenaciously (1927-1933), even when other Liberal leaders were willing to craft a compromise that fell short of ousting the Marines. Sandino articulated an anti-imperialist ideology that provided an opening for non-elite social actors to play a role in imagining a nation grounded in a mestizo racial identity. At the same time, the U.S. was training a National Guard based upon its own model of local militias in hopes that the new institution would keep social order after the withdrawal of the Marines. Anastasio Somoza Garcia was selected to be the head of the National Guard, envisioned by the U.S. as an apolitical constabulary. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "good neighbor" policy ironically helped make possible Somoza's rise to power. FDR tolerated Somoza's usurpation of power because not only did his authoritarian rule keep the peace, but he also proved to be a reliable ally against the Axis powers during World War II. In the post-war era, the ideological basis of the U.S.-Nicaragua alliance was transformed into Cold War anti-communism.

Politically ambitious, Anastasio Somoza Garcia used his control of the National Guard to seize the opportunity to take power away from the aristocratic Nicaraguan

families. From a modest middle class family, he married into the aristocracy. Nicaragua under the Somoza family dynasty was a patrimonial police state; he exercised charismatic personal power backed by his control over the coercive force of the National Guard within a constitutional structure that contained some of the formal features of a legal-rational state (i.e., constitution with formal separation of church and state; tripartite structure of executive, legislative, and judicial branches; and elections). The Liberal Somoza crafted a populist bipartisan support for his authoritarian rule and dropped the anti-clerical emphasis that had been the hallmark of Liberalism in the nineteenth century. Skillful pact-making with elite leaders allowed him to maintain dominance, while they accepted a minor share of political authority in exchange for economic opportunity. Somoza was, in short, not only a political usurper but also a status usurper as well. Political leaders, such as Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, editor of the *La Prensa* newspaper, who were members of the traditional aristocracy accustomed to ruling (two of his ancestors had been presidents of the republic), were offended at the upstart and shamed by the willingness of other elites to accept a subordinate role. Although Somoza ("Tacho") developed a politically-astute relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, he continued the Liberal practice of permitting non-Catholic religious groups to function. After Somoza's assassination in 1956, his son Luis ran the country, while Anastasio Somoza Debayle ("Tachito") headed the National Guard. After Luis' death in 1967, Tachito came to power.

In the 1960's, Carlos Fonseca developed *Sandinismo,* a creative fusion of Sandino's legacy and a Marxian vision inspired by the success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution (Zimmermann 2000), to guide a small band of guerrilla revolutionaries taking up arms against the dictatorship. However, in the final analysis, the overthrown of Somoza was achieved through a broad-based coalescence of classes and sectors. This multi-class coalition was united in opposition to the dictatorship, but no consensus on a

new direction for the country was possible. Nonetheless, the 1979 revolution dramatically changed the political configuration of Nicaragua. Subaltern Indians of Monimbó were key players in the insurrection against the National Guard, having participated in the earliest such action on February 23, 1978.

In a country culturally saturated by various forms of Christianity, Nicaragua's national liberation struggle contained a new element: liberation theology—a Latin American Catholic theological critique of social and political conditions arguing for a reorientation of the Church away from the interests of the rich and powerful to the poor and marginalized. This religious contribution to the struggle was not initially developed by the most prominent organic intellectual of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), Carlos Fonseca, or other leftist revolutionaries who were primarily secular Marxists, but it became increasingly important leading up to the overthrow of the Somoza family dictatorship. During the Sandinista decade, liberation theology functioned as an important segment of the overarching ideology for the revolution along with *Sandinismo* as elaborated by the Sandinista leaders who came to power.

Viewing the Biblical story of the Exodus as a political-religious movement, liberation theologians saw the "good news" of the Christian faith speaking prophetically about the struggle unfolding in Nicaragua. However, inasmuch as liberation theology brought elements of a secular ideology that criticized religion as an opiate for the masses into dialogue with Biblical themes about God's call for justice for poor and marginalized people, the conservative Catholic hierarchy resisted this dialogue (having fought Marxism as Godless communism from its first articulation). Resistance to liberation theology came not only from papal authority but also from the subaltern poor in Monimbó who are steeped in folk Catholicism, whether or not they felt an elective affinity with the revolution or the counterrevolution, or rejected them both in hopes of finding less conflictive ways of expressing one's faith commitment. If, to this ideological

351

battle raised to a fever pitch, the rapid growth of evangelical religious groups is added, one can begin to see that this was a polarizing situation of multiple dimensions. Under the circumstances, it does not seem altogether surprising that Catholics might turn to other forms of worship that were less controversial, especially given that papal authority was criticizing liberation theology harshly. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Neocatechumenal Way were being articulated as non-politically-engaged forms of worship, encouraging behavior that more closely resembles that of "exemplary prophets" of spiritual values. They are expressing their faith in deliberate contrast to the politically provocative "ethical prophets" directly challenging the socioeconomic and political structures of society.

Observing a social drama during the 1999 patron saint celebration in Masaya, I witnessed a subset of the members of a religious brotherhood (whose role it is to carry the image of Saint Jerome in street processions) symbolically challenge the legitimacy of President Arnoldo Alemán to rule. Witnessing the social drama opened up an opportunity to explore the enduring cultural power of the Catholic religious brotherhood (*cofradía*), which has its roots in the civil-religious cargo cult of the colonial era but is being transformed by the partial emergence of modern political parties and modern revolution articulated in class terms. Its recent history is additionally shaped by social status (primarily ethnicity and gender) as the subaltern male Indian members of the religious brotherhood continue to adapt this institution in the late twentieth century as a vehicle for expressing their political power as well as their identity. With the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution, the carriers of the patron saint image walked in street procession through the indigenous barrio, performing their new-found inclusion in the political process. The ritual became institutionalized for annual reenactment: it is the site of new history made and continuously being made, even as the political climate changes.

Surprising to me was that the carriers of the patron saint did not often participate in activities of the Christian Base Community. Expressing strong anti-clerical resistance to the Catholic hierarchy, they preferred the embodied performance of faith and identity through the religious brotherhood to liberation theology with its modern themes of brotherly love and feminism (however imperfectly expressed). Patriarchal patterns that persist in the economy, family, church, and politics maintain this civil-religious cargo cult as a significant basis for the creative use of power by these male ethnic subalterns. In spite of being supporters of the Sandinista Revolution, they resist the feminist principles articulated in the FSLN revolutionary program. The sacred authority structure of the religious brotherhood legitimates the authority structure of the patriarchal family structure in an economy that has yet to provide a material basis for changing gender relations. Liberation theology's God of brotherly love and gender equality lacks "carriers" who feel an affinity for this new movement in the Catholic Church among the *peañeros*.

The fusion of religious and political elements in the contemporary performance of this patron saint ritual exists in the context of extreme polarization associated with modern revolution and the uneven emergence of modern political parties. Partisan politics based on more fully articulated ideological terms created conflicts in securing funding for the annual festival. Under Somoza, a form of bipartisan political support (pact-making) for the patron saint festivities had become a source of funds. After the Sandinista period of one-party rule, when the political tide turned again, political paybacks came back to haunt the *peañeros*. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro defeated Daniel Ortega in 1990, and in Masaya, the subaltern *peañeros* remained fiercely loyal to Ortega and the Sandinista Party. In the late 1990's, an Indian from Monimbó was elected mayor of Masaya, but the new mayor refused to support the patron saint celebration when the *peañeros* came to him for a donation. As a Liberal, he told them that, with the municipality of Masaya now under his control, no contributions would be granted due to

their partisan pro-Sandinista activities. This setback did not deter the *peañeros* from their partisan loyalty right up to the time of the social drama I observed.

They made a symbolic political statement of protest for the third year in a row. Refusing to allow their saint to show respect to the President, this local group made an impact on the national political scene. They refused to concede the public stage to the dominant political party, contesting the authority of a sitting president. In short, the male artisans of Monimbó exercised their political agency as members of a rebellious subaltern ethnic community (Field 1999). New history is being written every year as the festival is re-enacted; it is not mere repetition of tradition, but a performance that contributes to the shaping of the nation-state as well as expressing their identity in local municipal politics. Their actions, moreover, mobilized male upper class members to seek to re-integrate them under the authority of the cross-class membership in the religious brotherhood. The patron saint of Masaya is a politico-religious symbol through which the contested process of imagining the Nicaraguan nation-state can be fruitfully observed as a complex articulation of economic class, social status, and political party.

Observation of the Immaculate Conception celebration offers another example of ritual as new history being made; however, it reflects other aspects of the articulation of class, status, and party, highlighting the role of women. An examination of this politico-religious symbol reveals a contested process in which the autonomy of household and neighborhood resists the elite effort to capture the Virgin Mary for their nation-state building project.

Nicaraguan scholar Edgardo Buitrago (1959) argues that *la Purísima* (the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary) is an expression of the Nicaraguan "national soul." He is constantly interviewed and cited as <u>the</u> authoritative source on understanding this tradition. While calling this symbol the "soul" of the nation, he does not explore the history of the symbol's connection to the project of building a nation-

state but rather describes the manifestations of the ritual as a religious, purely spiritual activity, especially beloved by the "folk" (poor people). I draw the local festival for this Marian devotion ethnographically observed into juxtaposition with the history of elite activity on the national level in order to imagine the Nicaraguan polity as a Catholic nation-state, protected by the Immaculate Conception as patron saint. New history is continuously made through this politico-religious symbol, revealing tensions between the popular element of neighbors binding themselves together on the local level, independent of church and state, and the national level project. Its linkages to the history of the Roman Catholic Church as transnational institution are a more prominent part of the cultural process of this ritual than in the ritual in honor of San Jerónimo, the municipal patron saint celebration.

A ritual at the gendered intersection of home and street, *la Purísima* gives women a more prominent role to play than does Masaya's patron saint festival. Moreover, la Purísima binds male members of the family to home and neighborhood in complementary equality with women, mitigating the harshness of the patriarchal cultural patterns that are more evident with San Jerónimo. The cultural landscape in Nicaragua is saturated with Marian devotion, a deep religious "enchantment" that shows few signs of becoming "disenchantment" in spite of an attempt at the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to move the Church away from Marian worship towards a more Christ-centered theology and ritual practice.

Nicaraguan Catholics in Masaya have many forms of the Virgin Mary to choose from, in addition to this central Marian celebration of the Immaculate Conception. The Marian devotions ongoing in Masaya reflect tensions within the Church. On the one hand, these devotions represent a unity in diversity of religious expression but, on the other, they reveal sources of potential for conflict. The Christian Base Community celebrates la Purísima with as much fervor as any group in Masaya, but they imagine the

Virgin Mary as a poor, humble peasant girl with faith in God who hears the cry of the people. Yet, frequently women, even those active in the Christian Base Community, told me they prefer the royal image of the Virgin as Queen, Mother of God. The image of a humble peasant girl feels like a down-grading of the Virgin's sacred power as intercessor on their behalf—and life is just too precarious to change this deeply embedded religious symbol so drastically. It has the feel of human beings inventing something new, drawing too much from the contemporary political situation, whereas whatever cultural invention of the image might have been present in the introduction of the devotion by the Franciscan friars during the colonial period had long been forgotten. They resist disenchantment, given both that the authorizing discourse of orthodox bishops continues to preach the eternal truths of the faith that cannot change and the fact that liberation theology does not offer a replacement to compare with the Virgin's power to comfort.

The anti-Somoza elite who were a critical component in the multi-class coalition that eventually overthrew the dictatorship rested on a culturally nostalgic, backward-looking vision for Nicaragua. Although their fathers and grandfathers were economic innovators actively involved in coffee production, this socioeconomic fact was not acknowledged (Gobat 2005). They promoted a discourse of Catholicism as spiritual core of the country. Their myth of the Nicaraguan nation-state painted a picture of a cattle *hacienda* as a Catholic social charter. This charter envisioned a modern nation-state from an "anti-modern" cultural angle, while adopting as much economic modernism as possible, given their structural position within an agrarian economy in the global capitalist market. This Catholic discourse was a powerful alternative to a competing modernist vision. These competing nationalist projects pitted two groups of elites against each other. The dominant Liberal forces at the turn of the twentieth century projected the country as a cosmopolitan, secular nation, ethnically homogeneous (Gould 1997),

while also setting in motion repressive policies that undermined Indian autonomy. They did not envision the participation of Indians or poor mestizos. The minority elite faction of nation-builders, while sharing in a belief that Nicaragua was a mestizo nation, insisted on envisioning the country as a Catholic nation. Faith was fundamental for binding people together across lines of ethnicity and class. Their vision integrated Indians and poor mestizos through patron-client relationships but without political empowerment of these "popular" groups.

When the Sandinista guerrillas overthrew Somoza, they imagined a revolutionary nation-state through an ideology that included the "popular" groups, articulating them in class terms as peasants and workers. This revolutionary nation-building process, Sandinisimo, was based on Fonseca's Sandino-Marxian political philosophy. It was substantially more rational than any other worldview in Nicaraguan history up to that time.

The National Directorate of the Sandinistas took up the task of imagining a secular nation without an established Church, while also seeking to expropriate Catholic religious symbols. They called Sandino a Christ-like savior and supporters draped Sandinista political colors on Saint Jerome in the street procession. Supporters of the revolution wrote a liberation theology novena for the celebration of the Immaculate Conception. Liberation theology encouraged a rationalized religio-political ethic of protest against economic and political injustice, yet the Sandinista nation-state was not strong enough to deliver on its promises to end the injustice, especially as the contra war and economic boycott made it increasingly impossible for the government to continue its ambitious plans for health care, education, and economic development.

Sandinista economic development projects—state-owned farms, agricultural cooperatives, and agrarian reform—assumed that peasants were further along a Marxian theoretical trajectory of proletarianization than was actually the case. Sandinista

modernist assumptions of collectivized state capitalism clashed with backward-looking

utopian images of the subaltern population that idealized the lifeways of a peasant

village. Such villages were rapidly fading away, not transformed through industrial

capitalism but structurally peripheral and exploited as an obsolete, largely expendable

sector by a globalizing capitalist world-system.

Liberation theology and the small group format often associated with it, the

Christian base community, and the Catholic cult of the saints (patron saints like Saint

Jerome or the Virgin Mary) are not the only religious options available to people in

Masaya. I noticed alternative forms of worship within the Catholic Church that had not

come to my attention in my preparation before beginning my fieldwork, in addition to

the Protestant and Pentecostal groups of which I was somewhat aware. Rather than

viewing the Church as dichotomized contested terrain between radical liberation

theology and the church hierarchy, a much broader portrait began to emerge. Political

scientist Anthony Gill's (1998) hypothesis about the growth of evangelical Protestant and

Pentecostal faith groups as an external "push" factor for understanding behavior in the

Catholic Church has been a fruitful guide as an expanded framework for interpreting the

growth of these alternative Catholic worship styles. Looking at the Catholic Charismatic

Renewal and Neocatechumenal Way in juxtaposition with the Christian Base Community

and Baptist Protestantism in Masaya provides insight into this wider field of religious

competition.

Anthony Gill (1998) tests an alternative explanation for the emergence of

"progressive" Catholicism and its call for the Church to shift institutional emphasis away

from a "preference" for the wealthy to a "preferential option for the poor." Through

cross-national comparison, he found a correlation between the threat of competition

from the growth of evangelical religious groups and the presence of national Catholic

Church hierarchies who favored progressive Catholicism. At the same time as the

Catholic Church talked about the problems of the poor and repressive authoritarian governments, they also talked about the "invasion of the sects."

In Nicaragua as well as other Latin America countries, the state in the twentieth century no longer maintained legal barriers to the entrance of non-Catholic religious groups. Since the nineteenth century, political leaders in Nicaragua fought to develop their authority to rule a secular nation-state by taking wealth and authority away from the Church. These leaders (commonly called Liberals) began to make changes that aimed to transform formal constitutional declarations of a "lay" (*laico*) state into a reality. Nicaragua's history reveals a situation in which the Catholic Church remained the *de facto* state religion in Nicaragua longer than in neighboring countries of Central America. This is true, at least in part, because President José Santos Zelaya, a Liberal, was deposed in 1909. The relative stability of the next 30 years of Conservative rule allowed moderate liberal economic reform under U.S. military occupation, but Roman Catholic cultural hegemony was maintained with little or no reform. As the Marines were withdrawn and Anastasio Somoza Garcia came to power in the 1930's, a new liberal party was formed. Somoza's party eschewed the nineteenth-century liberal emphasis on anti-clerical politics, accommodating himself significantly to the Catholic Church; however, he followed the liberal policy of allowing religious freedom by permitting non-Catholic religious groups to operate freely.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the Neocatechumenal Way have been called "new movements" by the Vatican. They show signs of being Catholic reactions to the presence of growing non-Catholic evangelical groups in ways strikingly similar to the Christian Base Community, while also having decidedly different forms. The Vatican does not consider these three together as "new movements" because liberation theology is being actively discouraged, but I have juxtaposed them because they are Catholic innovations that originated after the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and are

internationally widespread. The "protestant-like" elements they share are primarily small group worship and Bible study as well as new sacred music incorporating modern instruments and popular styles. At the same time as they show this highly selective incorporation of components from their non-Catholic competitors, they show strong attempts to maintain their essential Catholic character. The ways in which they differ from each other in practice are as fascinating as the ways in which these alternative forms of charisma challenge the authority structure of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal uses an emotional Pentecostal style of worship with strong lay leadership in small prayer circles. One of the most prominent Pentecostal-like elements is an emphasis on healing through the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit. While the prayer circles take place in people's homes, participants continue to attend the official celebration of the Mass in their local parish churches and partake of other official sacraments. They are allowed to hold weekly collective worship services in local parish churches. Led by male and female lay leaders, these services feature lively (and often loud) singing of new praise music to the accompaniment of electric guitars and drums.

The Neocatechumenal Way emphasizes adult spiritual formation in small groups and does not emphasize emotional prayer. Nonetheless, the *Camino* also introduced its own liturgical innovations, including livelier music in modern styles, while rigorously promoting the sacraments as essential aspects of being Catholic. The Neocatechumenal Way founders developed a catechism especially designed for adults that is authoritatively mandated for groups around the world. Moreover, they require the participants to move together in their small groups through a set of steps along a path (*camino*) towards Christian perfection. Through group retreats, they are expected to demonstrate obedience to Church authority by complying with specific behaviors at each step. Marriage is one of the seven sacraments that the Neocatechumenal Way insists upon.

This is just one example of the rigor of this movement's disciplinary methods—an authorizing discourse with a built-in mechanism for monitoring actual practice in individual participants' lives. The marriage sacrament is rigorous because it directly confronts the social reality of Nicaraguan family life in which 80% of the adult population is not married through Catholic Holy Matrimony or even a marriage ceremony performed under secular government authority.

Although each movement with the Catholic Church has clerical supporters, these "new" movements represent different segments of the laity coming together around unique expressions of religious charisma and an essential Catholic core. Although Charismatic Renewal and Neocatechumenal Way appear to be more conservative than the Christian Base Community because they stress spiritual values rather than prophetic values related to socio-economic and political issues, key leaders have also made statements that show that the conservatives are not as free from political entanglements as they claim.

Selective incorporation of "protestant-like" elements is one way in which these modern movements could be said to have "sect-like" qualities. In addition, all three ways of being Catholic represent potential challenges to the authority structure of the institution, although the Vatican has responded most strongly (at least to date) to restrain theologians of liberation and the Christian Base Community. Charismatic Renewal challenges clerical authority through an emphasis on direct access to the power of God through the Holy Spirit rather than mediation through a priest as an institutionally authorized carrier of charisma. This is sect-like behavior because participants may be carried away by an emotional conviction that they no longer need priests. The Neocatechumenal Way sets itself apart from the larger Church through celebration of its own liturgical innovation of the Eucharist that only participants in its special small groups are allowed to attend. Although clergy are the duly authorized

agents of the Church who perform this special Mass in the Neocatechumenal Way, this behavior is sect-like in that it encourages adherents (clerical and laity alike) to believe that they are spiritually superior to other Catholics.

Reflecting further on another aspect of Anthony Gill's hypothesis, examining the case of Nicaragua in light of the events that have taken place since Gill's time frame (1939-1979) reveals that characterizing the Nicaraguan church hierarchy as one of the "progressive" national episcopal conferences in Central America was overstated. This has led to a false impression that progressivism penetrated more deeply into the institution than it actually did. The antiauthoritarian stance that Nicaraguan Catholic Church leaders exhibited in 1978-1979 was not indicative of support for the "progressive" pastoral strategies of liberation theology, but rather, it was a stance forced on the Church by political crisis. Somoza's unjust repression and refusal to vacate office contributed to insurrectionary chaos and a broad-based, multi-class coalition that resulted in his downfall.

Moreover, the presence of Protestant and Pentecostal religious competition may well have been a significant "push" factor for the Catholic Church to allow "protestant-like" religious forms to flourish. The fact that modern Catholic conservative religious movements (i.e., ones that do not pose a challenge to the socio-economic and political structures of society) are available suggests that religious competition is having an impact on internal Church pastoral strategies in ways other than liberation theology and the base communities.

The Church-State conflict during the Sandinista decade (1980-1990), when the Nicaraguan Catholic Church hierarchy led the internal opposition to the revolution, showed that the national episcopacy had not taken significant steps towards liberation theology or its model for small group gatherings, the Christian base community. In contrast to other countries, i.e., Brazil where much stronger support for liberation

362

theology developed among prominent archbishops and bishops, the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference took actions such as the 1976 ban against singing the liberation-theology-inspired *Misa Campesina Nicaragüense* by Carlos Mejia Godoy in the Church. Although the Archbishop of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo, spoke out against Somoza's abuses and received death threats for his efforts at mediation as the legitimation crisis deepened in the 1970s, his theological orientation was conservative.

Moreover, the coming to power of a Marxian-influenced revolution, I argue, aborted any potential there might have been for the development of a deeper "progressive" stance by the Church hierarchy. In the ideologically polarizing climate of revolutionary forces successfully seizing the apparatus of the state, the Church was suddenly confronted by a secular rival to its Catholic integralist worldview; i.e., by a new regime made up of socialists (FSLN National Directorate) who distanced their government from the official Church in an effort to create a "lay" nation-state, respecting religious freedom rather than having a de facto state religion. Although four priests closely associated with liberation theology served in high-level Sandinista government positions, they were not bishops under the authority of the national episcopacy (who are directly appointed by the Pope). The Church hierarchy, being thus "deposed" from its former position of dominance, reacted defensively against what it perceived as a dangerous trend towards "Godless communism." At the same time, an important shift also occurred in the Vatican. In 1978, just one year prior to the Sandinista Revolution, a new Pope was elected—Karol Jozef Wojtyla from Poland, who took the name John Paul II. The new Pope represented a conservative reaction against the modernizing effort begun by Pope John XXIII's second Vatican Council. In 1981, John Paul II appointed Joseph Ratzinger to protect the integrity of Church doctrine in the role of prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Ratzinger (who succeeded John Paul II in

2005, taking the name Pope Benedict XVI) carried forward the battle against liberation theology with rigor.

Liberation theology is often characterized as a religion of revolution, challenging a repressive and violent status quo that marginalizes the poor. A religion of revolution is an oppositional worldview offering ideological support for making this-worldly changes in society. In Nicaragua, Christian Base Community articulated a prophetic message challenging injustice. In the context of a legitimation crisis for the Somoza dictatorship, liberation theology themes encouraged actions that profoundly threatened the state. While previously buttressing the state, the Church hierarchy functioned as a religion of the status quo. The Church hierarchy had long maintained alliances with the wealthy, powerful elite, while claiming to be a non-political institution carrying out purely spiritual practices. Respect for secular political authority was generally regarded as necessary for social order.

As the violent overthrow of the Somoza regime appeared immanent, the hierarchy inched towards an oppositional stance to the state; however, when the Sandinista revolutionaries seized control of the state, the Church continued on a trajectory towards greater levels of opposition to the state. As the Sandinistas consolidated their power, they needed to build legitimacy, which thrust them into a position in which they needed to shift to development of a non-oppositional ideology. In other words, they needed to develop a new religion for a new status quo. The hierarchy of the Nicaraguan Catholic Church shifted from being a religion of the status quo to one of the counterrevolution. The bishops elaborated their opposition to the revolutionary Sandinista government in strong anti-communist themes. When subaltern members of the San Jerónimo religious brotherhood dressed the saint in the Sandinista red-and-black bandana, the Church objected vociferously that this was an illegitimate expropriation of sacred symbols for illegitimate secular ends by a Marxist regime.

The church hierarchy was marginalized in terms of having lost access and influence with the secular state authority but not completely so. They were not reduced to the level of powerlessness suffered by subalterns who practice a religion of resistance. The religion of the counterrevolution had powerful international allies in the United States government and the Vatican.

E. Bradford Burns (1991) characterized the Catholic Church as a weak institution when Nicaragua emerged as an independent republic in 1838, needing the economic support and political recognition of the state more than the state needed the Church for legitimation. More than one hundred years later, the Nicaraguan Catholic Church gained international recognition from a Pope shaped by his own fight against communism in his home country of Poland. Conflict against a socialist state strengthened the Church's voice internally and on the world stage during this crisis. The Sandinistas' radical challenge to the structure of the world-system gave the religion of status quo an opportunity to go on the offensive as a victim of injustice. Those who had been opposing the Somoza regime through a prophetic religion of revolution now had to consolidate and legitimate their claim to authority as they crafted a new configuration of the status quo.

In 1990, another political reversal took place. Violeta Chamorro's election brought about the restoration of the Catholic Church's close alliance with the secular state. Yet, the Church had developed independence of action during the Sandinista decade, perhaps its greatest level of autonomy in Nicaraguan history. The future of its relationship to the state and its efforts to maintain cultural hegemony are worthy of exploration for the light they may shed on the human desire for embodied meaning, ritually seeking to contest or consolidate power, destabilizing or stabilizing religious or secular authority structures.

The Nicaraguan "national soul" at the end of the twentieth century continued to be nurtured by a Catholic integralist vision, but it is engaged in the active process of adjustment to a changing political and religious landscape. The Church has maintained its high-level political profile on the national stage, while confronting the "invasion of the sects" with its own experimentations with "protestant-like" expression of the faith. Liberation theology challenges the Church to take oppositional positions against economic and political injustice and policies that keep people impoverished. This prophetic stance is more threatening to the authority of both Church and State than the other charismas as expressed by the Neocatechumenal Way and Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which encourage the expression of embodied spiritual charismas that compete directly in worship and pastoral styles with non-Catholic evangelical religious groups. Will the rigor of the Church's authority combined with the new styles of worship stem the tide of the neo-Protestant Reformation in Latin America? What impact will this have on the body politic that has imagined itself as a Catholic nation-state but is being challenged by secular forces?

In the years since my fieldwork was conducted, the political party system in Nicaragua has continued to see dynamic contests between the FSLN and the Liberal Party on the local and national level, with elements of pact-making reemerging. Moreover, a rapprochement between Daniel Ortega and Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo resulted in Ortega publicly proclaiming that he has been converted, rejoining the ranks of the Catholic faithful. His repeated efforts to run for president finally resulted in victory in 2006. Insight into the significance of Daniel Ortega's return to the national presidency (Aizenman 2006; Ortega Hegg 2007), more than a decade after the revolutionary government had been voted out of power, may be fruitfully illuminated against the backdrop of growing religious pluralism, lay charisma, and change within the Roman Catholic Church. The Daniel Ortega who won the election in 2006 is a much

different person and politician from the man who was a Marxist revolutionary in 1979. He has grown increasingly closer to the Catholic Church hierarchy, especially former Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo (who has retired but is still a player on the national scene). Ortega, although still somewhat progressive, has become more pragmatic than ideological (Tamayo 2008). His transformation may be understood against the cultural hegemony of Nicaraguan Catholicism being challenged but not broken.

My fieldwork was a preliminary ethnographic exploration of Catholic religious ritual from "traditional" saint celebrations to "new" movements. My eyes were opened to variations in Catholic religious ritual unknown to me before being immersed in the culture. The next phase of research will require further historical analysis, especially of the "new" movements and their interactions with unique cultural elements of Nicaragua society. In addition, perfecting an operationalization of an index of sociological factors may lead to improved descriptive patterns and hypothetical predictions that tease out the elements of elective affinity for the various religious expressions in competition with each other. Exploring overlapping participation in and/or switching between groups would also yield greater refinements of the social indicators for expression of charismas. I would prefer to assemble a team to conduct fieldwork in order to explore the complexity of the competing groups within the Catholic Church and without—and to deepen the sophistication of the analysis of the historical context. Religious rituals have been a useful window for exploring the ethnographic reality on the ground in a particular community as well as understanding the process of imagining the Nicaraguan nation-state from the vantage point of this part of the country. Utilizing anthropological theory of religion and ritual, grounded in Weberian historical social theory, yielded insights into people making their own history.

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