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Civil Resistance in the Shadow of the Revolution: Historical Framing in Nicaragua's Sudden Uprising

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Abstract: Are grievances a necessary condition for civil resistance campaigns? Accumulating political or economic grievances play a key causal role in nearly every extant account of sudden mass protest. In this article, we present evidence that historical framing can enable sudden mass uprisings even where long-standing anti-regime grievances are absent. Protest cascades can emerge to challenge relatively stable and popular governments through four interdependent historical framing mechanisms. First, bystanders may make analogies to historical contentious episodes, leading them to compare their present government to an earlier hated regime. Second, individuals or groups may imagine themselves as occupying paradigmatic roles from past popular struggles, allowing them to develop prescriptions for collective action. Third, protesters can adopt tailor-made symbolic and tactical repertoires from previous contentious episodes. Finally, protesters may concentrate protests within symbolic space, reinforcing the other three mechanisms. We develop our theory with evidence from Nicaragua's 2018 mass uprising. This protest wave nearly toppled Daniel Ortega, previously Latin America's most popular president, after violence between pro-government forces and protestors activated powerful frames resonating with Nicaragua's history of dictatorship and revolution.

Key words: Nicaragua, protest, grievances, civil resistance

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Introduction

What explains the onset of sudden nonviolent civil insurrections? From the collapse of the Soviet Bloc to the Arab Spring, this political phenomenon has triggered epoch-making regional and global transformations.[1] Yet despite their world-historical importance, "mass nonviolent uprisings are quite difficult to explain or predict in a generalizable sense."[2] Existing theories emphasize political opportunities,[3] accumulation and mobilization of human, financial, and informational resources,[4] and modernization,[5] but above all, *grievances*.[6] Rather than assessing grievances as an explanatory factor, scholars often assume long-simmering and widely-shared grievances are a necessary but insufficient condition for civil uprisings.[7] Grievances are considered too ubiquitous to explain individual episodes of nonviolent civil resistance.[8]

How then, should we understand the April 2018 civil uprising against Latin America's then-most popular leader,[9] Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega? The protest wave followed Ortega's announcement of pension reforms on April 16, 2018; however, this announcement initially sparked only scattered protests by pensioners and student activists on April 18. After regime-linked paramilitary groups attacked the protests, images of bloodied retirees spread through social media. Students at five Nicaraguan universities joined the protests, and when police and paramilitaries killed several students and 15-year-old Álvaro Conrado in deadly clashes on April 19-20, the protests mushroomed into a mass pro-democracy civil resistance

[1] Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2013).
[2] Erica Chenoweth and Jay Ulfelder, "Can Structural Conditions Explain the Onset of Nonviolent Uprisings?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61 (February 2017): 318.
[3] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
[4] John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (May 1977): 1212–41.
[5] Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[6] Dawn Brancati, "Pocketbook Protests: Explaining the Emergence of Pro-Democracy Protests Worldwide," *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (September 2014): 1503–30; Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44 (October 1991): 7–48,; Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[7] Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 4–5.
[8] Henry Thomson "Grievances, Mobilization, and Mass Opposition to Authoritarian Regimes: A Subnational Analysis of East Germany's 1953 Abbreviated Revolution," *Comparative Political Studies* 51 (October 2018): 1594, synthesizes the conventional view, "[m]ass opposition to authoritarian governments is caused by economic grievances and factors which facilitate mobilization."
[9] Latinobarómetro "Informe 2017" (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2017).

campaign.[10] The government's crackdown, with over four hundred killed by police and paramilitary forces and thousands injured or imprisoned, marks Latin America's largest single episode of one-sided state violence in almost three decades.

Scholarship on past civil resistance campaigns emphasizes political and economic grievances, and some analysts have described Nicaragua's 2018 uprising as a product of "[l]ong-simmering political unrest."[11] Yet Nicaragua hardly fits the "pressure cooker" model of sudden popular revolution.[12] Latinobarómetro, the region's most respected cross-national polling organization, reports that in August 2017, only months before the uprising, Nicaragua's government boasted an approval rating of 67%—highest in Latin America.[13] In Nicaragua, more respondents trusted their government (42%) and believed it acted for the good of all (52%), and fewer saw their government as corrupt (28%), than in any other Latin American country. A year after the fraudulent 2016 elections that kept Ortega in power and installed his wife, Rosario Murillo, as Vice President, 70% classified Nicaragua as a democracy. While Nicaraguans declared poverty and unemployment the country's most pressing problems, they viewed Ortega's government as excellent custodians of Nicaragua's growing economy. Nicaragua was "the only [Latin American] country where a majority of citizens perceive progress, with 58%."[14] Opposition street protest before April 2018, observes sociologist Sergio Cabrales, was "by nature isolated, unsystematic, and with little popular support."[15] These data suggest that the April 2018 uprising did not result from a slow unraveling of Nicaragua's "ruling bargain,"[16] but from a sudden breach.

We argue that instead of widespread anti-regime grievances, Nicaragua's civil uprising is best explained by the role of history-based frames in shaping individual Nicaraguans' high-risk mobilization decisions. Faced with images of bloodied protesters, individuals drew on decision-

[10] José Luis Rocha, *Autoconvocados y conectados: los universitarios en la revuelta de abril en Nicaragua* (San Salvador, El Salvador: UCA Editores, 2019).
[11] Samuel Brannen, Christian Haig, and Katherine Schmidt, "The Age of Mass Protests: Understanding an Escalating Global Trend" (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, March 2020), 11.
[12] Walter Goldfrank, "Theories of Revolution and Revolution without Theory: The Case of Mexico," *Theory and Society* 7, no. 1/2 (1979): 138–39.
[13] Latinobarómetro.
[14] Latinobarómetro, 57.
[15] Sergio Miguel Cabrales Domínguez, "La oleada de protestas del 2018 en Nicaragua: procesos, mecanismos y resultados," in *Anhelos de un nuevo horizonte: Aportes para una Nicaragua democrática*, ed. Alberto Cortés Ramos, Umanzor López Baltodano, and Ludwing Moncada Bellorin (San José, CR: FLACSO, 2020), 80.
[16] Mehran Kamrava, *Beyond the Arab Spring: The Evolving Ruling Bargain in the Middle East* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014).

making schemas built from widely-shared historical memories of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution, in which Ortega's Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) overthrew the repressive Somoza regime.[17] The Revolution endowed Nicaraguans with a cultural repertoire of resistance to dictatorship, composed of tactics, symbols, and slogans that reemerged 40 years later. Protesters drew on this repertoire, casting themselves as protagonists and recreating well-known episodes in the FSLN's earlier struggle. By making analogies with the past, many Nicaraguans reassessed their present government as a dictatorship; by imagining themselves occupying "paradigmatic roles" from Nicaraguan history,[18] protesters developed prescriptions for collective action in an authoritarian context.

We first present our theoretical framework for explaining the Nicaraguan uprising, historical framing, before turning to our research design and original data. We then trace popular mobilization processes during the rebellion's crucial first days, explaining how history-based frames shaped the mobilization of three waves of Nicaraguan protesters. Next, we analyze the stability of Daniel Ortega's regime before April 2018 against common explanations for civil resistance campaigns, including widely-shared grievances, political opportunity structures, resource mobilization theories, economic change, and international shocks, none of which can account for the eruption and spread of Nicaragua's mass uprising. Given historical framing's explanatory power, we conclude by discussing Nicaragua as a "deviant case" that challenges conventional wisdom about civil resistance campaigns.[19]

Historical Framing and Mass Mobilization

> "In Nicaragua, we haven't had any truly good governments. Ortega's government was the best of the worst. Yeah, it had its good things, especially in the sphere of social aid... As the repression mounted, as more people died or were disappeared, more people went against the government. They realized that the 'good government' we had was just a smokescreen [*solo pantalla*]; that the government had bought them off with chickens, pigs, zinc roofs, crumbs [*migajas*]."
>
> -Interview 14 with Masaya-based activist.

[17] John Booth, *The End of the Beginning: The Nicaragua Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).
[18] Petersen, 284–86.
[19] John Gerring, *Case Study Research Principles and Practices.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32.

Our theoretical perspective draws from arguments in the literature on nonviolent civil resistance emphasizing "agency-based" and "processual" approaches to explaining sudden mass contentious action.[20] Revolutions, as McAdam and Sewell observe, often begin with the collective interpretation of a transformative event.[21] Frames aid this collective interpretation, shaping individual pathways to mobilization and helping groups initiate and maintain collective action.[22] In short, "[f]rames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action."[23] Frames shape and communicate what a movement stands for, who it opposes, expectations of success, and how to carry out the struggle.

Sociological and political science literatures demonstrate that leaders seeking to mobilize individuals promote frames they believe will resonate with local belief systems and conceptions of the national community.[24] Narrative fidelity—frames 'ringing true' to a society's central myths and ideologies—may be particularly valuable in explaining sudden mass mobilization where central leadership emerges slowly if at all, and actors have little opportunity to promote novel framings of surprising events.[25] First-moving protesters, with little time to proactively frame unexpected events, therefore often draw on and appeal to "shared understandings of history and identity" to mobilize others.[26]

History's mobilizational potential is especially deep when a country has experienced a previous mass uprising, 'sedimented' in national memory,[27] since Tilly notes that once a

[20] Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 318; Killian Clarke, "Unexpected Brokers of Mobilization: Contingency and Networks in the 2011 Egyptian Uprising," *Comparative Politics* 46 (July 2014): 379–97; George Lawson, "Within and Beyond the 'Fourth Generation' of Revolutionary Theory," *Sociological Theory* 34 (June 2016): 106–27; Wendy Pearlman, "Mobilizing From Scratch: Large-Scale Collective Action Without Preexisting Organization in the Syrian Uprising," *Comparative Political Studies* forthcoming (March 2020).
[21] Doug McAdam and William Sewell, "It's About Time: Temporality in the Study of Social Movements and Revolutions," in Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 119.
[22] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Snow and Robert Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[23] Robert Benford and David Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (August 2000): 614.
[24] See Erica Simmons, "Corn, Markets, and Mobilization in Mexico," *Comparative Politics* 48 (April 2016): 413–31.
[25] Benford and Snow, 622.
[26] Anastasia Shesterinina, "Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 110 (August 2016): 413; see also Petersen.
[27] Donatella della Porta, "Protests as Critical Junctures: Some Reflections towards a Momentous Approach to Social Movements," *Social Movement Studies* forthcoming (December 2018): 10–13.

revolution "has occurred and acquired a name, both the name and the one or more representations of the process become available as signals, models, threats, and/or aspirations for later actors."[28] Relatedly, historical framing also helps explain when and why "moral shocks" lead to nonviolent civil resistance campaigns.[29] Morally shocking events, like grievances, are far more common than backlash mobilization. As we illustrate in the Nicaraguan case, two factors are critical: that morally shocking events resonate with a society's historically salient frames, and that activists creatively frame morally shocking events around widely-shared conceptions of history to change others' understandings and preferences.

We argue that Nicaraguan protesters framed their movement using historical memories of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution, the mass popular uprising that forced dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle into exile. Though partly inspired and ultimately led by the FSLN, the uprising exploded spontaneously after the 1978 assassination of opposition journalist Pedro Joaquín Chamorro.[30] Beginning with street barricades and homemade contact bombs in Monimbó and León, the revolution culminated with bloody battles between Somoza's National Guard and ordinary Managua residents. Collective memories of these events comprise a bundled set of frames, a "master template" offering Nicaraguans "a cultural recipe for the making of contentious claims."[31] The FSLN state itself had transmitted historical memories of the Revolution, emphasizing them in the national educational curriculum and through invocations in public ritual.[32] Ironically, the FSLN may have taught the youngest generation of Nicaraguans how to challenge it.

Individual Nicaraguans drew heavily on the Sandinista Revolution template's frames in the early weeks of protests. Observing paramilitary attacks on pensioners and students on April 18, 2018, many Nicaraguans—particularly students—interpreted this event through a *Dictatorship* frame, identifying President Ortega as the target of collective action and proffering new attributes (dictator) that fit with historical narratives. The Dictatorship frame invoked a paired

[28] Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 421.
[29] James Jasper and Jane Poulsen, "Recruiting Strangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests," *Social Problems* 42 (November 1995): 493–512.
[30] Booth; Mateo Jarquín Chamorro, "A la sombra de la Revolución Sandinista: Nicaragua, 1979-2019," in *Anhelos de un nuevo horizonte: Aportes para una Nicaragua democrática*, ed. Alberto Cortés Ramos, Umanzor López Baltodano, and Ludwing Moncada Bellorin (San José, CR: FLACSO, 2020).
[31] McAdam and Sewell, 113.
[32] Yerling Marina Aguilera Espinoza, "Transmisión de las memorias oficiales de la revolución sandinista nicaragüense desde el sistema de educación secundaria (Nicaragua, 2008-2015)" (Masters Thesis, Universidad de Valladolid, 2017), http://uvadoc.uva.es:80/handle/10324/24278.

frame, *Revolution*, providing guidelines for collective action. As in 1978-79, collective action meant mass street uprisings, with a symbolic and tactical repertoire inherited directly from Nicaragua's Revolution. The resulting mobilization initiated an escalatory backfire process:[33] state repression further activated and spread adoption of the Dictatorship and Revolution frames. These frames' widespread adoption led to mass participation in protests nationwide.

Critically, this participation cascade did not occur because of "preference falsification," as per Kuran's[34] theory of sudden revolutions. Media censorship and state violence are critical for incentivizing preference falsification,[35] yet before April 2018, Nicaragua's government made little effort to censor opposition media outlets, while occasional street protests did not provoke lethal state violence.[36] Rather, adoption of highly resonant frames in the face of unexpected events caused *preference transformation*. Latinobarómetro data suggest that nearly half (44%) of all Nicaraguans turned against the regime from summer 2017 to summer 2018, as government approval ratings dropped from 67% to 23%. Over the same period, those characterizing Nicaragua as a non-democracy or a democracy with major problems leaped from 31% to 64%.[37] Strikingly, preference transformation occurred even among long-time regime allies (business leadership) and staunch supporters (pro-government newspaper *El Nuevo Diario*).

Drawing on sociological and political science theories of mobilization, we identify four components of the Sandinista Revolution master template followed by Nicaraguans in the first months of the 2018 uprising. These include "analogic thinking,"[38] the assumption of "paradigmatic roles" from the Revolution,[39] use of historical "symbolic" and "tactical

[33] Jonathan Sutton, Charles Butcher, and Isak Svensson, "Explaining Political Jiu-Jitsu: Institution-Building and the Outcomes of Regime Violence against Unarmed Protests," *Journal of Peace Research* 51 (September 2014): 559–73.
[34] Kuran.
[35] Mengyang Zhao, "Media Freedom and Protest Events in the Global South," *Social Science Quarterly* 100 (June 2019): 1254–67.
[36] Cabrales Domínguez, 2020; Salvador Martí i Puig and Macià Serra, "Nicaragua: De-Democratization and Regime Crisis," *Latin American Politics and Society* 62 (May 2020): 117–36; Uriel Pineda, "Protesta y represión: el monopolio privado de la violencia," in *El régimen de Ortega* (Managua: PAVSA, 2016), 160–85.
[37] See Appendix A for disaggregated data.
[38] Mark Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (June 2007); Eva Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* 44 (January 2012): 127–49.
[39] Petersen.

repertoires,"[40] and concentration of protest events in Nicaragua's geographic "symbolic space."[41] These four factors played varying and complementary roles across time and space as Nicaragua's first-moving protesters were joined by steadily increasing numbers of compatriots.

Data and Methods

This article draws on original data, including participant-observation, participants' oral histories of the uprising, and quantitative analysis of a hand-coded events dataset.[42] The first and fourth authors were present in Nicaragua from mid-April to mid-May 2018 during the first six weeks of the protests. They marched, chanted, sang, and spoke with protesters and visited roadblocks (*tranques*), observing opposition strategies, organization, frames, and other dimensions of on-the-ground contentious politics. These experiences helped us iteratively formulate a grounded theoretical perspective and interpret subsequent accounts of protesters' experiences and emotions.

In 2019 we conducted semi-structured interviews by secure calls with 15 key opposition actors. These interviews with activists, business leaders, journalists, and Sandinista dissidents helped us reconstruct their pathways to anti-regime mobilization. Additionally, we analyzed newspapers, Nicaraguan and international television, social media, videos of protests, and scholarly works.

We also compiled an events dataset including 1060 contentious episodes from April-July 2018, collecting data from local Spanish-language sources (specifically, the newspaper *La Prensa* and Twitter account Nicaragua Verificado (@NicaraguaVe)). We use these data to further substantiate our qualitative findings and test our argument against alternative explanations for mass civil resistance campaigns and uprisings.

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[40] Eric Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance: The Power of Story* (London: Zed Books, 2009); Sidney Tarrow, "Modular Collective Action and the Rise of the Social Movement: Why the French Revolution Was Not Enough," *Politics & Society* 21 (March 1993): 69–90; Tilly, 2003.

[41] Charles Butcher, "Geography and the Outcomes of Civil Resistance and Civil War," *Third World Quarterly* 38 (July 2017): 1454–72; Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97 (August 2011): 257–82; William Sewell, "Space in Contentious Politics," in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 51–88.

[42] All translations are our own. More details on data gathering and analysis are provided in the appendix.

Historical Analogy

Color Revolutions diffused across Eastern Europe in the early 2000s because a "sense of interconnectedness across cases produced by common institutional characteristics, histories, cultural affinities, or modes of domination, [allowed] agents to make analogies across cases" and "see themselves in analogous structural positions."[43] Protesters then emulated the successes of neighboring 'people power' movements, borrowing "frames, strategies, repertoires, and even logos from previously successful efforts."[44] Referencing Tunisia's example crucially aided Egyptian activists in framing their 2011 mobilization efforts.[45] As Selbin found, analogic thinking helps explain the 1979 Nicaraguan Revolution itself: "A Nicaraguan revolutionary from the earliest years told me how he and others were inspired by 'the triumph' in Cuba. Their reasoning [...] was simple: 'If they can do it there, we can do it here.'"[46]

Rather than a recent regional example of revolutionary success, however, Nicaragua's 2018 protesters were inspired by a success from their own history.[47] As one activist affirmed, "In this country, opposition to tyrants runs in our blood; in this country, we had a revolution and this gave us strength. If we took care of one [dictator], we can take care of another. That's what gave people bravery."[48] In this sense, revolution diffused not across space but over time.[49] Nicaraguans' analogic thinking particularly influenced the outbreak of mass mobilization in mid-April by helping establish a "diagnostic framing," or "problem identification and attribution."[50] The key analogy crystallized in the widely-chanted slogan, "¡Ortega y Somoza, son la misma cosa!"—Ortega and Somoza are the same thing. This diagnostic frame entailed a prescriptive frame, too: late on April 18, protesters hung a banner from a Managua overpass declaring

[43] Beissinger, 263. See also Bellin.
[44] Beissinger, 263.
[45] Clarke.
[46] Selbin, 69.
[47] Alex Braithwaite, Jessica Maves Braithwaite and Jeffrey Kucik, "The conditioning effect of protest history on the emulation of nonviolent conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (November 2015): 697-711, find the importance of domestic examples from the past five years for mass protest mobilization, yet in Nicaragua's case, an example from 40 years prior proved most salient.
[48] Interview 14 with Masaya-based activist. Also, Interview 7 with foreign journalist living in Nicaragua: "Nicaraguans have beaten dictators before. There was a confidence that history gave [the protesters]. There was sense of destiny or fate. We're not like those other countries. Nicaragua wins its revolutions."
[49] Compare to repertoires shared across several Parisian uprisings from the 1789 French Revolution to the 1871 Paris Commune: Tarrow.
[50] Benford and Snow, 615.

"Daniel: July 17 comes for every dictator," referencing the 1979 date when a mass uprising forced Somoza to flee Nicaragua.[51]

Two events in mid-April 2018 offered Nicaraguan observers strong parallels with powerfully-mobilizing past events. First, state violence against elderly and, especially, student protesters on April 18-19 recalled a famous massacre of student protesters on July 23, 1959 (see Figure 1). The 1959 student massacre, coinciding with Cuban revolutionaries' shocking victory, catalyzed popular struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. The second event, the murder of journalist Ángel Gahona by unknown assailants on April 21, 2018, echoed journalist Pedro Joaquín Chamorro's 1978 murder by unknown assailants,[52] which sparked the mass uprising culminating in the Somoza dictatorship's demise. Beyond provoking moral shock and widespread revulsion, April 2018's state violence compelled Nicaraguans to compare Ortega with Somoza, jolting many into adopting the Dictatorship frame.[53]

Figure 1: Parallels between 1959 and 2018. *Left:* mural depicting the 1959 student massacre in León. *Right:* photo of the April 19, 2018 student protest in León, less than three blocks from the famous mural.

[51] Nicolle, "Patria libre o morirpic.twitter.com/jTJ1K0QmUI," Tweet, *@iCardenas_*, April 19, 2018, https://twitter.com/iCardenas_/status/986862572388397056.
[52] In both cases, the unknown assassins were popularly assumed to be linked to the state.
[53] The Dictatorship frame was also likely "primed" by extensive electoral fraud in 2016, along with January 2018 corruption charges against Supreme Electoral Council head Roberto Rivas and Vice President Murillo's March 2018 proposal to censor Nicaraguan social media: David Snow and Dana Moss, "Protest on the Fly: Toward a Theory of Spontaneity in the Dynamics of Protest and Social Movements," *American Sociological Review* 79 (December 2014): 1134.

This sequencing supports our argument that adoption of a Dictatorship frame in response to unexpected events is key to explaining April's mass anti-regime protests. On April 17, most Nicaraguans believed they lived in a democracy, if a flawed one; by April 22, many, if not most, had come to believe they lived under a dictatorship comparable to Somoza's.[54] An April 20 exchange between bystanders in Monimbó, inadvertently recorded by a journalist covering police-protester clashes, captures clearly a transition moment from the Democracy frame to the Dictatorship frame:

> **Woman**: Let the president of the republic fix this, *hombre*, he should make a call to the population so that we have peace and quiet… He should weigh in—where is the president?—he should weigh in so we can fix our problems. He knows we can't stay in this situation. I was a *guerrillera*, what I want is peace and quiet. And we as Sandinistas have to set a good example for the population.
> **Man**: We shouldn't keep voting for that son-of-a-bitch Daniel Ortega anymore.
> **Woman**: We have to be unified. We're family. We can't go back to war.
> **Man**: He's sucking the blood of the people [*el pueblo*]. He and his damn wife.
> **Woman**: Yes [agreeing], but you have to consider things carefully…
> **Man**: The *pueblo* too is at fault for voting for him.
> **Woman**: The *pueblo*, it's that the *pueblo* always votes…
> **Man**: Yes, it always votes for that trash.
> **Woman**: And we've let him get away with a lot of things.
> **Man**: Now that son-of-a-bitch wants to be dictator.[55]

Our participant-observation and interviews suggest analogic thinking operated through slightly different mechanisms on three different waves of opposition actors: first-movers, second-movers, and third-movers. As Rocha concludes in his study of fourteen first-moving student activists, "the first trait that stands out in the profiles of the majority of the most visible youth in the revolt is their Sandinista roots or even militancy… [a] Sandinismo of a diverse

[54] Avil Ramírez, *Déjà vu: Somoza - Ortega* (Managua: s.n., 2019), compares newspaper headlines from the 1970s and 2010s.
[55] Video from El Nuevo Diario, "Protestas en Monimbo contra reformas al Inss," YouTube, April 20, 2018: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzcgV3SzYuY&t=8m40s.

nature rose up against its own party."[56] First-moving students grew up with parents and other relatives recounting the revolutionary fight against Somoza.

However, most had grown disillusioned with the FSLN's failures to live up to its revolutionary ideology before 2018. Prominent student activist Madelaine Caracas offers a typical background: "My father was in the revolution. He was a guerrillero. I grew up with those stories, but I also grew up having political debates with my parents."[57] Many young dissident Sandinista first-movers were already active in the feminist, LGBT, and environmental social movements that preceded the uprising, or with the anti-Orteguista Sandinista Renewal Movement (MRS) party.[58] MRS-affiliated activists had tried for years to paint Ortega as a dictator and to frame his actions as betraying the revolution and historic Sandinista values, prominently in the anti-canal movement,[59] but these historical comparisons and critiques suddenly became starkly, bloodily salient for a wider audience. In the first days of the April 2018 protests, dissident Sandinista first-movers became conscious and active promoters of historical analogy.

Yet first-moving activists were few in number. Far more important for launching a major civil resistance campaign was a vast catchment population who would respond to first-movers' actions. Broadly-shared historical memories, rather than preexisting mobilizing structures, proved critical in mobilizing these second-movers. The students and young activists who protested and were repressed on April 18 did not plan or expect a broader uprising. One first-moving activist who helped organize and attended the April 18 protest said:

> I remember waking up on April 19th and not knowing what was going to happen. Because of the day before, we didn't schedule our next debrief or meeting, everyone was just kind of processing what was just happening. As soon as I woke up, I checked my phone, and

[56] Rocha, 66.
[57] Rocha, 68.
[58] Feminist and LGBT activists sought an "emancipatory" revolution, highlighting the Ortega regime's discriminatory policies around reproductive and LGBT rights and gender-based violence, but women's participation generally took a "hybrid" form, with women acting in diverse and fluid roles of frontline activism, support, and political engagement, echoing women's participation in the Sandinista Revolution: Olena Nikolayenko, "Invisible Revolutionaries: Women's Participation in the Revolution of Dignity," *Comparative Politics* 52 (April 2020): 451–72.
[59] Sarah McCall and Matthew Taylor, "Qué Diría Carlos? The 'No al Canal' Movement and the Rhetoric of Resistance to Nicaragua's 'Grand Canal,'" in *Civil Resistance and Violent Conflict in Latin America: Mobilizing for Rights*, ed. Cécile Mouly and Esperanza Hernández Delgado (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 65–84.

> everybody was like, students in three universities are protesting. It was more for the reforms, but it was now more tied to police brutality, as well...I think the conversation completely changed. But the more the students protested, the more the police reacted, the more the images ended up on social media and on TV, and the more other students reacted. And when you then have five universities protesting, that's when we saw, on April 20, Masaya and Monimbó, more '*los pueblos*' [the masses], joining the struggle.[60]

The April 19-20 killings of several first-moving students and youths by government forces served as a moral shock that transformed preferences and spurred risky action among "the masses."[61] One such second-mover, an older businessman who attended marches following these killings, outlined how analogic thinking provoked massive civil resistance on April 20:

> This is worse than the times of Somoza. You can compare it. Nicaragua's got a unique history that we can compare to another dictator. The comments are that Somoza was a child compared to what is going on with this guy [Ortega]… Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't remember Somoza killing young people. Children.[62]

Nicaraguans generally and even many rank-and-file FSLN members turned against Ortega once Orteguista paramilitaries attacked first-moving activists. As an ex-Sandinista journalist and activist told us, the uprising would not have occurred without "the thousands and thousands of Sandinistas who flipped [into opposition]. And they turned because they were being loyal to their convictions, to their way of thinking, of seeing life, to their political ideology."[63] Another student Masaya-based activist told us:

> In Masaya the people that I know are—were—Sandinistas. They were pro-Revolution. They went to the July 19 celebrations [of the Revolution]. It's a deep-rooted political

[60] Interview 8 with Managua-based activist.
[61] See Pearlman on the importance of moral shocks in pushing second-movers to act and to mobilize through informal networks or spontaneous participation: Wendy Pearlman, "Moral Identity and Protest Cascades in Syria," *British Journal of Political Science* 48 (October 2018), 1–25; Pearlman, 2020.
[62] Interview 10 with businessman. Also Interview 15 with student activist: "You hear all the time in Managua, 'It's like Somoza's time, when it was dangerous to be a young person.'"
[63] Interview 6 with ex-Sandinista journalist and activist.

> identity [*arraigo político*] that they get from their parents, grandparents, and relatives. These people woke up and realized that things are actually politically bad, politically, socially, economically, because who uses rubber bullets and live fire to repress protesters?[64]

Examples abound of committed Sandinistas taking to the streets against Ortega after witnessing state violence. Pro-government paramilitary attacks on unarmed students, said one protester, were "the critical point that started all of this. And it's very sad, because there were so, so many of us who believed in [Ortega's] words."[65] One marcher told a journalist, "Many of us here were Sandinistas and we're sick of this bullshit, this corruption. I worked in the elections supporting the Frente but never again! To hell with them!"[66] Another student activist told us how, shortly after the first deaths, he encountered his cousin, a life-long Sandinista, protesting outside the National Cathedral, "And I'm like, 'What the fuck, you voted for Daniel Ortega! I don't get it. What the hell are you doing?' And he's like, 'No man, we cannot accept this. They killed students.'"[67]

Critically, Sandinista identities helped Nicaraguans draw historical analogies to Somoza-era repression, and Sandinista families transmitted historical memories across generations. Luisa, a combatant in the 1979 Revolution described her response, "It's sad for our generation, to have to relive this with our grandchildren… I was proudly Sandinista, and every time Daniel Ortega ran, he had my vote. He has betrayed all of those principles and values." Luisa's grandson Ernesto, a medical student who joined the protests continued, "When all this started, I only remembered what my mama, my grandpa, my papa told me, what the war was like, how they ran through the streets, afraid of the police, and all the wounded and dead people."[68]

Third-movers, like the commercial elites represented by the Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP) business association, aligned with the opposition only after hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans took to the streets. In large part, business leaders were forced to

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[64] Interview 14 with Masaya-based activist. This statement suggests *preference transformation* occurred when lethal repression began in April 2018. Limited fear of repression meant there was little preference falsification before.
[65] Video from France 24, "Dentro del bastión rebelde de Masaya en Nicaragua," YouTube, July 24, 2018: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWrmIlML-EY&t=1m43s.
[66] Video from Alberto Mendoza, "2 Dia de Protesta 20 de Abril Estudiantes protestan contra el Gobierno," YouTube, April 22, 2018: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUCp2oFShTk&t=10m53s.
[67] Interview 3 with student activist.
[68] Video from France 24: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWrmIlML-EY&t=10m30s.

bend to the tide of anti-regime sentiment that swept through their employees' ranks.[69] Yet even rent-seeking actors who might have preferred business-as-usual under Ortega deployed analogic thinking as a heuristic to make boundedly rational decisions: "COSEP turned because they examined the historical context of Somoza, when COSEP placed itself very quickly in opposition to Somoza, and here [in 2018] COSEP went over to the students' side at the beginning because they're not fools—they knew that the great majority of the people [was against Ortega]."[70]

Paradigmatic Roles

Once individuals have begun drawing analogies between historical memory and ongoing events, when and why do they decide to engage in risky collective action? According to Petersen, they may do so by referencing "paradigmatic roles" drawn from their society's cultural and historic inventory.[71] By offering a salient model, paradigmatic roles allow actors to cast themselves as protagonists in previous historic struggles and experience what Wood calls the "pleasure of agency;" protesters may therefore be "motivated in part by the value they put on being part of [making] history."[72] Upon assuming paradigmatic roles, actors' preferences may be transformed even to the extent that ordinary people seek martyrdom: "the paradigmatic role may redefine the meaning of risk and in certain cases turn risk from a cost into a benefit."[73]

The Sandinista Revolution offered Nicaraguan protesters no shortage of revolutionary "héroes y mártires"[74] to emulate. For example, Lesther Alemán, a key student leader who famously denounced Ortega during May 2018's National Dialogue negotiations, declared that "the founder and paragon of the Frente [Sandinista], Carlos Fonseca, dead before the triumph of the revolution, is his hero."[75] The most important paradigmatic figure was Leonel Rugama, a student-poet who joined the FSLN in 1967. Rugama became an FSLN martyr in 1970 when he

[69] Interview 4 with bank executive.
[70] Interview 9 with activist.
[71] Petersen.
[72] Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18–19.
[73] Petersen, 285.
[74] Heroes and martyrs, a frequently-invoked FSLN phrase.
[75] Martín Caparrós, "El misterio de las revoluciones," *New York Times*, May 29, 2018, sec. América Latina, https://www.nytimes.com/es/2018/05/29/revoluciones-daniel-ortega-nicaragua-caparros/.

was cornered by Somoza's National Guard. Ordered to surrender, he famously shouted "¡Que se rinda tu madre! (Let your mother surrender!)" before being killed.

Historian Hilary Francis traced the politics of memory surrounding Rugama. Noting that his legendary final words are absent from the Rugama memorial Ortega's government built in 2010, Francis wrote in 2012 that this omission "reflects the present Sandinista regime's discomfort with the revolution's original radical intent."[76] Rugama's inherently radical slogan was instead increasingly taken up by opposition youth groups who, "by paraphrasing Leonel Rugama, […] positioned themselves as the rightful heirs to the legacy of Sandinismo." Francis concluded, presciently, that "for many Nicaraguans, [Sandinista memory's] revolutionary possibilities have not been diminished."[77]

Rugama's status as a student, his young age at death (twenty) and his famous last words made him an ideal paradigmatic role for the students comprising the early protesters. In April 2018, "¡Que se rinda tu madre!" became the battle cry of Nicaraguan students facing often-lethal violence from police and paramilitaries with military-grade weapons. Figure 2 shows the sudden, widespread adoption of the slogan. Prior to April 2018, tweets of "Que se rinda…" come predominantly from pro-FSLN Twitter accounts. Afterwards, they come almost exclusively from anti-FSLN Twitter accounts. To the protesters' appropriation of a core hero from the Sandinista Revolution, government counterdemonstrators could only respond, "Aquí no se rinde nadie" ("Nobody surrenders here"), a slogan not from Nicaragua but from the Cuban Revolution.

This highlights how opposition adoption of the *Revolution* frame placed the Ortega regime in a double bind. FSLN claims to embody continuity with the Sandinista Revolution served to legitimate its governance and mobilize its supporters. By adopting the *Revolution* frame, first-moving protesters mobilized widespread participation while depriving the regime of its main symbolic source of legitimacy, complicating pro-government countermobilization.

[76] Hilary Francis, "*¡Que Se Rinda Tu Madre!* Leonel Rugama and Nicaragua's Changing Politics of Memory," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 21 (June 2012): 235.
[77] Ibid., 248.

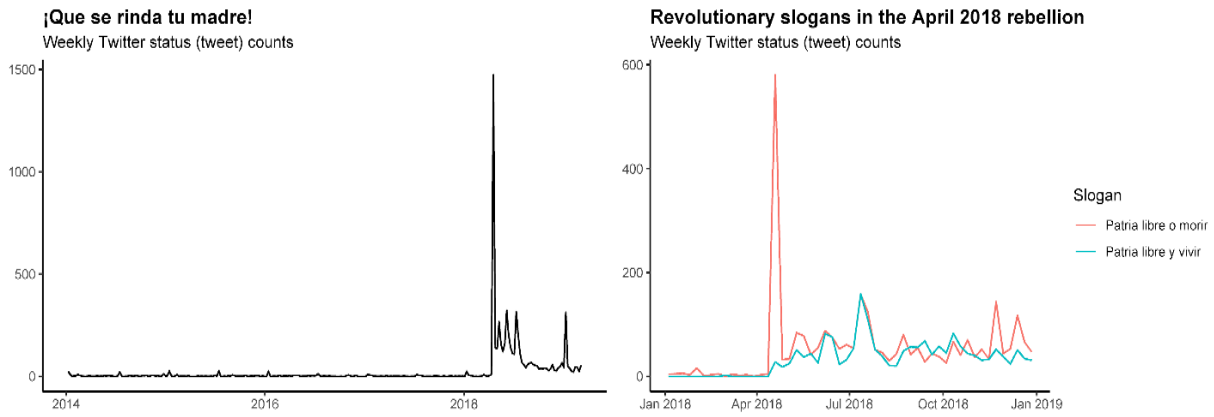

Figure 2: Revolutionary slogan tweet counts

Symbolic and tactical repertoires

Protesters, like participants in any kind of collective action, draw on their culture's symbolic repertoires to "provide templates for interaction, bases for collective memory, and switchpoints for collective struggle."[78] Symbols can guide onlookers to similar interpretations of ongoing events, encouraging and reinforcing the tendency towards analogic thinking. They also serve as scripts allowing crowds to spontaneously coordinate, easing collective action when there are too few leaders, or too many.[79]

Historical analogy, one student activist told us, "comes in perceiving what a dictatorship is, and also in confronting it."[80] Protesters drew on the cultural repertoire of symbols for resisting dictatorship left by the Sandinista Revolution, recreating widely-known episodes in the FSLN's earlier revolutionary struggle.[81] For instance, protesters chanted "Patria libre o morir" ("Free homeland or death"), the FSLN's most famous revolutionary slogan.[82] Only two weeks later did protesters move beyond mimesis to creatively adapt such slogans to new circumstances, now chanting "Patria libre y vivir," or "Free homeland and life." Figure 2 compares tweets of these

[78] Tilly, 2003, 46.
[79] Snow and Moss, 1134.
[80] Interview 15 with student scholar-activist.
[81] See especially Sergio Cabrales, "Terremoto sociopolítico en Nicaragua: procesos, mecanismos y resultado de la inesperada oleada de protestas de 2018" (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2018), 16–17.
[82] Ivette Munguia, "Estudiantes gritan consignas en la zona de la Villa Rafaela Herrera @laprensa @hoynoticiaspic.twitter.com/tYOqLqytVz," Tweet, *@Ivymunguia* (blog), April 21, 2018, https://twitter.com/Ivymunguia/status/987786718635053057. Augusto Sandino used the slogan decades before it was taken up by the FSLN.

two slogans, with the mid-April 2018 spike capturing the immense importance of this historically pro-FSLN "Patria libre o morir" during the protests' earliest days. Marchers also carried photo placards of killed protesters,[83] recalling an iconic 1978 march for slain FSLN student activist Arlen Siu. In a ritual straight from the Sandinista revolution, protest leaders commemorated the names of those killed by police and government mobs with a resounding "¡Presente!"[84] Protests also featured "the appropriation of protest songs normally associated with the FSLN."[85]

Like symbolic repertoires, past events endow future generations with distinct tactical repertoires. The barricades that first appeared in scattered neighborhoods of Paris during the 1830 July Revolution, for instance, reappeared in 1848 and subsequently spread across Europe.[86] Barricades likewise appeared during Nicaragua's revolutionary struggle in the late 1970s and reappeared in April 2018. The Managua Cathedral sheltered student demonstrators in April,[87] echoing student church occupations throughout the Sandinista Revolution. Homemade mortars similarly resurfaced, aimed at riot police. These tactics, both nonviolent and violent,[88] were consciously emulated from the Sandinista Revolution.

In many cases, combatants from the 1970s taught younger generations Revolution-era tactics. In Monimbó, after Orteguista paramilitaries beat up "ancianitos" [elders] on April 19, the señores [older men] "talked with [the muchachos (the boys)] about how to make the contact bombs that they made during the war."[89] As one Nicaraguan told journalist Tim Rogers, "The difference is we've had a successful revolution before. Thirty percent of the country is old enough to remember that moment. We know how to do this."[90]

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[83] Elizabeth Romero, "Dos Jóvenes Que Estaban Desaparecidos Aparecieron Muertos En El Instituto de Medicina Legal," *La Prensa*, April 24, 2018, https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2018/04/24/nacionales/2409121-dos-jovenes-que-estaban-desaparecidos-aparecieron-muertos-en-el-instituto-de-medicina-legal.
[84] Video from Articulo 66, "En vivo: Vigilia por los 33 asesinados. Rotonda Jean Paul Genie, Managua." Facebook, April 25, 2018. https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1700237703378736&ref=watch_permalink [from 14:56].
[85] Cabrales, 2018, 17.
[86] Tarrow, 80–81.
[87] Leonor Álvarez, "Juventud Sandinista mantuvo bajo asedio a jóvenes en la Catedral de Managua," *La Prensa*, April 21, 2018, https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2018/04/21/politica/2407499-juventud-sandinista-mantuvo-bajo-asedio-a-jovenes-en-la-catedral-de-managua.
[88] See Mohammad Ali Kadivar and Neil Ketchley "Sticks, Stones, and Molotov Cocktails: Unarmed Collective Violence and Democratization," *Socius* 4 (January 2018): 1–16, on many 'nonviolent' resistance campaigns actually involving significant "unarmed collective violence." Kudelia argues that limited protest violence can provoke excessive state violence, which can backfire against the regime: Serhiy Kudelia, "When Numbers Are Not Enough: The Strategic Use of Violence in Ukraine's 2014 Revolution," *Comparative Politics* 50 (July 2018): 501–21.
[89] Interview 12 with Monimbó activist.
[90] Tim Rogers, "Nicaragua's primal scream," Univision, April 20, 2018, https://www.univision.com/univision-news/opinion/nicaraguas-primal-scream.

Geography and symbolic space

Several scholars emphasize how civil resistance campaigns make use of symbolic space.[91] In Nicaragua, historical memories of the Sandinista Revolution defined symbolic space and provided opportunities for activists and observers alike to invoke historical frames. In one potent form of protest, students re-painted public monuments of the Revolution from the FSLN's black-and-red to the Nicaraguan flag's blue-and-white, reclaiming the Revolution from partisan symbol to national patrimony.[92] Our analysis also suggests that 2018's protest events clustered in areas where Sandinista popular uprisings occurred from 1977-1979. The largest, most combative of 2018's protests erupted in traditional Sandinista strongholds like Monimbó, León, Estelí, and Matagalpa.

In Monimbó, a neighborhood in Masaya where the Sandinista Revolution's first mass uprising occurred, protesters again donned the masks and built the barricades for which the barrio became famous forty years earlier.[93] Monimbó had been a Sandinista stronghold for decades.[94] One young resident who brought supplies to the muchachos [boys] manning the barricades in April 2018 told us how in Monimbó, "the majority of the people were Sandinistas, everybody. They made contact bombs during the war [against Somoza] here. The brother of Daniel Ortega died here [in 1978]. We identified with that history."[95] But Monimbó was among the first neighborhoods to rise up against Ortega precisely because "in the 1970s, it was always Monimbó that rose up against Somoza. Our ancestors taught us how to defend ourselves. It's always been Monimbó that stands out in the protests."[96] A similar scene transpired in León, the self-styled cradle of the Sandinista Revolution. One ex-Sandinista activist described the atmosphere in the first few days of the April 2018 insurrection:

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[91] Butcher; Endres and Senda-Cook; Sewell.
[92] "Estudiantes pintan monumentos de azul y blanco," *La Prensa*, April 26, 2018, https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2018/04/25/imagenes/2409823-fotogaleria-estudiantes-pintan-monumentos-de-azul-y-blanco.
[93] Moisés Martínez, "Monimbó, el bastión histórico del FSLN, se rebela ante el orteguismo," *La Prensa*, April 20, 2018, https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2018/04/20/politica/2406908-la-valiente-historia-de-monimbo.
[94] According to Monimbó residents with whom we spoke, prior to the protests, 60% of Monimbó's residents had supported Ortega, and 40% did not care about politics. After the protests and their repression, 90% of Monimbó opposed Ortega; only municipal employees continued to support the government.
[95] Interview 11 with Monimbó resident.
[96] Interview 12 with Monimbó activist.

> León was burned [in 1979]—well, a lot of cities were burned—but the collective memory of the Leoneses on seeing the city center burning [in 2018], I feel that it revived all the collective memory of the war with Somoza, because Somoza ordered León bombed. Still for many years after there were ruins of that war […] Many people seeing the center relived their experiences of that war. The lights [going out], young people running, the patrols. It was very strong.[97]

Public ritual was crucial in transmitting local memories of the Sandinista Revolution across generations, grounding them in specific geographies, and offering participants paradigmatic roles to emulate. Two annual public reenactments of Nicaragua's revolution occur in León and Monimbó. León's Day of the Student commemorates the 1959 Student Massacre, and features reenactors dressed as Somoza's National Guardsmen grabbing audience members, pretending to beat them and forcing them onto a truck to represent students' arbitrary detention (see Figure 3). The scene escalates as participants arrive portraying Somoza-era student protesters, shouting at the troops. It culminates with the Guardsmen shooting and killing four students. Similarly, Monimbó is an endpoint of the annual Withdrawal to Masaya parade commemorating the FSLN's June 1979 tactical retreat from Managua.

[97] Interview 9 with ex-Sandinista activist.

Figure 1: León's annual reenactment of the 1959 student massacre. Photo taken June 22, 2017 by fourth author.

Statistical Analysis

We conduct a statistical analysis of our events dataset to test to what extent historical framing shaped the geographic diffusion of protest within Nicaragua. Our dataset covers events from April 18 to July 19, 2018, the most intense period of the civil resistance campaign. We used *La Prensa*, Nicaragua's preeminent independent newspaper, and a crowdsourced fact-checking Twitter account, Nicaragua Verificado (@NicaraguaVe), as sources. For analysis, we created a dichotomous municipality-day variable capturing the presence of demonstrations, marches, or *tranques* (roadblocks). Our dataset contains 1060 protest events over three months, with protests reported in 90 of Nicaragua's 153 municipalities.

We tested whether protest events were associated with locations of anti-Somoza protests and battles from 1977-1979. These contentious events created local historical memories of the revolution, along with local symbolic repertoires, paradigmatic roles, and intergenerational networks that can transmit knowledge and behaviors.[98] Our prior is that municipalities like Masaya and León with earlier contentious action during the late-1970s revolutionary wave preserved stronger local historical memory in 2018. We relied on Esteban Duque Estrada's

[98] Sarah Zukerman Daly, "Organizational Legacies of Violence: Conditions Favoring Insurgency Onset in Colombia, 1964–1984," *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (May 2012): 473–91.

authoritative chronology to measure 1977-79 contention as an ordinal variable,[99] coding 4 for first-moving municipalities that launched the 1978 February insurrection, 3 for municipalities that joined in the 1978 September insurrection, 2 for municipalities that only joined the final May-July 1979 insurrection , 1 for municipalities where only FSLN-initiated (rather than popular) battles occurred from 1977-1979, and 0 for municipalities where no events occurred.[100]

We also use survey and census data to test alternative explanations. We pooled municipal-level responses to questions from four Latinobarómetro surveys conducted 2013-2017, a period characterized by macroeconomic stability, in which Ortega's approval rating varied from 60% to 69%. We use data on political and economic approval ratings, corruption assessments, democratic satisfaction, voter intention, left-right political values, and social networks. These data were available for 126 of Nicaragua's 153 municipalities. Appendix Table C1 summarizes more detailed information on Latinobarómetro data. Data on municipal population, ratio of 14-to-27-year-olds to total population,[101] and poverty rates come from the most recent national census, conducted in 2005.

Results

Table 1 reports results from negative binomial regressions for likelihood of municipal-level protests events from April-July 2018. The results support the hypothesis that historical framing helps explain mass participation in protests, and are largely inconsistent with alternative explanations focusing on pre-existing political and economic grievances. Beyond this finding, the clearest pattern we identified is that protest events were more likely to occur in more urban, wealthier, and more geographically central municipalities.

[99] Esteban Duque Estrada, *Nicaragua: ¡insurrección! 1977-1979* (Managua: Lulu Press, 2014).
[100] Once rebellious, municipalities continued to resist during subsequent contentious waves.
[101] We calculated this variable using the 1-to-14-year-old age categories in the 2005 census, because individuals in this range would be 14-27 in 2018. This variable correlated almost perfectly (r=.95) with poverty rates.

Table 1: Municipal-level determinants of protests and tranques (April—July 2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	0.316**				0.388***
	(0.110)				(0.100)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.080			0.153
		(0.119)			(0.096)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.080			−0.183
		(0.119)			(0.098)
Corruption (2016–2017)			0.044		
			(0.127)		
FSLN vote share (2006)				−0.567***	−0.618***
				(0.108)	(0.097)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)				0.084	0.164
				(0.109)	(0.094)
Facebook use (2013–2017)				0.181	0.121
				(0.108)	(0.095)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.130	0.147
				(0.110)	(0.099)
Distance from capital					−0.351***
					(0.103)
log Population (2018)	0.675***	0.741***	0.812***	0.824***	0.645***
	(0.113)	(0.112)	(0.129)	(0.110)	(0.099)
Constant	1.507***	1.738***	1.929***	1.752***	1.639***
	(0.104)	(0.111)	(0.124)	(0.104)	(0.089)
Observations	153	125	89	105	104
Log Likelihood	-402.876	-354.818	-269.443	-301.737	-284.329
Akaike Inf. Crit.	811.752	717.635	544.886	615.473	588.658

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 1 reports the relationship between 1970s revolutionary events and protest events in 2018. Supporting our argument, protests were more likely in municipalities that experienced contentious events during the 1977-1979 revolution. Models 2, 3, and 4 provide important evidence that pre-existing political and economic grievances do not adequately explain protest diffusion in Nicaragua. Neither lower approval ratings for Daniel Ortega or economic assessments were statistically or substantively related to protests in this analysis. Many interviewees decried Ortega's corrupt practices, but perceptions of corruption in 2016 and 2017 had no statistically or substantively significant relation with protest. In fact, Nicaraguan Latinobarómetro respondents reported low perceptions of corruption from 2013-2017. FSLN vote share in the 2006 elections (which the FSLN won with only 38% of the vote) does predict fewer protests, indicating these municipalities harbor Ortega's hardcore supporters.

We present additional analyses of alternative explanations and model specifications in Appendix C. In mixed-effects logistic regressions, we find that municipalities reporting higher approval ratings for Ortega from 2013-2017 were *more* likely to see anti-Ortega protests in 2018. Poorer and younger municipalities (and, relatedly, those where many survey respondents

believed wealth was unfairly distributed) were less likely to protest. Pessimism about one's personal economic future, however, was linked to protest, possibly suggesting a "relative deprivation"[102] explanation for protest in a country whose economy has grown rapidly but where most remain poor. Municipalities reporting satisfaction with Nicaragua's democracy from 2013-2017 were *more* likely to see protest in 2018, corroborating a key contention of the historical framing hypothesis: that violence against student protesters jolted many observers from a *Democracy* frame to a *Dictatorship* frame. There is support for the role of social networks, though it is difficult to disentangle Facebook use and interpersonal trust from wealthier, more urban municipalities generally. Both intergenerational and online social networks, we argue, provided conduits for historical framing.

In sum, the statistical results offer strong evidence in favor of historical framing's role in explaining protest diffusion during Nicaragua's 2018 civic rebellion. They are largely inconsistent with explanations based on pre-existing political and economic grievances.

Assessing Alternative Explanations

Grievances play a key causal role in every account of sudden mass revolt we have encountered. Kuran famously argued that the revolutions of 1989 occurred when Eastern Europeans stopped falsifying their true preferences, thus "bring[ing] into the open long-repressed grievances" and ending "a system that many considered abominable."[103] Scholars of the Arab Spring cite a "cocktail of grievances that exploded in the uprising,"[104] argue that an "accumulation of grievances had toppled over, like a huge pile of documents,"[105] and tally "the roots of rage."[106] Given the ubiquity of grievances in authoritarian regimes, social scientists' task becomes identifying conjunctural causes that allow pent-up resentments to explode into mass protest. These can include political opportunities, resource mobilization, international shocks, electoral fraud, economic retrenchment, and corruption. Appendix Table A.1 summarizes these common arguments from cases around the globe.

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[102] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970).
[103] Kuran, 22, 29.
[104] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Introduction: Understanding the Consequences of the Arab Uprisings – Starting Points and Divergent Trajectories," *Democratization* 22 (February 2015): 209.
[105] Lindsey Hilsum, *Sandstorm* (London: Faber, 2012), 13.
[106] Lin Noueihed and Alex Warren, *The Battle for the Arab Spring: Revolution, Counter-Revolution and the Making of a New Era* (Yale University Press, 2012), 11–60.

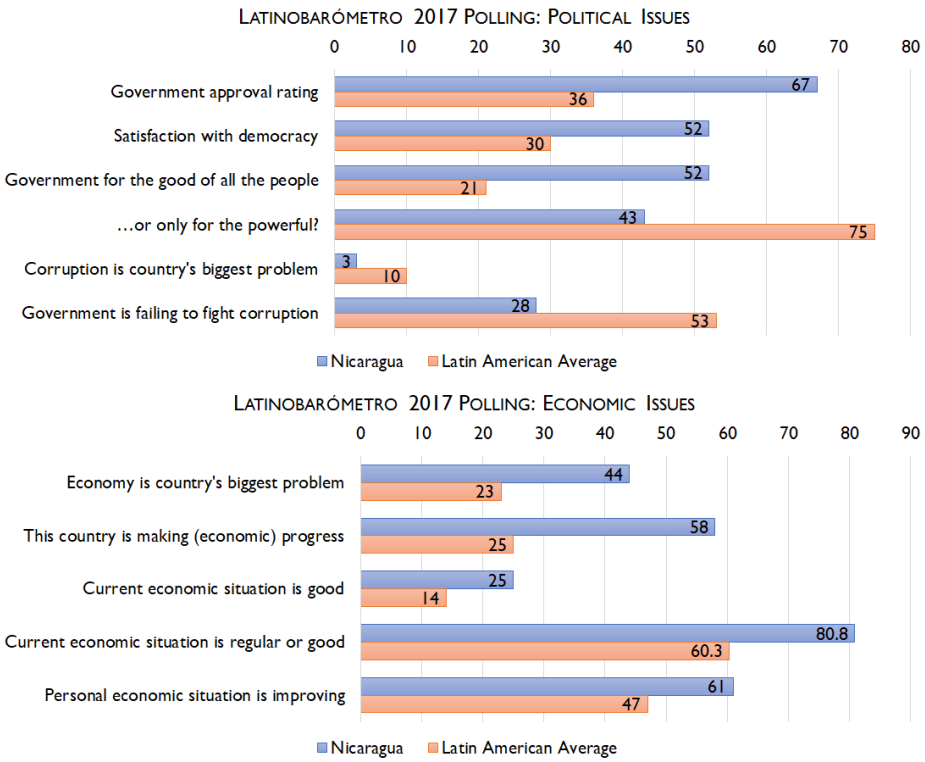

Figure 4: Assessing political and economic grievances in Nicaragua

Prior to April 2018, however, Nicaragua contrasted starkly with this general picture of broadly-hated authoritarian governments. In an era of unpopular presidents in Latin America, Daniel Ortega stood out with positive polling across numerous issue areas. Before 2018, the Ortega government was notable for its relative restraint and lack of mass repression,[107] leading us to doubt widespread preference falsification among poll respondents.[108] Figure 4 shows that in 2017, Nicaraguans reported viewing their government as more competent, egalitarian, honest, and more democratic than the Latin American average. At a glance, these numbers would not foretell a mass pro-democracy civil resistance campaign, absent a major shock. Moreover, Ortega's regime did not suffer from the structural vulnerabilities common among the (largely) exclusionary, low-performing regimes in Table A.1. Ortega had engineered a high-performing personalistic regime incorporating or coopting most political, religious, and economic elites, and

[107] Martí i Puig and Serra; Pineda.
[108] That Ortega's approval rating plummeted to 23% in surveys taken amidst extreme repression in summer 2018 further confirms that fear of state violence had not produced preference falsification in Nicaragua.

popular with a majority of the population. His broad domestic popularity rested on three pillars: a) cooptation of right-wing and center-right former political and religious enemies; b) skillful stewardship of a growing market-based economy, with economic rewards for business-class allies and targeted social programs and public goods provision for the urban and small-town poor; and c) undermining and suppression of potential resistance from civil society. None of these pillars showed significant weaknesses prior to April 2018.

One of the most prominent theories on the timing and strength of civil resistance campaigns points to political opportunities created by divisions among elite actors.[109] Yet Ortega's coalition exhibited few signs of fracture before April 2018. Ortega began his return to the presidency by centralizing power within the FSLN throughout the 1990s. At the national level, he engaged in backroom deal-making with conservative President Arnoldo Alemán of the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista (PLC).[110] After regaining the presidency in 2007, Ortega could still rely on Alemán and remaining PLC members, and began further outreach to Catholic Church and business elites who had been his enemies during the revolutionary period, consolidating a new elite alliance.

FSLN relations with Church leadership were poor during the 1980s and 1990s due to perceptions of the Marxist-Leninist FSLN as atheistic. In the early 2000s, however, Ortega repaired ties with Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo. Ortega began rebranding the FSLN as a Christian party, giving religion top billing in the new slogan "Cristiana, socialista, solidaria" (Christian, socialist, in solidarity) and reversing FSLN commitments to women's rights by banning abortion once in office in 2007. This social conservatism, including increased anti-LGBT policies and rhetoric, also appealed to Nicaragua's growing evangelical Christian community. Obando y Bravo stepped down in 2005 but remained close to Ortega, while Ortega's newfound affinity with evangelicals offered a more solid power base as younger Catholic clergy voiced criticism of the government.[111]

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[109] McAdam.
[110] David Close, *Nicaragua: Navigating the Politics of Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2016); Salvador Martí i Puig, "The Adaptation of the FSLN: Daniel Ortega's Leadership and Democracy in Nicaragua," *Latin American Politics and Society* 52 (December 2010): 79–106.
[111] Henri Gooren, "Ortega for President: The Religious Rebirth of Sandinismo in Nicaragua," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 89 (October 2010): 47–63; Edmundo Jarquín Calderón, "Construcción democrática revertida y pervertida," in *El régimen de Ortega* (Managua: PAVSA, 2016), 43–44; Timothy Steigenga, Kenneth Coleman, and Eduardo Marenco, "'En Dios Confiamos': Politics, Populism, and Protestantism in Daniel Ortega's Nicaragua," *International Journal of Latin American Religions* 1 (June 2017): 116–33.

Ortega's third key alliance was with Nicaragua's capitalist business elites, most prominently the members of COSEP.[112] While adopting neoliberal macroeconomic policies, Ortega cooperated with business leaders to set domestic economic policies and developed a tripartite bargaining system on wages and labor issues between the government, business, and increasingly corporatist, FSLN-dominated labor unions. Economic growth kept business elites and burgeoning crony capitalists happy, while Ortega used targeted social programs and patronage to FSLN supporters to help reduce poverty and assuage the rising inequality his policies were generating. There was little indication of divisions between Ortega and his elite allies prior to April 2018.[113]

Electoral fraud can offer an important political opportunity for launching mass civil resistance campaigns, because scheduled elections help protesters overcome collective action problems.[114] This explanation also fails in Nicaragua's case. Mass protests following the fraudulent 2008 municipal elections were brief.[115] Ortega took office for a prohibited consecutive presidential term following the 2011 elections, leading independent newspaper *La Prensa* to begin its continued practice of labelling Ortega the "presidente inconstitucional" (unconstitutional president),[116] but a sustained mass civil resistance movement did not emerge. Ortega commissioned blatant fraud in the 2016 elections that returned him to office for a third term, yet "election day was eerily calm."[117] This calm may have partly resulted from an opposition boycott, but many FSLN supporters likely also stayed home, with Ortega's reelection assumed. Most significantly, there were few signs of street protest in 2016, and, as shown in Figure 4, most Nicaraguans expressed satisfaction with their democracy a year after the fraudulent elections. Though scholars often point to economic dissatisfaction as a determinant of

[112] Rose Spalding, "Los empresarios y el Estado posrevolucionario: El reordenamiento de las élites y la nueva estrategia de colaboración en Nicaragua," *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* 43 (December 2017): 149–88.
[113] Carlos Fernando Chamorro Barrios, "Nicaragua: antes y después de la Rebelión de Abril," in *Anhelos de un nuevo horizonte: Aportes para una Nicaragua democrática*, ed. Alberto Cortés Ramos, Umanzor López Baltodano, and Ludwing Moncada Bellorin (San José, CR: FLACSO, 2020), 23–39.
[114] See Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (September 2007): 535–51.
[115] Martí i Puig and Serra 120.
[116] La Prensa, "Un presidente inconstitucional," *La Prensa*, January 9, 2012, https://www.laprensa.com.ni/2012/01/09/opinion/86346-un-presidente-inconstitucional.
[117] Kai Thaler, "Nicaragua: A Return to Caudillismo," *Journal of Democracy* 28 (April 2017): 162.

civil resistance,[118] Nicaraguan polling data do not support this explanation either. Ortega's policies generated substantial optimism about Nicaragua's economic future, unsurprising given that Ortega had delivered four-to-five percent annual growth rates since the mid-2000s.[119]

Neoliberal policies in particular can fuel dissent by expanding precarious and informal employment while cutting the social safety net: hence, protesters called for "dignity" during the Arab Spring[120] and express redistributive preferences in Latin America.[121] Yet neoliberal economic policies in Nicaragua came packaged with significant public goods provisions, with many services aimed at the poor—Ortega's most important and loyal political base. Low-income families benefited from free healthcare and zinc roofs. The government renovated town squares and public spaces and sponsored frequent, well-attended festivals and holidays, buoying Ortega's popularity. In the Latin American context, security was perhaps the most important public good of all,[122] with Nicaragua's homicide rate comparable to Costa Rica and the United States rather than the violent Northern Triangle.[123] Finally, even though Nicaragua's civil resistance campaign began with scattered protests against public pension cuts, "the debate over economic models and development has stood out for its absence in the crisis of Orteguismo in 2018's popular revolts."[124]

Scholars of social revolutions also point to foreign shocks through international pressures or conflicts.[125] Yet Ortega had insulated his government through deft foreign policy, simultaneously fostering cooperative relations with the US and an alliance with Venezuela. Nicaragua's military worked with US security forces on anti-drug trafficking efforts, and Ortega earned ire in the

[118] Brancati; Mark Beissinger, Amaney Jamal, and Kevin Mazur, "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions: Regime Strategies and the Structuring of Participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions," *Comparative Politics* 48 (October 2015): 1–24.
[119] Thaler, 165.
[120] E.g. F. Gregory Gause "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 90 (July/August 2011): 85–87.
[121] Patricia Justino and Bruno Martorano, "Redistributive Preferences and Protests in Latin America," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63 (October 2019): 2128–54.
[122] See Julienne Weegels "Implementing Social Policy through the Criminal Justice System: Youth, Prisons, and Community-Oriented Policing in Nicaragua," *Oxford Development Studies* 46 (January 2018): 57–70.
[123] Salvador Martí i Puig, "Nicaragua: país bolivariano, pero no del todo," *Política exterior* 30 (November/December 2016): 28–34; Enrique Sáenz, "La gestión económica: ¿Despilfarro de oportunidades?," in *El régimen de Ortega* (Managua: PAVSA, 2016), 209–65; Spalding; Thaler. While many of these services were underwritten by diminishing Venezuelan subsidies, the effects of Venezuela's economic crisis were only beginning to be felt by April 2018.
[124] Jarquín Chamorro, 72.
[125] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

region, but US appreciation, by blocking northbound migrants at the Costa Rican border. Nicaragua remained a member of the Central American Free Trade Agreement, attracting increasing US investment. Though the US reacted negatively to Ortega's election fraud, there were few consequences: the US Congress only passed the long-gestating Nicaragua Investment Conditionality (NICA) Act *after* April 2018. Meanwhile, Ortega forged a strong alliance with Venezuela under Hugo Chávez and then Nicolás Maduro, gaining cheap oil, massive economic assistance enabling the new social programs and business investments described above, and also vast opportunities for graft.[126]

Finally, resource mobilization theories argue that strong, autonomous civil societies can foster civil resistance campaigns.[127] Yet Ortega faced few significant anti-regime protests following his return to the presidency in 2007. The most sustained anti-regime protests were small weekly demonstrations in Managua by the MRS, the main dissident Sandinista faction, but the movement's limited social base and popular perceptions of its elite nature impeded growth into a wider movement. The Campesino Movement also organized political protests beginning in 2014 against the Ortega government's intentions to construct an interoceanic canal across Nicaragua, a project that would entail large-scale land seizures, including appropriation of indigenous lands.[128] While the Campesino Movement over time developed ties to some MRS-associated elites, its leadership focused exclusively on promoting peasant rights rather than broader political change.[129] Cabrales also highlights protests by transport workers seeking better employment conditions, by informal workers opposing regulatory measures, and by feminist groups denouncing state responses to femicide; however, he notes that none of these smaller protests "activated the processes or mechanisms that enabled April 2018's protest wave."[130]

As Ortega squeezed civil society organizations and independent media ever tighter,[131] concern grew among opposition elites that Nicaragua's youth and the public generally were becoming politically apathetic, tacitly accepting the Ortega regime as avenues for dissent were blocked. Outside of a committed core of activists, "middle and upper-class members of my

[126] Martí i Puig, 2016; Sáenz; Thaler.
[127] McCarthy and Zald.
[128]McCall and Taylor; Pineda.
[129] McCall and Taylor.
[130] Cabrales Domínguez, 2020, 80.
[131] Pineda; Guillermo Rothschuh Villanueva, "Asedios a la libertad de expresión," in *El régimen de Ortega* (Managua: PAVSA, 2016), 186–208.

[millennial] generation weren't opposed to Ortega so much as they were apolitical. If you asked them about politics, they might say, 'Yeah, I guess things are probably better now than they were ten years ago.'"[132] Protests by student activists against the government response to fires in the Indio Maíz Biological Reserve in early-to-mid-April 2018 attracted a few hundred demonstrators in Managua,[133] but had few links to established civil society infrastructure.[134] Though student protesters typically count on organizational advantages,[135] Nicaraguan students "had to create new organizations ad hoc [after April 18] because the Unión Nacional de Estudiantes de Nicaragua (UNEN), which might have been a good platform for struggle, has functioned for many years as an extension of the FSLN."[136]

In short, existing structural explanations for mass civil resistance campaigns fail to explain Nicaragua's civic rebellion. In the weeks before the uprising, most Nicaraguans approved of Ortega's self-proclaimed "*buen gobierno*" [good government], most elites remained regime allies, the opposition was weak and fragmented, international pressures were light, and civil society was no match for the FSLN's mass base. Our fieldwork, interview research, and statistical analysis indicate that the rapid mobilization and spread of Nicaragua's anti-regime protests is best explained by historical frames and their role in shaping reactions to unexpected events.

Conclusion

The Nicaraguan case portends major implications for the study of nonviolent civil resistance campaigns. Nicaragua may be a "deviant case that disproves a deterministic proposition,"[137] namely that simmering grievances are a necessary condition for unexpected civil revolt. Our research instead strengthens the notion that frames,[138] analogic thinking,[139] and

[132] Conversation with political historian Mateo Jarquín, November 2018.
[133] Maynor Salazar, "Jóvenes marcharon por Indio Maíz a pesar de represión policial," *Confidencial*, April 13, 2018, https://confidencial.com.ni/jovenes-marcharon-por-indio-maiz-a-pesar-de-represion/.
[134] Interview 15 with Managua-based activist.
[135] Yael Zeira, "From the Schools to the Streets: Education and Anti-Regime Resistance in the West Bank," *Comparative Political Studies* 52 (July 2019): 1131–68.
[136] Rocha, *Autoconvocados y conectados*, 13.
[137] Gerring, 32.
[138] Snow and Benford.
[139] Beissinger.

shared understandings of history and identity[140] inform high-risk mobilization decisions. The political science and sociological literatures agree framing matters, but it is typically difficult to isolate its causal contribution. Nicaragua's civic rebellion shows that powerful framing in response to a critical event can be a sufficient condition to spark a mass civil resistance campaign, and that this framing is more likely to succeed where activists can draw on collective memories of past mass uprisings. This finding in turn suggests the need to reassess framing's importance in otherwise overdetermined cases of civil resistance. Scholars studying participation cascades should pay closer attention to mechanisms like historical framing and "moral motivations"[141] through which individuals' preferences are not only revealed, but transformed.

Nicaraguans' use of historical framing finds parallels in other recent mass civil resistance campaigns. Zeilig observes how, in Burkina Faso, "the 2014 revolution and the popular resistance to the coup in 2015 were inspired by the example of Thomas Sankara, even if many of those involved had been born after 1987. His name tumbled from the lips of activists, or self-defined revolutionaries… [I]t was the example of his life (and death) that informed and inspired the movement."[142] Davis argues that by deploying slogans from the 1962 revolution and paradigmatic roles like FLN martyr Ali La Pointe, "Algerian protesters [in 2019] are trying to reappropriate the historical resource of the revolution to undermine this ruling elite."[143] In Chile, small 2019 protests over rising metro fares exploded into a mass civil resistance campaign after "[President] Piñera's decision to take the armed forces to the streets evoked in the oldest Chileans painful memories about the [Pinochet] dictatorship."[144] Protesters further linked history to the present with slogans like "It's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years," and aimed to overturn Pinochet's neoliberal economic model and 1980 constitution.[145]

Based on our study of Nicaragua, we contend that such instances of historical framing may be more than just a rhetorical strategy protesters employ. Rather, historical framing itself is a powerful cause of mass mobilization. The Nicaraguan example also shows that activists can even

[140] Shesterinina.
[141] Pearlman, 2018.
[142] Leo Zeilig, "Burkina Faso: From Thomas Sankara to Popular Resistance," *Review of African Political Economy* 44 (April 2017): 7.
[143] Muriam Haleh Davis, "The Layers of History Beneath Algeria's Protests," *Current History* 118 (December 2019): 339.
[144] Nicolás M. Somma et al., "No Water in the Oasis: The Chilean Spring of 2019–2020," *Social Movement Studies* forthcoming (February 2020): 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1727737.
[145] Ibid., 2.

seize the central legitimizing symbols of the state or ruling party, placing the regime in a double-bind: the regime loses control of its mobilizing symbols at the precise moment it must mobilize counterrevolutionary forces. Nicaraguan activists' experiences thus offer vital insights for assessing—and furthering—the prospects of future efforts for nonviolent democratic change.

Appendix A. Supplemental Analysis

In this appendix, we provide additional data and descriptive analyses to support the materials in the main text of the article.

Grievances in the civil resistance literature

Table A1 reviews an extensive case literature on mass civil resistance campaign, showing that in almost all cases analysts suggest widespread (and usually longstanding) *grievances* as a necessary condition for sudden popular revolt.

Table A1: Causes of mass civil resistance campaigns

Year	*Countries*	*Movement*	*Necessary Cause*	*Conjunctural Causes*
1986	Philippines	People Power Revolution	**"widespread grievances"**[146]	Economic nosedive, political opportunities, electoral fraud
1989	Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, etc.	East European Revolutions	**"long-repressed grievances"**[147]	Festering economic problems, diffusion
1989	China	Tiananmen Square Protests	**"explosion of grievances"**[148]	Economic liberalization, economic inequality, corruption, diffusion
2000 - 2005	Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan	Color Revolutions	**"strong grievances against the regime"**[149]	Electoral fraud, diffusion
2009	Iran	Green Revolution	**"accumulated grievances"**[150]	Electoral fraud, economic dissatisfaction
2014	Burkina Faso	Burkinabé uprising	**"popular grievances"**[151]	Secession crisis, impunity, corruption, and inequality

[146] Kurt Schock, "People Power and Political Opportunities: Social Movement Mobilization and Outcomes in the Philippines and Burma," *Social Problems* 46, no. 3 (August 1, 1999): 358, https://doi.org/10/gf2vjh.
[147] Timur Kuran, "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44, no. 01 (October 1991): 22, https://doi.org/10.2307/2010422.
[148] Jiping Zuo and Robert D. Benford, "Mobilization Processes and the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement," *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1995): 135, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1995.tb02324.x.
[149] Joshua A. Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (September 2007): 536, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707071538.
[150] Kevan Harris, "The Brokered Exuberance of the Middle Class: An Ethnographic Analysis of Iran's 2009 Green Movement," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (December 1, 2012): 442, https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.17.4.hm3q725054052k85.
[151] M.-S. Frere and P. Englebert, "Briefing: Burkina Faso--the Fall of Blaise Compaore," *African Affairs* 114, no. 455 (April 1, 2015): 299, https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adv010.

2011	Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen	The Arab Spring	**"cocktail of grievances"**[152]	Economic stagnation, diffusion
2015	Guatemala	Guatemalan Spring	**"profound disenchantment"**[153]	Corruption, crime
2018	Armenia	My Step Revolution	**"anger and discontent"**[154]	Economic inequality, electoral fraud, corruption
2018 - 2019	Sudan	Freedom and Change	**"decades of penned-up political frustration"**[155]	Economic crisis, austerity
2019	Algeria	Smile Revolution	**"social and political discontent"**[156]	Major economic problems
2019	Chile	Chile Despertó	**"long-standing grievances"**[157]	Economic inequality, elitist politics
2015-2020	United States	Black Lives Matter	**"direct experience of grievance"**[158]	Police brutality, centuries of political, economic, and social oppression

Latinobarómetro polling data

In the article, we discuss the rapid shift in public opinion about the Ortega regime and the quality of democracy before and after the violent repression of protesters in April 2018, leveraging the fact that the 2018 Latinobarómetro survey in Nicaragua was conducted after the protests and repression began. Here we include details on the specific questions asked in the survey and the full tables of survey responses.

Satisfaction with Democracy

Table A2. "In general, world you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or completely unsatisfied with the functioning of democracy in Nicaragua?"

[152] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Introduction: Understanding the Consequences of the Arab Uprisings – Starting Points and Divergent Trajectories," *Democratization* 22, no. 2 (February 23, 2015): 209, https://doi.org/10/f3shx3.
[153] Edelberto Torres Rivas, "Guatemala: la corrupción como crisis de gobierno," *Nueva Sociedad* 257 (2015): 1.
[154] Armine Ishkanian, "A Revolution of Values: Freedom, Responsibility and Courage in Armenia's Velvet Revolution," *OpenDemocracy* (blog), May 3, 2018, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/revolution-of-values-freedom-responsibility-and-courage-in-armenias-velve/.
[155] Nisrin Elamin and Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, "Recent Protests in Sudan Are Much More than Bread Riots," *Washington Post* (blog), December 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/12/28/recent-protests-in-sudan-are-much-more-than-bread-riots/.
[156] Tarek Cherkaoui, Michael Arnold, and Yasmina Allouche, "Algeria: A Grassroots Movement for Change or Elite Political Gamesmanship?" (Istanbul, Turkey: TRT World Research Centre, 2019), 3.
[157] Nicolás M. Somma et al., "No Water in the Oasis: The Chilean Spring of 2019–2020," *Social Movement Studies* 0, no. 0 (February 11, 2020): 1, https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1727737.
[158] Vanessa Williamson, Kris-Stella Trump, and Katherine Levine Einstein, "Black Lives Matter: Evidence That Police-Caused Deaths Predict Protest Activity," *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 2 (June 2018): 400–415, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592717004273.

Satisfaction with Democracy	2016	2017	2018
Very satisfied	16	20	7
Fairly satisfied	34	31	13
Not very satisfied	28	24	31
Completely unsatisfied	15	16	42
Do not know	6	8	5
No response	2	1	2

N = 1,000 respondents in each survey wave

As the table shows, satisfaction with democracy was relatively stable between 2016 and 2017, despite the controversy surrounding the fraudulent 2016 elections. In both 2016 and 2017, almost exactly half of respondents reported being very satisfied or fairly satisfied with democracy in Nicaragua. In 2018, however, after the protests and repression began, the number dropped to only 20%.

In 2016 and 2017, around 40% of respondents reported being completely unsatisfied or not very satisfied with democracy. In 2018, the percentage of respondents completely unsatisfied or not very satisfied with democracy jumped to 73%.

Quality of Democracy

Table A3. "What is the state of democracy is in your country?"

Quality of democracy	2017	2018
A full democracy	13	6
A democracy with minor problems	33	14
A democracy with major problems	18	30
Not a democracy	13	34
Do not understand	15	8
Do not know	5	6
No response	1	2

N = 1,000 respondents in each survey wave

This question was only included in the 2017 and 2018 survey waves, so we cannot compare data with 2016, prior to that year's general elections. In 2017, 46% of respondents considered Nicaragua a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems, while only 31% said it was not a democracy or a democracy with major problems. In 2018, by contrast, in the wake of the protest wave and government crackdown, just 20% of respondents said Nicaragua was a full democracy

or a democracy with minor problems, while now 64% said it was not a democracy or a democracy with major problems.

Analogic Thinking

Figure A1, which measures the appearance on Twitter of "Ortega y Somoza, son la misma cosa" since 2014, presents additional evidence for analogic thinking. The phrase existed prior to the uprising, but with very little traction among the broader public. It was deployed almost exclusively in protests associated with the MRS, the small breakaway faction of the FSLN that has sought to portray itself as the true carriers of Nicaragua's revolutionary heritage.

Figure A1: Tweet counts exemplifying analogic thinking

If political or economic grievances had been slowly building against Ortega's regime, we might expect to see a gradual increase in the use of analogic slogans like "Ortega y Somoza son la misma cosa." Yet the slogan gained little traction even during the fraudulent 2016 presidential election which returned Ortega to power for an unconstitutional third term.[159] In April 2018, however, this formerly factional slogan was broadly adopted in mass protests. This sequencing supports our argument that the adoption of a Dictatorship frame in response to unexpected events, rather than structural factors, explains April's mass anti-regime protests.

[159]See Kai Thaler, "Nicaragua: A Return to Caudillismo," Journal of Democracy 28 (April 2017): 157-69. If "Ortega y Somoza son la misma cosa" had come into wider use after the 2016 elections, we would still expect to see a disjuncture in April 2018 following a rapid increase generally in expressions of anti-regime sentiment.

Appendix B. Additional Information on Data Collection and Methods

In this appendix, we provide additional details on our collection of original data, as well as our methods of analysis utilized in this article.

Participant Observation

The first source of original data used in the article is participant observation conducted by the first author. He arrived in Nicaragua ten days after protests broke out on April 28, 2018, and spent four weeks attending demonstrations, visiting roadblocks, talking with everyday people, and following local news and social media. Participant observation occurred primarily in the southern city of Rivas and in the capital, Managua, the epicenter of the protest movement.

We refrain from referring to this as ethnographic fieldwork, which implies a lengthier and more structured investigation. Because the first author's trip to Nicaragua was originally for the purpose of visiting family and because the protests were an unexpected event, participant observation was conducted on an ad hoc basis. As no Institutional Review Board approval could be secured in time, the first author refrained from any action that could potentially endanger human subjects, like structured interviews.

The first author marched in several protests and visited tranques, and personally witnessed, photographed, and videotaped most examples of the symbolic uses of historical analogy described in the manuscript. We relied on social media and news coverage to confirm his impressions that historical symbols were widespread, and cite these external sources in the manuscript. Participant observation was especially useful for the initial formulation of the historical framing hypothesis; for observing cognitive mechanisms of framing as they occurred; for guiding subsequent investigation; and for "embedding" the investigation in the on-the-ground context of Nicaraguan protesters. Participation in protests also helped the first author create rapport with activists during later interviews, and was crucial in helping us understand how framing changed over time between 2018 and 2019, during retrospective interviews.

The fourth author was present in Nicaragua at the beginning of protests. She was able to confirm many of the first author's observations and provide additional details about the transmission of historic memory in León.

Interviews

A second source of original qualitative data is a set of 15 interviews with activists, protesters, civil society leaders, business leaders, journalists, and scholars. Interview research was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the first author's university. Interviews were conducted in Spanish or English, according to the interviewee's preference. Interviewees were selected through an initial purposive sample, using contacts developed by the authors during previous fieldwork. We then sought to snowball sample based off initial interviews, asking our interlocutors if they were willing to put us in touch with protesters, activists, or others who might be willing and able to share their insights about the emergence of the protest movement.

Interviews were semi-structured, with questions varying depending on the person's position and experience, but for each interview, we sought to understand the person's perceptions of the Ortega regime, the opposition, and possibilities for change prior to April 2018; how they experienced the beginning of protests; and how their evaluations of the regime and prospects for change evolved over time. We were careful not to solicit historical analogies with our questioning. Rather, our interviewees frequently volunteered them without prompting, particularly in response to questions such as:

- Why did you personally join the protests on [date]?
- What sort of emotions did you feel when you were protesting?
- Why do you think that the beatings and killings of students provoked such widespread outrage among Nicaraguans?
- Why did protesters use [symbol / chant / song / tactic]?

It is currently difficult to conduct fieldwork on such a sensitive topic in Nicaragua, and we worried that if we were to conduct in-person interviews, government suspicion and adverse consequences might fall on people not already known as open government opponents. We therefore conducted interviews by secure voice call, allowing the interviewee to choose the service (WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, etc.). In the article and appendices, we have omitted the exact app used for each call and provided the month, but not the exact date of interviews in order to minimize risks to interviewees if our phones or computers were hacked or seized.

We have selected key, representative quotations from interviewees for inclusion in the article manuscript, but we provide below in Table B1 details on the full set of interviews and participants. All interviews were conducted in 2019.

Table B1. Interviews and Participant Details

#	Month	Location of coverage	Time	Type	Recording and note taking	Sex	Age
1	June	Managua	1:15h	Student activist	concurrent notes	M	20-29
2	June	Managua	3h	Student activist	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	20-29
3	June	Managua	1:15h	Student activist	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	20-29
4	July	Managua	1:30h	Bank manager	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	30-39
5	July	León / Managua	1h	Foreign academic	concurrent notes	F	30-39
6	July	Managua	2h	Journalist and activist	audio recording, concurrent notes	F	30-39
7	July	Granada	1:20h	Foreign journalist	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	40-49
8	July	Managua	1:10h	Artist and student activist	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	20-29

9	August	León	1:40h	Actor and activist	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	30-39
10	September	Managua	1:30h	Businessman	audio recording, concurrent notes	M	60-69
11	September	Monimbó	1h	Civilian	concurrent notes	F	20-29
12	September	Monimbó	1:15h	Activist	concurrent notes	M	20-29
13	September	Masaya	2h	Journalist and activist	concurrent notes	M	30-39
14	September	Monimbó	1h30m	Activist	concurrent notes	M	30-39
15	October	Managua	1hr	Scholar-activist	concurrent notes	F	20-29

Qualitative Analysis of News and Social Media

We also closely tracked Nicaraguan news media and social media over the course of the protests and the months afterwards. In some places, we have quoted or cited news reports or revealing social media posts, but generally these sources were used to inform a more complete picture of events and perceptions inside Nicaragua, though we recognize the biases of these data sources, which tend to emerge from and cater towards a more urban, educated audience.

Original Quantitative Data

The final source of original data collection was the compilation of an original events data set. Based around the coding rules of the NAVCO 3.0 dataset,[160] we used the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa* and the crowdsourced, fact-checked Twitter account Nicaragua Verificado (@NicaraguaVe) to hand-code and cross-check contentious events. Ideally we would have been able to systematically examine additional news sources, including regional ones, but *La Prensa* is the preeminent independent national newspaper, producing coverage spanning the country, and Nicaragua Verificado--which published events that were self-reported by protesters--also provided additional coverage beyond major cities and highlighted events that were not necessarily included in news coverage. We therefore consider our dataset comprehensive and representative, though not exhaustive.

The final dataset includes 1060 contentious episodes, including protests, repression, claims-making, and international involvement. The dataset spans from April 2018, before protests began, through July 2018, after the government had largely reestablished control of the streets, recapturing Masaya and forcibly clearing universities of protesters. This original quantitative data was used for statistical analyses, described in greater detail below.

[160] Chenoweth, Erica, Jonathan Pinckney, and Orion Lewis. "Days of rage: Introducing the NAVCO 3.0 dataset." Journal of Peace Research 55.4 (2018): 524-534.

Appendix C. Quantitative Analysis and Robustness Checks

Data

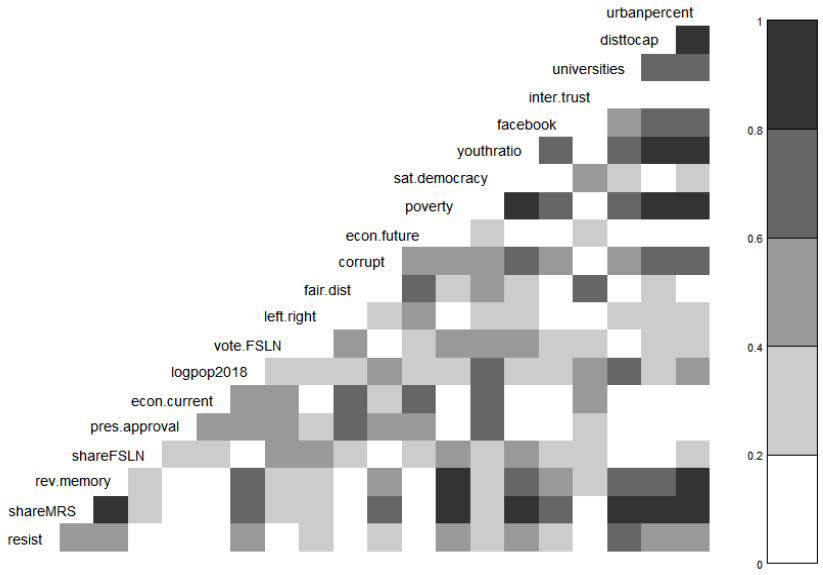
Table C1 summarizes the Latinobarómetro questions we tested in the statistical analysis.

Table C1. Latinobarómetro variables

Variable name	*Survey question*
Ortega approval rating	Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ortega is leading the country?
Economy approval rating	How would you describe the country's present economic situation?
Would vote for FSLN	Which party would you vote for if elections were next Sunday?
Left-leaning	In politics, people normally speak of "right" and "left". On a scale where 0 is right and 10 is left, where would you place yourself?
Wealth unfairly distributed	How fair do you think is the distribution of income in Nicaragua?
Corruption (available only for 2016 and 2017)	How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the fight against corruption?
Personal economic optimism	In the next 12 months, do you think your economic situation and that of your family will be much better, a little better, about the same, a little worse or much worse than now?
Democratic satisfaction	In general, would you say you are very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the working of the democracy in Nicaragua?
Facebook use	Do you use any of these social networking services?
Interpersonal trust	Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust most people, or that you can never be too careful in dealing with others?

Correlation table

Table C2. Correlations between variables used in analysis



Multicollinearity poses the most significant issues for inference in our quantitative analysis. Table C2 reports correlations among all the variables used in our quantitative analysis. As can be seen, our main independent variables, *Revolutionary events* and *MRS vote share* are highly correlated (r = .604). This is unsurprising, given that we theorize these variables proxy the existence and politicization of local historical memory. However, it means that they do not offer fully independent tests of the underlying concept, *historical memory*.

Nicaragua's monopolar geography--centered on Managua--poses a greater challenge for inference through statistical analysis. Municipalities that are geographically closer to Managua are on average more populous, more urban, and wealthier; they host more universities; they were also more likely to rebel during the Sandinista Revolution, have higher MRS vote shares, and experienced more contentious events in 2018. While it is therefore difficult to disentangle which variables are most causally important, their covariance suggests we consider them together as representing a latent variable. We base our argument that *historical memory* is a causally central component of this latent variable primarily on our participant observation research, interviews, and careful qualitative case analysis. Our statistical analysis is strongly consistent with our

qualitative analysis while providing strong evidence against the role of preexisting grievances. Table C5 in the Appendix adds further evidence by showing that not only the occurrence but the *timing* of revolutionary events from 1978-1979 predicts protests in 2018.

Testing additional variables

While 1977-1979 contentious events during the Sandinista revolution created local historical memory, we also suggest that protest events are more likely in 2018 in municipalities where elites were able to frame the Ortega regime using those memories. Specifically, political and cultural elites in the Sandinista Renewal Movement (MRS) had been attempting to deploy this *Dictatorship* framing for ten years prior to the 2018 protests. Table C2 tests the relationship between MRS vote share in the 2006 election (our proxy for the presence of MRS elites) and 2018 protests using negative binomial regressions. There is evidence of a positive correlation in Model 1, although it does not reach statistical significance in the full model. Elites appear to have helped frame ongoing events to some degree, but the analysis highlights the role of the *spontaneous* adoption of historical framing by the broader Nicaraguan public wherever local historical memories of the revolution were strongest.

Table C2: Testing MRS vote share

	(1)	(2)
MRS vote share (2006)	0.362***	0.181
	(0.104)	(0.138)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.173
		(0.103)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.171
		(0.107)
FSLN vote share (2006)		−0.568***
		(0.101)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)		0.127
		(0.101)
Facebook use (2013–2017)		0.041
		(0.109)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)		0.075
		(0.107)
Distance from capital		−0.400**
		(0.138)
log Population (2018)	0.732***	0.783***
	(0.109)	(0.111)
Constant	1.489***	1.677***
	(0.103)	(0.096)
Observations	153	104
Log Likelihood	-401.081	-290.095
Akaike Inf. Crit.	808.162	600.190
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

We also test a wider battery of variables proxying leading explanations of sudden mass civil resistance campaigns from the literature in Table C3. These variables represent the influence of ideology, economic grievances, factors commonly held to increase the likelihood of Color Revolutions (like youth bulges and democratic aspirations), internet and interpersonal networks, and geography. Only geographic factors are well-supported in these tests: protests were more likely in wealthier, more urban, and more central municipalities. As we will see further on, however, network explanations are better supported in mixed-effects logistic regressions.

Table C3: Assessing alternative explanations

	Ideology	Economy	Color Revolution	Networks	Geography
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Would vote for FSLN (2013–2017)	0.009				
	(0.116)				
Left-leaning (2013–2017)	0.141				
	(0.115)				
Wealth unfairly distributed (2013–2017)	0.089				
	(0.118)				
Personal economic optimism (2013–2017)		−0.197			
		(0.108)			
Poverty rate (2005)		−0.378***			
		(0.106)			
Democratic satisfaction (2013–2017)			0.002		
			(0.113)		
Youth ratio (2005)			−0.298**		
			(0.115)		
Facebook use (2013–2017)			−0.086	0.001	
			(0.118)	(0.115)	
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.092	
				(0.116)	
Number of universities					−0.018
					(0.105)
Distance from capital					−0.422***
					(0.110)
Percent urban (2018)					0.312**
					(0.110)
log Population (2018)	0.701***	0.742***	0.775***	0.772***	0.711***
	(0.114)	(0.106)	(0.115)	(0.117)	(0.118)
Constant	1.837***	1.678***	1.734***	1.765***	1.431***
	(0.112)	(0.106)	(0.110)	(0.113)	(0.098)
Observations	113	125	117	117	152
Log Likelihood	-331.638	-349.242	-332.633	-335.539	-393.299
Akaike Inf. Crit.	673.276	706.485	675.265	679.077	796.598

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Assessing model fit

For negative binomial models, the Akaike information criterion (AIC) offers one of the simplest means for comparing model fit. Table C3 adds our main explanatory variable to base model to assess fit. Revolutionary events produces a lower AIC when added to the base model, which means the variable improves the model fit.

Table C3. Comparing model fit

	(1)	(2)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)		0.388***
		(0.100)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)	0.188	0.153
	(0.103)	(0.096)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)	−0.168	−0.183
	(0.107)	(0.098)
FSLN vote share (2006)	−0.547***	−0.618***
	(0.101)	(0.097)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)	0.140	0.164
	(0.101)	(0.094)
Facebook use (2013–2017)	0.075	0.121
	(0.103)	(0.095)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)	0.046	0.147
	(0.106)	(0.099)
Distance from capital	−0.519***	−0.351***
	(0.112)	(0.103)
log Population (2018)	0.817***	0.645***
	(0.100)	(0.099)
Constant	1.681***	1.639***
	(0.097)	(0.089)
Observations	104	104
Log Likelihood	-290.919	-284.329
Akaike Inf. Crit.	599.839	588.658
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

Mixed-effects logistic regressions

To assess whether our results our robust to alternate specifications, we ran mixed effects logistic regressions with the municipality-day as unit of analysis and date as a random effect. This approach accounts for protest variation over time (for example, accounting for greater likelihood of protests across Nicaragua on days after state violence, or on declared national marches). We present the results in Table C4 with standardized coefficients. These analyses support our main findings, that 1970s revolutionary events predict protest events in 2018. They also produce support for the role played by networks (both online and off). Tellingly, both left ideology and high approval rating for Daniel Ortega are associated with *more* anti-Ortega protests, suggesting

that neither ideological opposition to Sandinismo nor pre-existing grievances explain protest events.

Table C4: Municipal-day determinants of protests and tranques (mixed effects)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	1.020***				1.116***
	(0.079)				(0.098)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.399***			0.473***
		(0.097)			(0.111)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.054			−0.173
		(0.097)			(0.115)
Corruption (2016–2017)			0.109		
			(0.088)		
FSLN vote share (2006)				−1.056***	−1.489***
				(0.094)	(0.114)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)				0.275**	0.269**
				(0.095)	(0.100)
Facebook use (2013–2017)				0.530***	0.347***
				(0.085)	(0.097)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.544***	0.637***
				(0.103)	(0.109)
Distance from capital					−0.628***
					(0.111)
log Population (2018)	2.049***	2.750***	2.798***	2.839***	2.166***
	(0.090)	(0.093)	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.116)
Constant	−4.984***	−4.981***	−4.992***	−5.172***	−5.387***
	(0.246)	(0.247)	(0.255)	(0.263)	(0.276)
Observations	17,748	14,500	10,324	12,180	12,064
Log Likelihood	-2,540.039	-2,374.588	-1,957.572	-2,119.094	-1,991.098
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,088.078	4,759.176	3,923.143	4,252.188	4,004.196
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	5,119.214	4,797.086	3,952.112	4,304.041	4,085.574
Note:					*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table C5 reproduces this analysis with department (a Nicaraguan geographical unit similar to state or province) as a random effect instead of date. The results are robust to this alternate specification.

Table C5: Department random effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	0.651***				0.807***
	(0.089)				(0.103)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.274**			0.337**
		(0.095)			(0.106)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.146			−0.128
		(0.096)			(0.108)
Corruption (2016–2017)			0.155		
			(0.101)		
FSLN vote share (2006)				−1.093***	−1.194***
				(0.109)	(0.116)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)				0.199	0.260*
				(0.103)	(0.104)
Facebook use (2013–2017)				0.262**	0.380***
				(0.100)	(0.102)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.145	0.320**
				(0.108)	(0.110)
Distance from capital					−0.558***
					(0.161)
log Population (2018)	1.719***	2.279***	2.255***	2.332***	1.569***
	(0.096)	(0.084)	(0.097)	(0.101)	(0.116)
Constant	−3.236***	−3.258***	−3.314***	−3.352***	−3.359***
	(0.109)	(0.130)	(0.161)	(0.127)	(0.086)
Observations	17,748	14,500	10,324	12,180	12,064
Log Likelihood	-3,364.523	-3,094.180	-2,536.502	-2,795.251	-2,743.332
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,737.046	6,198.360	5,081.004	5,604.502	5,508.665
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	6,768.182	6,236.269	5,109.973	5,656.355	5,590.043
Note:					*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table C6 examines alternative explanations (ideology, economic grievances, Color Revolution factors, networks, and geography) using mixed effects logistic regressions with date as a random effect once more. These analyses further provide evidence that networks are associated with protest events, and suggest a possible relative deprivation explanation: protests were more likely

in wealthy municipalities where Latinobarómetro respondents expressed lower personal economic optimism. Other explanations are not well-supported in these analyses.

Table C6: Alternative explanations of protests and tranques (mixed effects logistic regression)

	Ideology	Economy	Color Revolution	Networks	Geography
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Would vote for FSLN (2013–2017)	0.183				
	(0.100)				
Left-leaning (2013–2017)	0.237**				
	(0.088)				
Wealth unfairly distributed (2013–2017)	−0.121				
	(0.106)				
Personal economic optimism (2013–2017)		−0.337***			
		(0.094)			
Poverty rate (2005)		−1.012***			
		(0.082)			
Democratic satisfaction (2013–2017)			0.205*		
			(0.091)		
Youth ratio (2005)			−0.957***		
			(0.087)		
Facebook use (2013–2017)			−0.026	0.371***	
			(0.089)	(0.080)	
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.442***	
				(0.094)	
Number of universities					0.651***
					(0.097)
Distance from capital					−0.914***
					(0.097)
Percent urban (2018)					0.462***
					(0.087)
log Population (2018)	2.713***	2.575***	2.665***	2.748***	1.845***
	(0.096)	(0.093)	(0.101)	(0.099)	(0.105)
Constant	−4.939***	−5.115***	−5.141***	−5.014***	−5.714***
	(0.246)	(0.260)	(0.265)	(0.252)	(0.379)
Observations	13,108	14,500	13,572	13,572	17,632
Log Likelihood	-2,286.008	-2,297.932	-2,220.600	-2,278.735	-2,464.711
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,584.017	4,605.865	4,453.201	4,567.470	4,941.421
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	4,628.902	4,643.774	4,498.296	4,605.049	4,988.086

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Two week sample

We theorize that historical framing helps explain the onset of sudden mass participation in nonviolent civil resistance. It is therefore especially important that our variables explain protest during the earliest stages of mobilization -- as time passes, other logics of mobilization may come to replace it. To test this assumption, we reproduce our mixed effects models (with date as a random effect) on a subset of our events dataset restricted to the first two weeks of protests (April 18, 2018 to May 2, 2018). As Table C7 shows, our results hold, especially for Revolutionary events. Both MRS vote share and FSLN vote share fail to reach significance in the

full model, which most likely reflects the much smaller sample size of these regressions. However, it may also suggest that vote share proxies each party's local organizational structures, and these were activated over time to encourage or discourage protest. The first author, who was embedded with an FSLN-affiliated family at the time, witnessed the municipal party organization in Tola, Rivas begin to mobilize supporters approximately two weeks after the beginning of anti-FSLN protests.

Table C7: Protest events in the first two weeks (April 18, 2018 to May 2, 2018)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	2.340***		1.200***
	(0.292)		(0.351)
MRS vote share (2006)	0.705***		0.119
	(0.204)		(0.282)
FSLN vote share (2006)			−0.732
			(0.378)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		1.472***	1.505**
		(0.441)	(0.496)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		0.348	0.244
		(0.385)	(0.391)
log Population (2018)		5.043***	4.034***
		(0.435)	(0.504)
Constant	−4.295***	−5.723***	−5.717***
	(0.351)	(0.535)	(0.561)
Observations	2,142	1,750	1,750
Log Likelihood	-293.407	-219.918	-208.130
Akaike Inf. Crit.	594.814	449.836	432.260
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	617.492	477.173	475.999
Note:			*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Binary revolutionary events variable

In the regression included in the main text in Table 1, we assumed that municipalities whose contentious events began earlier in the 1978-1979 Sandinista Revolution would have stronger local historical memory of the Revolution. We base this assumption on three arguments: 1) municipalities with earlier collective action likely sympathized more, on average, with revolutionary action; 2) these municipalities experienced insurrection and state repression for a longer period of time, with the earliest municipalities (like Masaya and León) experiencing 16 months of insurrection, while municipalities that revolted during the final insurrection experienced only one or two months; and 3) municipalities that revolted earlier were often

particularly associated with the Revolution in popular historical memory--thus, Monimbó was memorialized in the Carlos Mejía Godoy song "Vivirás Monimbó," León became known as "The Cradle of the Revolution" (and became seat of the Museum of the Revolution), and Estelí earned the sobriquet "Three Times Heroic Estelí" for its participation in all three protest waves.

To test this assumption and reinforce evidence that the strength of historical local memory mattered for the geographical diffusion of protest in 2018, we re-ran the main (negative binomial) regressions with Revolutionary events coded as a binary, instead of ordinal, variable. The results in Table C7 show that the variable, while still statistically significant, is far less substantively significant in predicting the diffusion of protest. The models also exhibit worse fit: the AIC of Model 1 is 817.597 with the binary variable, instead of 811.752 for the ordinal variable. This analysis shows that the timing and length of a municipality's insurrectionary activities from 1978 to 1979 help predict contentious events in 2018.

Table C8: Revolutionary events as a binary variable

	(1)	(2)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	0.220*	0.295**
	(0.111)	(0.101)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.170
		(0.099)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.164
		(0.103)
Corruption (2016–2017)		−0.617***
		(0.102)
FSLN vote share (2006)		0.117
		(0.099)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)		0.108
		(0.103)
Facebook use (2013–2017)		0.172
		(0.098)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)		−0.442***
		(0.106)
Distance from capital	0.736***	0.744***
	(0.112)	(0.099)
log Population (2018)	1.535***	1.651***
	(0.106)	(0.093)
Observations	153	104
Log Likelihood	-405.799	-287.090
Akaike Inf. Crit.	817.597	594.181
Note:	*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001	

Fixed effects models

Earlier we presented multilevel models with date as a random effect. This is based on the assumption that date random effects would capture otherwise unexplained (and extraneous to our purposes) national-level daily variation: general calls for marches on a certain day, backfire protests against regime violence the day before, etc. We loosen this assumption here by running a simple logistic regression without random effects. Table C9 shows that our results are robust to this specification.

Table C9. Fixed effects logistic regression

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Revolutionary events (1977–1979)	0.806***				0.862***
	(0.071)				(0.086)
Ortega approval rating (2013–2017)		0.329***			0.366***
		(0.090)			(0.101)
Economy approval rating (2013–2017)		−0.036			−0.102
		(0.089)			(0.103)
Corruption (2016–2017)			0.092		
			(0.079)		
FSLN vote share (2006)				−0.846***	−1.186***
				(0.085)	(0.101)
Left-leaning (2013–2017)				0.231**	0.217*
				(0.087)	(0.089)
Facebook use (2013–2017)				0.407***	0.268**
				(0.077)	(0.088)
Inter-personal trust (2013–2017)				0.410***	0.485***
				(0.093)	(0.099)
Distance from capital					−0.444***
					(0.100)
log Population (2018)	1.627***	2.188***	2.208***	2.213***	1.613***
	(0.077)	(0.076)	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.096)
time	−0.023***	−0.023***	−0.024***	−0.024***	−0.024***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	−2.138***	−2.159***	−2.091***	−2.177***	−2.183***
	(0.061)	(0.065)	(0.074)	(0.071)	(0.072)
Observations	17,748	14,500	10,324	12,180	12,064
Log Likelihood	-3,185.391	-2,951.937	-2,403.174	-2,641.137	-2,542.071
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,378.783	5,913.874	4,814.347	5,296.274	5,106.142

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001