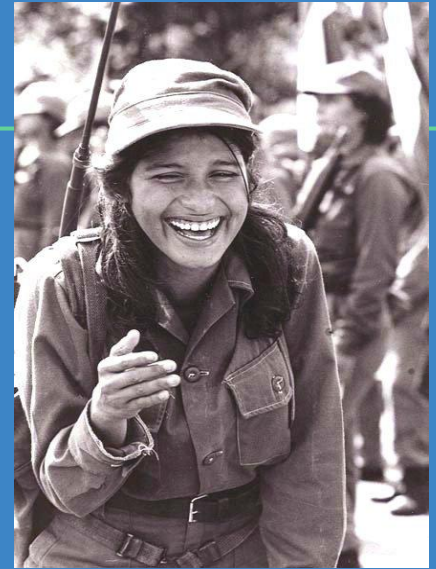




Women in Nicaragua



Presenters:
Enat Arega
Jennifer Hernandez
Celeste Vazquez



Agenda

Role of women:

- I. Before the Nicaraguan Revolution
- II. During the Nicaraguan Revolution
- III. After the Nicaraguan Revolution
- IV. Organizations

Before the Revolution



Role of Women

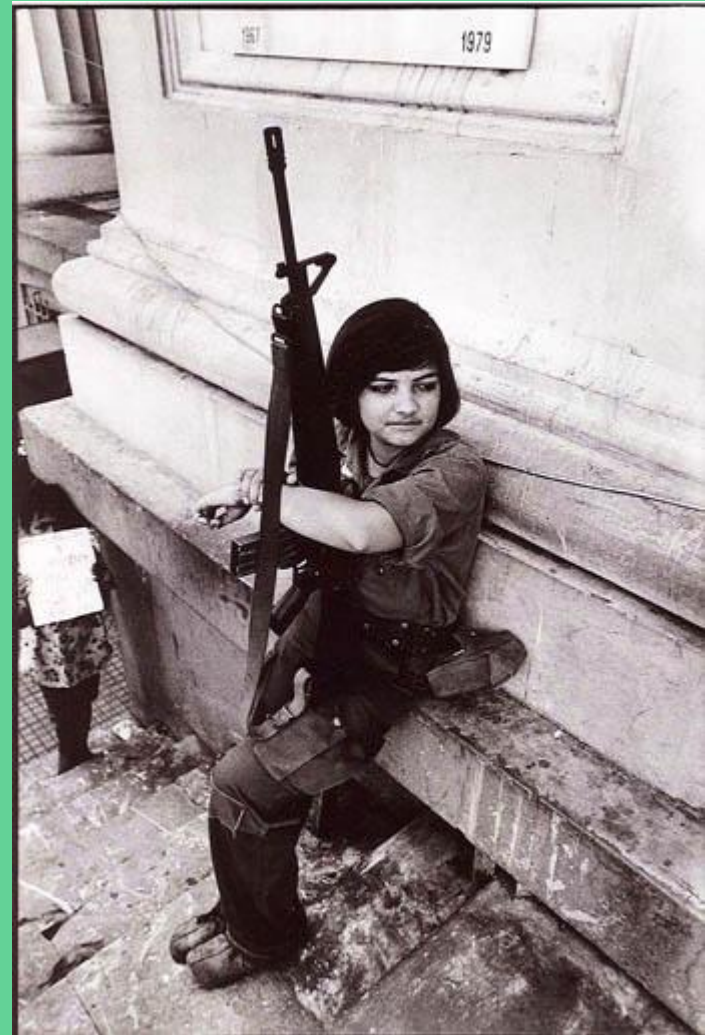
- Stayed at home
- Shaped by traditional Hispanic values
 - High fertility
 - Raise the children
- Attributes of women
 - Dependence
 - Devotion
 - Submissiveness
 - Faithfulness



The law favored men over women

- Family Code of 1904
- Women could not vote until 1955
- Marriage: essentially just a contract that forced woman to follow and obey the man's every decision.
- Divorce: only allowed under extremely dangerous/cruel conditions
- Remarriage was frowned upon
- A mother was denied the right to her child if the child was conceived outside of marriage (not the case for men)
- No protection for a sexually/domestically abused woman who was married
- Prostitution encouraged

During the Revolution



Women's Involvement in the Nicaraguan Revolution (1961-1990)

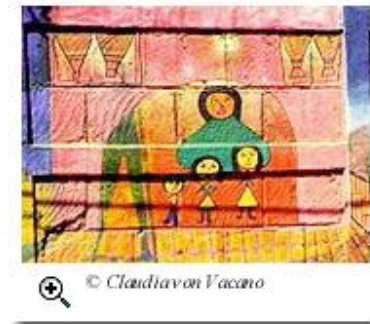
- 1987
 - 67% active members in popular militia
 - 80% of guards
 - 50,000 women nationwide
- Served as:
 - Messengers
 - Ran safe houses
 - Organized demonstrations for political prisoners and against the dictatorship



Women's Involvement in the Nicaraguan Revolution (1961-1990)

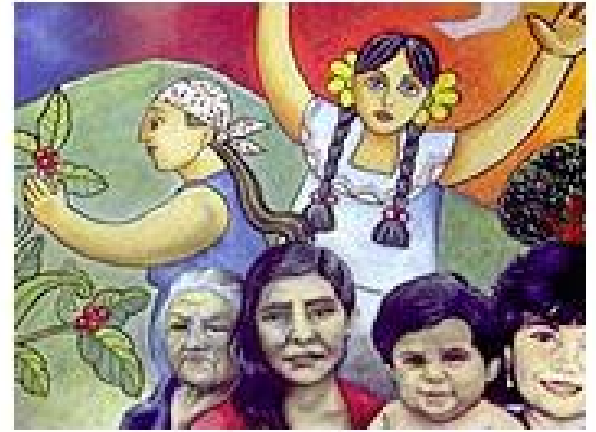
- Women recorded testimonies
 - As guerrilla soldiers
 - Produced testimonial literature
 - *Roads of the Polar Star*
 - *Being a Mother in Nicaragua*

"Everything that we did was for our children so that they could learn to read, so they could have a better life, then we, with this idea, participated in the Revolution. With the idea that they were going to learn to read, that they were going to learn many things that they didn't know, with this we integrated in the process of the Revolution," Ser madre en Nicaragua (Being a Mother in Nicaragua) 22.



Joining the Revolution

- Nicaragua suffered from severe economic crisis
 - government overspending
 - foreign debt
 - worldwide hike in interest rates.
- Pressuring of the Nicaraguan government to cut social programs
- Hyperinflation, rising food prices, and a devalued currency made it increasingly difficult for women to provide for their families and perform their domestic duties.
- Many housewives and mothers entered the political arena, lobbying the government to meet basic needs, combat inflation, and provide social services



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Support for the Revolution

- Supported the Sandinista Revolution because of their role as mothers
 - frequented the public jails, demanding that their children to be released
- Wished to protect and defend an immediate family member.
- In desire to give their lives to the revolution after losing a child in battle
- Peter Rosset and John Vandermeer argue:
 - "the political activities of these women now are completely bound up with their identity as mothers" (161).



"In conditions of war and in the situation that our country lives, I as a mother cannot watch over one child, there are millions of children in the country...the interests of the entire people should come first" (ibid., 86).

Women in the Revolution

- Women were fighting for 2 reasons
 - Gender equality
 - overthrow Somoza
- Leadership positions
 - headed units and battalions
 - sometimes entire commands were composed of solely women.
- Safehouses
 - provided food, clothes and shelter for fighters and political workers.
- organized first aid and medical supplies
- made bombs
- provided weaponry and ammunitions
- messengers

“There was never any lack of respect on the part of our male comrades. On the contrary there was incredible solidarity” - Ana Julio Guido



Awakening

- By joining the formal workforce - many women developed a feminist conscience and fought in the revolution for women's emancipation
- Gloria Carrión
 - "women weren't aware of anything: they only washed, ironed, cooked, had children and that was it. But now, I tell you, we're awakened... participation brought a sense of self-respect to many women" (Flynn 418).



Awakening continued

- By 1984, an estimated 50% of Nicaraguan households were female-headed
- Women mobilized, build their own self-help and community service organizations
 - Ex. Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRONAC)
 - professional development and educational training
 - created day care centers for working mothers
 - led hunger strikes and demonstrations, demanding an end to gender discrimination and unequal pay for female workers.



AMNLAE
Granada

Luisa Amanda Espinosa and AMNLAE



Luisa Amanda Espinosa, mujer obrera cae el 3 de Abril de 1970 en León.

“It is necessary that as women , we meet under the guidance of an organization in order to discover and understand our specific situation and organize ourselves to change our reality...move forward in the elimination of ideological chains, that tie us to a form of behavior that is dependent, submissive and that underestimates our capacities.”

(Collinson, pg 140-141)

- Espinosa was the first woman to die in the war.
- AMNLAE was named after her
- AMNLAE is a Sandinista organization under the wing of the FSLN.
- to help women participating in the revolution.



AMNLAE

- 1983: Managua was the first city in Nicaragua to open the AMNLAE Women's Legal Office -- soon followed by Esteli, Leon, Granada and Masaya.
- Helped women facing domestic violence and child custody.
- “minimum programme”
- helped unemployed women, housewives
- Helped women in a practical way
 - training centers
 - poultry rearing
 - sex-education
 - journalism
 - cookery
 - project administration
 - political training courses for activists
 - women's health

After the Revolution



Right after the Triumph

- Many women took advantage of their advancements in the war to take on non-traditional responsibilities
 - Head of Sandinista Police
 - Minister of Health
 - Vice-deputy of the National Assembly

President Violetta Chamorro (1990-1997)

- Received early education in the U.S
- Husband's death sparked the Sandinista Revolution
 - Anti-government journalist
- Ended the contra war and brought peace and stability to Nicaragua
- Changes:
 - Reversed a number of Sandinista policies
 - state-owned industries were privatized, censorship was lifted, and the size of the army was reduced
- Credited for her conciliatory policies
 - retained a number of Sandinistas in the government
 - attempted to reconcile the country's various political factions



Rosario Murillo

- Born June 22, 1951 in Managua, Nicaragua.
- Married to President Daniel Ortega
 - *companero*.
- Was educated outside of Nicaragua
- Poet
- Sandinista
- *La Prensa*



The Global Gender Gap Rankings

Track Progress Achieving Equity in Economic Participation and Political Empowerment

- 2nd straight year to finish in the top 10
- ranks fifth among all countries on political empowerment
- Mechanism

Overall Top and Bottom 10

Top Ten

Iceland	1
Finland	2
Norway	3
Sweden	4
Philippines	5
Ireland	6
New Zealand	7
Denmark	8
Switzerland	9
Nicaragua	10

Note: The overall ranking gives results of four combined Subindexes: Health and Survival, Educational Attainment, Economic Participation and Opportunity, and Political Empowerment.

Economic Participation and Opportunity

Top Ten

Norway	1
Mongolia	2
Burundi	3
Malawi	4
Bahamas	5
United States	6
Luxembourg	7
Laos	8
Canada	9
Barbados	10

Note: The Economic Participation and Opportunity Subindex measures the gender gap in labor force participation, wage equality, income, and the proportion of women in managerial, professional, and technical roles.

Political Empowerment

Top Ten

Iceland	1
Finland	2
Norway	3
Sweden	4
Nicaragua	5
Ireland	6
Bangladesh	7
South Africa	8
India	9
Philippines	10

Note: The Political Empowerment Subindex measures the gender gap in participation in parliaments, ministries, and as heads of state.

Source: World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2013).

Struggles still continued...

- It was hard for most women to be viewed as equal to men outside of the revolutionary context
- Many women went back to their traditional roles
- Educated women were recruited for administrative positions

“There are no men left at home, just three generations of women”

40%

40% of households are
sustained by women alone

34% , 60%

The father is absent in 34% of urban homes
and 60% in Managua

Women in the Workforce

At home	Labor Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Women are still in charge of the household's necessary duties<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ carry water○ grow crops (small fields)○ work in markets○ collect fuel wood○ care for children● 10+ hrs/day taking care of house duties● 8 hrs/day dedicated to any outside job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 47% of women play a role in Nicaragua's economic activities.● 74% of women have an informal job<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ tailoring, laundry service○ 41.5% work "propia cuenta"<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 20.8% don't receive pay● Women's work contributed to 80% of national exports

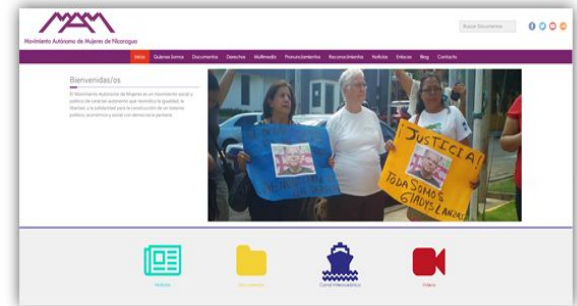
- All their efforts/jobs go unrecognized and are seen as insignificant by the rest of society
- There is no law that favors women and acknowledges the work that they do as valid

Organizations



Organizations

- **Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres de Nicaragua**
 - Social and political movement for autonomous character
 - Advocates equality, freedom, and solidarity for a joint democracy
 - Fight against patriarchal authoritarianism
- **Friends of Batahola**
 - Priority given to women and children
 - bear the weight of social and economic inequity
 - Empower and transform its students and community through access to education, arts, and culture
- **Women in Action**



Education and training programs

- increase economic independence and individual dignities by helping students develop their skills and talents
- Over 900 students participate each year in courses that are organized into three categories:
 - Basic adult education: gives opportunity to finish grades 1-6 in 3 years; get diploma from the national Ministry of Education
 - Job training: career oriented
 - Baking and pastry making
 - Communicative English
 - Computer Operator
 - Cosmetology and Hairstyling
 - Handicrafts
 - Natural medicine
 - Sewing/tailoring
 - Arts education
 - drawing and painting
 - drama
 - music and dance

Sources

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