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TAKING RISKS

*Feminist Activism
and Research
in the Americas*

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In memory of my beloved father, Barry (1945–2001)

RURAL FEMINISM AND REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

Voices of the Compañeras

SHELLY GRABE

And I think, now, the women, knowing that they are their own property holders, they are starting to feel that they decide how to run their farm, they make the decisions over their bodies, or any other decisions.

—Juana Delia Rojas, board member of
Xochitl Acalt, a rural women's center

The Women's Autonomous Movement in Nicaragua

The Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres (Autonomous Women's Movement) in Nicaragua emerged, like many other Latin American social movements in the 1970s and 1980s in the context of dictatorial regimes, as a marginalized and restricted movement (Alvarez 1990; Shayne 2004). It is now characterized as expansive and diverse, with feminist agendas being found in multiple sectors (e.g., government, labor, health, agriculture). The objective of this chapter is to better understand how gender has been negotiated within the agricultural sector of the *movimiento* and how these negotiations have been related to processes surrounding neoliberalization. Foremost feminist scholars have highlighted that although rural women have always been more oppressed than their counterparts, organization among rural women in Latin America has generally been low (Deere and León 1987; Stephen

1997). Nicaragua is an exception to this rule. In Nicaragua, a combination of oppressive conditions and new channels for participation, led to the rise of a mobilized rural feminism, a feminism theorized and practiced by rural women that takes into account the distinct needs of rural women.

During its more than forty-year control in Nicaragua, the Somoza dictatorship had what was considered the most heavily U.S.-trained military establishment in Latin America, and Somoza's family owned more than 20 percent of Nicaraguan land and businesses (Walker 1985). The *Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres* was, in part, birthed out of the Sandinista Revolution² when many women joined the massive national uprising in the 1970s in an effort to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship (Kampwirth 2004). Women's participation in the Revolution was considered greater than nearly any other revolution during the time: women made up approximately 30 percent of the FSLN's combat forces, and after the overthrow several women were appointed to senior positions in the newly established ministries (Kampwirth 1996; Molyneux 1985). Despite the fact that women were involved in nearly every aspect of the insurrection and played a crucial role in weathering the Reagan-imposed trade embargo and the U.S.-backed contra war in the 1980s, feminist concerns of patriarchy and male privilege were largely marginalized during the Revolution (Kampwirth 2004; Molyneux 1985). As a result, women gradually began to move beyond adherence to party directives (made by the male-dominated leadership of the FSLN) and to formulate their own agendas based on the needs and interests of women (Criquillón 1995; Randall 1994).

A country grown tired of war and U.S. programs of economic strangulation voted out the Sandinistas in the elections held in 1990. Although the Sandinistas fell short of eradicating gender inequality, the new U.S.-backed Chamorro administration actively promoted neoliberal policies that resulted in dramatic cutbacks to public services, which disproportionately impacted women. The economic reforms and structural adjustments aimed at privileging foreign investment and the international economy reflected an era characterized explicitly by new policies driven largely by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The gender consequences of this shift throughout the world were enormous. For example, it has been widely documented that as a consequence of the structural adjustment programs there has been an increase in women's unpaid labor in the home and a feminization of low-paid service labor (see for example, Desai 2002).

Nevertheless, in Nicaragua, ten years of revolutionary government left a legacy of political mobilization and a network of organized women. Both would play a role in shaping the birth of a women's social

movement that coordinated efforts in various sectors to address the challenges stemming from global economic restructuring. By 1992 Nicaragua had the largest, most pluralistic, and most autonomous feminist movement in Central America (Kampwirth 1996).³ This plurality can be explained, in part, because a large number of women from all social classes had joined the Revolution. Given that the mobilization and cooperation of women from the upper and middle classes, university students, and landless peasants were a crucial part of the efforts that eventually overthrew the Somoza regime, the women's movement emerged out of a "multiclass revolutionary coalition" (Kampwirth 2002). Moreover, because the structural adjustments that accompanied the new administration in 1990 created consequences that cut across sectors and classes (for example, threats to health care, land reform, etc.), cross-class and urban-rural alliances remained critical to the viability of an autonomous women's movement. These alliances are reflected in a slogan the *Movimiento* began using to characterize themselves in 1992: *Diverse but United* (Randall 1994).

The agricultural emphasis in the *Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres* began during the Revolution when a number of steps were taken to remove institutional obstacles that traditionally prevented women from gaining access to land and other natural resources. For example, the Agrarian Reform Laws of the 1980s recognized equal rights for both genders and made it possible for women to become direct beneficiaries of land allocation. In 1987, Nicaragua adopted a new national constitution that explicitly granted women and men equal rights in land ownership. Moreover, the *Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo* (Association of Rural Workers; ATC), the principal FSLN labor organization for farmers founded in 1978, was considered at the cutting edge of feminist organizing within the workplace. Over the course of the 1980s the membership of the ATC became increasingly female, as many men left their agricultural positions to join the contra war, and a women's secretariat within the ATC was formed in 1986 (Kampwirth 1996). The new secretariat's goal was to raise agricultural workers' consciousness through workshops on judicial, union, and gender rights. Despite these advances, data from the rural titling office indicate that between 1979 and 1989 women accounted for only 8–10 percent of beneficiaries under the agrarian reform. The small gains made during the 1980s were further eroded under the neoliberal agrarian legislation of the 1990s. By the early 1990s the former state-oriented model of agrarian reform had been discredited in favor of counterreforms that focused on privatization, or the individualization of land rights, that was thought to be more conducive to profit-maximizing the export-oriented agriculture sector (Deere and León 2001).

The gender consequences of this shift were reflected in the feminization of agricultural labor coupled with the gap between women's and men's property rights (Deere 2009). However, until the publication of Deere and León's (2001) book *Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America*, virtually no attention had been given to the gendered implications of neoliberal reform in agriculture.

The change in focus from a revolutionary state that took into account agricultural workers' rights and livelihoods to a market-based model of counterreform raises the questions: what has happened in terms of rural women's land rights under neoliberalism and how, in the context of these changes, is gender being negotiated. Despite much that has been written about the cultural obstacles women experience, there has been little empirical data collected to flesh out the mechanisms by which women's participation operates in the agricultural sector. This chapter is, in part, about the way the agricultural sector within the women's social movement in Nicaragua was birthed out of a political climate antagonistic to progressive collective voices. It seeks to chronicle how the efforts and experiences of social movement actors function when the political climate and strategies of the powerful political actors are hostile. Two women tell their stories of triumph in this chapter. Although both women were involved in the Revolution, they each articulated an eventual need to move beyond the FSLN party. In their stories they demonstrate how their resistance led to a feminist praxis that allowed them to transform existing social structures in order to create spaces for rural women to mobilize and have their rights recognized.

Bridging Activism and Academic Research: My Story

As researchers, we inevitably bring our own stories to bear on the research process (White and Dotson 2010). From the outset I realized that my interest in the women's social movement in Nicaragua was partly about my own experience and interests as a woman from a working-class background. It was also driven by my desire to focus on women's communities as sources of feminist protest and as sites where women negotiate counternarratives that challenge dominant power structures. My initial exposure to feminism occurred through locating feminist texts in used bookstores and reading authors such as Nawal El Saldawi and bell hooks, whose critical perspectives pointed me in unforeseen directions that challenged my silence. Their perspectives encouraged me to use my position to give voice to those who had been severely marginalized, especially those marginalized by the

involvement of my own government. I went from turning pages in the shelter of the bookstore, to rapidly moving those conversations into my life and work. I had already finished graduate school, and, as a research psychologist, my shifting lens was repeatedly labeled "radical" within academia. With the label came the suggestion that my new interests bordered on irreverent. As a result, I increasingly found my home and my people in the activist community, and like other women participating in social movement research, it seemed as though the work I was to become involved in chose me, rather than me choosing it (Shayne 2009; Taylor 1998).

A year after receiving my PhD in psychology I became involved in local community organizing surrounding women's rights. I co-organized events with another community member who was the director of an organization that was part of a social movement that aimed to end the U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua in the 1980s. Despite the fact that Nicaragua had experienced over a century of U.S. intervention and interference, I knew embarrassingly little about it. The director of the organization, Carlos Arenas, invited me to accompany him on a social delegation to Nicaragua that was to be focused on women's empowerment. Although I was strongly committed to women's issues and involved in local community activism, the trip seemed a bit far afield from my focus as a psychologist, and I suspected, given my lack of knowledge, that it was perhaps even inappropriate that I be part of the delegation. Carlos convinced me otherwise.

During my first trip to Nicaragua in 2005 we visited several key women's rural organizations that were working to empower women. One of the organizations, Xochitl Acalt, facilitated rural women's access to land as a means to alter structural gender inequities in a manner that would transform women's subordination. Both the leaders and the members of the organization took countless risks to boldly and brazenly challenge gender norms, with seemingly incredible effectiveness. Despite the fact that our conversations with each other included "solidarity" language, I had yet to contribute anything substantive to the dialogue. However, as a social scientist, I could not help but inquire whether research might play a role in their efforts toward social justice. A determinedly emphatic response indicated that, yes, being able to empirically demonstrate the efficacy of the programs being administered could afford their efforts more credibility with people in positions of power.

I returned to the States to inform a senior (feminist) colleague that I aimed to pursue collaborative research with a feminist organization in Nicaragua that was engaging in radical and, I believed, demonstrable change. She looked bewildered and asked, "Have you some forgotten

Peace Corps dream?" The question was followed with some suggestion that I take care lest I burn my academic bridges. To be fair, we were located in a mainstream, quantitative, R1 environment where using the f word (i.e., feminism) positioned one in an "alternative voices" box. However, I remained certain I could uphold the standards of my discipline and develop a sound research partnership with the leaders of the Nicaraguan organization. I began writing grants and pursued funding to run a quasiexperimental study examining the effects of land ownership on women's empowerment and receipt of violence.⁴ In planning the research, I was candid with my collaborators at Xochitl Acalt that I knew little of Latin American politics, I was not trained as an international field researcher, and that I could not speak Spanish. Within academia, these disclaimers would often be read as incompetence. However, my collaborators noted astutely that *they* were, of course, the experts in these areas of knowledge. We thus began a longer-term collaboration and have since collected and disseminated data, with support from the National Science Foundation, demonstrating that landowning not only empowers women, but reduces their receipt of psychological and physical violence (Grabe 2010; 2012; Grabe and Arenas 2009; Grose and Grabe, forthcoming).

Over time I became increasingly committed to solidarity and traveled with Witness for Peace to learn more about U.S. interventions in Latin American foreign policy, spent a summer in Central America taking language classes, and visited other parts of revolutionary Latin America to increase my breadth of knowledge. Although a common and justified concern with transnational work is that Western feminists are deploying a universal Western feminism, I entered into these relationships with no formal training in feminism and rather, became a student of activists who have devoted their lives to social change. In doing so, I learned a women of color, decolonial, rural feminism that largely influences most of the work I do today. I did also, of course, scurry to familiarize myself with relevant literatures informed by sociology, economics, and feminist studies (e.g., Agarwal 1994; Connell 1987; Kabeer 1999; Naples and Desai 2002).

Years later, after having secured a position as an assistant professor at the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) where scholar-activist collaborations are well supported, I returned to Nicaragua to conduct a project documenting the life stories of several key feminist leaders in the Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres. Although my collaboration with Xochitl Acalt was a community-driven feminist project that aimed to use research toward liberatory processes, I was also motivated to document the voices behind the broader movimiento autónomo—a multisector, coordinated mobilization of women that

had weathered the unremitting power differentials characterized by patriarchy and capitalism. Although work of a similar nature surrounding the role of women in the Revolution and the birth of the women's movement had already been conducted by Margaret Randall (1981; 1994), many years had passed, each creating an ever more marginalizing situation for women due, in part, to the political conservatives in power. I knew documenting the experience of social movement actors in this context would demand a methodology different than the large-scale survey designs and quantitative analyses that I had mastered and were more widely respected within my discipline. In this case, feminist thinking and practice would require eliminating the boundaries of division that privilege dominant forms of knowledge building, boundaries that mark who can be a knower and what can be known (Hesse-Biber 2007). In short, it was clear to me that the women needed to tell their own stories.

Accessing the Stories

The oral history method, which allows women to describe their experiences on their own terms, was used to elicit the women's stories. In this case, women were invited to be narrators, to tell stories about biographical particulars that were meaningful to them. In the pursuit of knowledge aimed at creating social justice, women's own voices have the potential to document how women are enacting transformation, rather than having the researcher abstractly define or quantify it. Mohanty (2003) has argued that understanding struggles of justice must involve illuminating "Third World women's" engagement with feminism and resistance to oppressive regimes in relation to states and histories of imperialism. To best understand these processes of resistance and oppression, the current study privileges an activist standpoint, which can be conceived as a transformative exploration of activists' experiences of resistance to oppression (Maddison and Shaw 2007). *Testimonio*, in particular, may be used to refer to a type of oral history or life story that is an explicitly political narrative that describes and resists oppression (Chase 2003). *Testimonio* has been widely used with Latin American activists involved in revolutionary movements (Golden 1991; Maloof 1999; Menchú 1984; Stephen 1997; Randall 1981; 1994; Tula and Stephen 1994). Privileging an activist standpoint through *testimonio* can bring into focus a greater range of activity, the invisible and often undocumented activity that takes place within social movements, yet without which no publicly visible movement would exist (Maddison and Shaw 2007).

Because an underlying goal of activist research is a reconfiguration of knowledge production that shifts power and control into the hands of the oppressed or marginalized (Fals-Borda 1985; Sandoval 2000), I relied heavily on Carlos Arenas and his years of solidarity with the Movimiento Autónomo to construct a list of interviewees. Carlos, in collaboration with the elected representative of the Movimiento Autónomo, Juanita Jiménez, arranged interviews with eighteen key women leaders in Nicaragua. This secured me interviews with women to whom I most certainly would not otherwise have had access and without whom the story of women's resistance in Nicaragua could not adequately be told. These women reflected various positions and sectors and included former guerrilla commanders during the Revolution, congresswomen, the director of the national human rights center, grassroots organizers, journalists, and professors. I set up a small team that included an extraordinary driver and assistant, a videographer, and a U.S. translator who actively participates in solidarity work with rural feminists in Nicaragua.

To facilitate rapport and ease, the interviews were scheduled in a location of the woman's choosing. Sometimes this was her home; sometimes it was her office. All of the interviews were preceded by a conversation that explained how the woman's story might be used, and each was given a list of the other interviewees. The larger project aims to reproduce the stories as text in a manner similar to the method used by Margaret Randall (1981; 1994) and to archive a video recording and transcript of the interview with the Global Feminisms Project⁵ at the University of Michigan. All of the women agreed enthusiastically to have their stories reproduced.

The interviews, which occurred through simultaneous translation, lasted approximately an hour and were audio and video recorded. A loosely structured set of questions guided each interview, intended simply to facilitate the progression of the woman's story. The objective was to allow each woman to elaborate on her experience, which was particularly important with this sample, in part because the women were more accustomed to being spokespersons for the larger social movement and had vastly less experience talking about their personal histories.

Of the eighteen women interviewed, three were participants in the agricultural sector. Because of space limitations, only two of their three life stories will be reproduced here. The third woman, Anita del Socorro Chavez Tursio, offered a powerful *testimonio* of her experience as a beneficiary, and later board member, of the Xochitl Acalt women's center. The other two, Martha Heriberta Valle and Diana Martínez, were both active participants in the Revolution, and each later came

to mobilize rural women with a focus on land access and production. As will be seen in each woman's story, the interviewees elicited specific social identities and contexts in which gender issues were intertwined with their relationships to land and rural production. Despite being from vastly different social class backgrounds, both women demonstrate a resistance to gender inequalities that manifests in their agency. In their life stories, we can examine how the women developed an oppositional consciousness—or a rhetoric of resistance—that they employed when countering patriarchal and capitalist struggles surrounding land (Sandoval 2000). As Chela Sandoval highlights in her analysis of U.S. Third World women's activism, oppositional consciousness can be viewed as a methodology of the oppressed and a technology for social transformation. As we will read in these women's stories, an oppositional consciousness surfaces early for both of these women, and each of them uses it to negotiate injustices in gender and agriculture, thereby historically influencing the struggle for women's land rights. In the interest of space each interview was reduced by nearly a third of its original length.

The Risk-Takers

Martha Heriberta Valle

Martha is the founder and current president of Federación Agropecuaria de Cooperativas de Mujeres Productoras del Campo de Nicaragua (Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Rural Women Producers of Nicaragua, FEMUPROCAN), a women-run agricultural cooperative that helps women in poor rural regions organize to grow and sell crops sustainably. Her office, where the interview was conducted, is located in Managua off of a busy and loud street. Martha and her long-time coworker and vice-president of FEMUPROCAN, Matilde Rocha, greeted us together. Martha and Matilde were familiar with research processes because they had been previously interviewed by economist Carmen Diana Deere regarding the role of their organization in rural social movements. I explained that the current project was distinct in that it focused on individual life history, rather than on their organization. Immediately they both smiled and pointed at the other indicating she was the one who should be interviewed for the oral history. Even without knowing they had worked together for over twenty years, the level of respect and warmth between the two women was evident. After a brief discussion it was agreed that Martha would be interviewed for the oral history project, and Matilde would be interviewed to gain a

better understanding of the role of the FEMUPROCAN in the broader movement.

Despite her humility, Martha has been involved in the cooperative land movement since its start in the 1980s, helped found the Sandinista-affiliated Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (National Union of Farmers and Cattlemen; UNAG), and is also the current president of del Consejo Nacional de Cooperativas (the National Council of Cooperatives). Martha's early experiences of marginalization and illiteracy, having come from a large peasant family in the central region of Nicaragua, led to her participation in the Revolution and to her sustained commitment to justice for rural women. She tells a story of personal triumph and dedication to change here:

SG: Martha, I know you're probably more used to talking about your organization, but I'd actually like to start the interview today talking about you and asking you some questions about your own history.

M: There are times when talking about yourself is difficult, but I'm going to give it all I've got . . . I was born in a community where there weren't schools, and my parents had fourteen children. Of them, I was the first daughter. We didn't have potable water; we didn't have electric lights; we would use oil lamps for light. Eh the whole family worked; there were 31 of us in the house. My two parents were illiterate, and the whole family was illiterate. . . . In *La Montaña* we had to go eight hours on mule with the *café* production to sell in to the department of Matagalpa. In this world, men and women both worked. This is how we were able to be efficient producers of something. But we never had shoes.

SG: How old were you when you started working in the fields with your family?

M: At age eight I was the tortilla maker, and I went to the orchard to plant with an oxen *yunta*. We did this together as a family. It gave us the great virtue of being efficient and at the same time broke with the traditional structure. What are the traditional structures in the country? That the girls don't work. But my father said that all of us had to work, so all of us could have goods. I—this virtue that God gave me and that my father taught is the one that gave me the strength to fight from the time I was very young until today. . . . With the triumph of the Revolution, the first thing I did was study in adult education classes. And there I completed sixth grade, I began secondary school,⁶ and I

completed an agronomy technical certificate, already having three children.

SG: How old were you when you did that?

M: I started at age twenty-seven.⁷ That's why I believe that humans aren't defeated when we have this *désire* to grow and to serve. . . . If there is something that I have always valued it's that my father didn't differentiate—despite not knowing the term feminism—the different gender roles. We did it out of a real necessity, and he was proud because all us girls produced results equal to those of the boys. When I was thirteen, my father told me—I had asked him for a horse that was very pretty, a beastly horse—and he told me, "I'll give it to you if you break him." So I tell him, "He'll throw me off." "No," he tells me, "If you—look, I'll pull him—if you see that he's going to throw you, take this tamer, this bridle, and put it on, restrain him, because you aren't going to let yourself be hit by anybody." And this stuck with me; it stayed recorded in me because it was during my adolescence, and I think this gave me a lot of strength . . . When I was—I got married when I was sixteen, but I also started getting involved in the movements at the farming level. And we began to work for the communities.

SG: What kind of strategies were you using at the time to organize people in rural areas?

M: Well, in the first place, someone has to motivate you, come—peers come to you, and they tell you that things aren't going well; you're feeling them too. In that moment, it wasn't just anyone who risked doing that. This was a death sentence then, right. But the reality is that we saw that the country worked with an attitude as if we were animals; they went by, and if they knew that there was a *guerrilla*⁸ there, then they would sweep the area, the area would be bombed. You have to start by collaborating and you begin entering into the process. I liked it because it was a struggle, and more than the motto that we had, it was only workers and peasants that made it to the end, right.

But the dream that I had was that one day the country would have light, would have water. But also, those challenges come from—once when I was an adolescent, when I was an adolescent I got on a bus with my grandmother. I was already about fourteen, almost a young lady, right, but

I was carrying a sack with the hens' eggs, the milk curds, to sell in the city, right. But I got on the bus, and when I got on there was a woman with nice glasses, and she looked at me, and she covered her nose, and I began to cry. Because dirty peasants had gotten on, right, and so then she did that, and I just cried. I grabbed my grandmother, but I told her, "I promise you, I promise you that I am going to fight so that one day I can be in power and transform." I didn't say transform because peasants don't say transform, but I said this: "One day I will change this, so they don't look at us like animals."

So then, battles don't come so easily, but they come within these feelings, right. So then what it is to only create values of hard work, of a vision, where are you going to focus? We didn't say vision, we only said this, "We want to live well, have food, that we have enough food, never to worry about shoes." I put on shoes [for the first time] when I was fourteen years old. When the Revolution happened, I began to study, I finished sixth grade, I finished secondary school, and I began to study for a technical degree in agronomy. I already had children. I completed it at age thirty-six, right. A two- or three-year degree . . . This gave me strength, and I was able to participate in the first movement that happened here in Nicaragua in the decade of seventy-nine,⁹ the peasant movement. I'm part of it at the—at the regional level.

SG: Can you tell us a little bit about what you were doing right after the Revolution?

M: I started at the ATC [Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo (Association of Rural Workers)], it was the organization that worked, worked underground, and I started with the triumph, that's where we began to organize. . . . The ATC worked with the revolutionary movement of the Sandinista Front. It started because when the workers organized, their rights were violated. And it was—the ATC was from the workers in the unions. The first meeting was December 14 of 1979. In eighty-one we created the peasant organization that is called the Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos.¹⁰ . . . So then I became the first provincial president of this *campesina*¹¹ movement. They elected me. I don't know why.

SG: As a woman.

M: Yes, but this woman had won, like I said—what my father left me, he didn't leave me an inheritance. He left me strength, this vision that we also could, right. . . . He told me that he was teaching me so that a man or my husband wouldn't hit me. You have to be strong. And he told me a very important slogan. He told me: The poor and women cross the same paths. But when we see them, he tells me, among those who have money and those that don't, at the end everyone ends up in the same bag, but the women suffer more, he tells me. You have to defend yourself because you're my daughter, and I adore you; you are going to defend yourself . . .

SG: Were you treated differently as a woman working for this organization?

M: Yes, of course. The elements of work contradict those of the culture. But when I saw this—there was a colleague with a lot of passion and knowledge about production; he was elected (as president of the organization). Well, they say he won, but well the truth is that I had two more votes than him, but the agreement was, you go. I want the vice presidency because I want to work on a topic that I haven't worked on, and that was to work with *campesina* women because in the 27,000 people we had, we had 819 women. And these women only participated—but not actively—it was like "oh we need to have women" so they would bring women. And sometimes they didn't even know why they were there. They [co-workers] would say to me: "So? We have women here, there are women and men here in the organization." Yes but the women don't make decisions, they don't plan, and they sure aren't the presidents of the cooperative. They are the wives of the members. And when they bring them, that's when we have women. Then that is where we have to make our fight.

. . . So while I was there, I come and I plant the idea that it's necessary to organize women in collectives. They tell me, "You're crazy; that's divisive." I tell them, but this isn't a big deal—it's so that they identify [with the organization] and learn to be coordinators, presidents, secretaries, and it's very important. So then they say, "Well, you'll have to take it to UNAG's national conference." We proposed—it was four, eight women who brought this up, right. These women proposed that was necessary that the organization's

planning and statutes state that women should also participate in the cooperative movement. I never will forget the paragraph that says—the participation—it said “participation of *campesina* women in UNAG”—that was it, the rest was a document like this, but that’s all it said. . . . So then they come and say to me, one of them says, “C’mon let her do that.” The vice president doesn’t have a role so then I am going to make a role with the women.

So I had my first meeting in a co-op, and I talk with the president of the co-op, and I tell him, I want to have a meeting with the women because we want to organize them. Then he told me, “First you organize us, now you came to organize the women, and you come saying that we have the same right.” We’re talking about 1982. Then he comes, and he says, “How is it that women have the same rights? A woman doesn’t have the right to pass out drunk in the street.” “They’ll grab her, tipsy, drunk with liquor.” So I tell him, “You don’t even have the right to pass out drunk in the street either because”—look, I used a vulgar word, but it’s because they respected me, and I told him, “If you pass out, and some ass goes by and rapes you and is that a right? That’s not a right. And it’s also not a right for a woman to pass out in the street. Rights are different. “Rights,” I told him, “are that the woman works equally or that you work equally with her or that she works equally to you, and you work together for the legacy of the *finca*¹² that you have.” I had to use techniques they would understand. I tell him, “For example, if you die tomorrow, and this woman doesn’t know how to work in the *finca*, what does she have to do? Look for another man? Do you want another man to ride your horse? [laughter] That’s it, “Would you like someone to ride your horse?” “Of course not,” they tell me, but I was giving it a double meaning. [laughter] “Well that’s what we want, that now you and your wife both manage. She can decide when she’ll enter into a relationship, but she’s not going to decide to do it because she’s ignorant of how to manage the *finca*.” So these were the methods that I started using because in the country you couldn’t openly have a confrontation. So a member of the executive board stood up and said, “Let her do it.” But this meant let her do it without resources—without resources.

So I began to visit a women’s collective in Matagalpa. . . . So, I’m talking about 1983, and I put a brigade that was called—the first group was María Castilblanco, a *campesina* that was killed by the Guardia [National Guard], while pregnant. Two groups, or three—people like you came to visit us from Holland, from Switzerland, from Spain, from everywhere. So we asked for their collaboration, not money. . . . Then I tell the *compañeras*¹³ that were in the city, “Get the media.” They got the media, and the local media come out with big headlines: “The María Castilblanco Women’s Brigade refuses to leave until the National Farmers’ Union approves the line for women’s work.” The National Committee for the Sandinista Front immediately says they are going to go see those women. And that’s where they promise to have a line and section for women. . . .

SG: What is the vision now? What strategies are you using now?

M: Well, first we have to value the context. . . . At the beginning we initially had to make a federation within the organization. We asked the National Farmers’ Union why they had allowed the men to make a men’s federation, but then why didn’t they want our women’s movement—that had almost twelve thousand women—to make an incorporated women’s federation. They told us that this was divisive. . . . Then they cut off all of our resources, they cut off the projects from our section, they cut off our vehicles, they cut off everything and they left us—they left the women that supported us unemployed, Matilde, Morena, Bertha, all of them, they all end up unemployed. And they took our access to vehicles. They took everything. So we ended up with nothing. So then, I aim for something different; I aim to launch myself into politics. While the others continue the struggle, and I launch myself, and I win at the national level, I win second place of all the deputies in this country. And within the Assembly, right. I win with a percentage of—almost half a million votes. This makes me, that my salary is injected into this federation so that women can go on with that, and we negotiate. . . . With what I made in the Assembly, we rented a house, I bought a car, I bought an air conditioning unit, a computer, and I put it in. I’m saying it clearly because sometimes people don’t know it

because we don't say it. And finally, a little help for the *compañeras* to mobilize. I invested it all in that. I'm a deputy that left [the Assembly] with the same shoes, but I was able to become a deputy . . .

What I do want to make clear is that when we are women with goals, women are more persistent. We are capable. And I think, they say that men don't respect us. How is that? When you are taking power, you are respected, and this is important.

SG: Can you tell me a little bit about your definition of feminism in your work?

M: Look, I think that the processes, the processes—it's that there is some confusion here. Here, when people hear about feminism, they think you're a lesbian, that you're—well they say everything, bisexual, that you're this, that you're that. I interpret feminism as my fight, as an ideology in defense of women, with the different expression that everyone has decided to make theirs.

SG: In your opinion, are there any international policies or international economic policies that impact women in Nicaragua?

M: I think that talking—talking about gender politics, what has happened is that the focus that it had in one decade, the focus it had in another decade, what has changed is the language at the political, economic, and family level. . . . There is still a lot to fight for. And we still lack the application of so many laws that we have that aren't being applied in real life. And global policies are still bound to the media. Here when they talk about women, they talk about the environment—of going to plant a tree. The programs are for vegetable gardening, you understand. They're not of much significance. We must have programs of greater significance or scope, since we women are the ones that drive the world economy. And you ask me why. Because you say that the economy is driven by a corporation, a bank corporation. But that's not how it is, the ones who make the products, all of us little people, that when we come together, we become a corporation . . . There are many women that are secretaries, but they aren't the directors of universities, in the United States, for example, or in other countries. There's only a few of them, you need tweezers to find them, ask Carmen Diana¹⁴ about it.

SG: Can you tell me a little bit about the relationship between scholarship like Carmen Diana's and the activist work you're doing?

M: Look, Carmen Diana has always had a focus on the women's struggle for land acquisition, for women to become empowered, and that is something that I really admire. She's a great woman. . . . She came to share with us here in the country. And we have shared with her because a professional also has to get feedback from the product in order to be a good professional, and it's the informative part. And we give feedback for those concepts that they are focusing on in the world. And there are also a lot of very smart women here, and I think the Revolution gave us a lot of space. It gave us space that we take advantage of, but not very much. Here even though we had the Revolution, hardly 13 percent of people obtained land. Right, we didn't accomplish everything. We have to keep fighting, yes . . .

Martha's narrative details the way in which her oppositional consciousness—or the awareness that drove her resistance—becomes enacted within the constraints of powerful social and political relations. The development of her oppositional consciousness is evident when she discusses her personal experiences of poverty and illiteracy. Her recollection of being discriminated against by an affluent woman and the strong messages of equity that she received from her father help illustrate how she became impassioned for justice. Martha's interest in and awareness of the gendered nature of land evolved steadily and becomes apparent through her experience of marginalization within FSLN-affiliated organizations. She details a climate of antagonism for women's interests and how she begins to adopt an explicitly feminist agenda that advocates for the importance of women's access to and control over resources.

Martha's awareness of the structural limitations facing women is demonstrated in her commitment to integrating women into agriculture beyond their role as day laborers, but rather as people who come to the table to make decisions. Her resistance demonstrates the belief that equality cannot be achieved without women's participation. She took countless risks to participate, as a woman, in positions and offices that could be influential in establishing gender equity. In these positions she would confront her male coworkers and insist on the recognition and support of women's rights and cooperatives that valued women as legitimate producers.

Moreover, Martha's discussion of neoliberalism reflects the understanding that power constrains the lives of women around the world and that women need to be in influential positions, where they are involved in decision making and have meaningful access to resources and power. Her reflections on globalization also highlight that many analyses miss the gendered nature of most large-scale economic policies, and she indirectly calls on the international community to engage in action that has a sincere potential for transformative change. Martha's story of triumph reflects how a counternarrative can disrupt the stranglehold of dominant narratives and thereby lead to more democratic processes that encourage social justice.

Diana Martínez

Diana's story similarly reflects how understanding a differential form of consciousness can generate a new form of knowledge and oppositional activity. Coming from a very different social location than Martha, Diana was raised in an upper-middle-class family and attended the private schools of the elite ruling class. However, from a young age she demonstrated an awareness of inequities and a commitment to justice. Like Martha, she was involved in the Revolution, has a history of organizing in rural communities, and developed a sustained focus on the political empowerment of rural women. Like other rural feminists involved with the ATC, in 1995 Diana eventually broke away from the oppressive male leadership and began her own organization to support rural women. She is currently the president of la Fundación Entre Mujeres (Foundation Between Women, FEM), a female-led cooperative of women organized from rural communities to grow and sell fair trade coffee while simultaneously supporting and promoting women's rights. The cooperative is located three hours east of Managua in the department of Estelí where much of the land is devoted to tobacco production and largely controlled by male producers. We met Diana in FEM's office in Estelí for the interview. Before we began I shared with her publications from the collaborative research conducted with Xochitl Acalt, a women's center with which she is greatly familiar. She asked astute questions and expressed interest in collaborative research with rural producers organized with FEM. Given her interest in research, she also demonstrated great enthusiasm for the current project before we began.

SG: Diana, I know you're probably more accustomed to talking about the history of your organization, but I'd like to ask you to start by telling me some of your personal history.

D: Well I was born in 1958 . . . I am the second daughter of an upper-middle-class family. In the first years of my life I studied at the school Purity of Mary. It was a school run by nuns in Managua. . . . And then my family decided to come to Estelí because my father was a banker. In Estelí I enrolled in another nun's school named Our Lady of the Rosary. People from the dominant class (the elite) of Nicaragua studied there. In secondary school, for example, my classmates were the daughters of the Cubans that had settled there after the fall of Batista. There were many people there linked to Somozism.¹⁵ It was a school that serviced the dominant class, one that very few people had access to. And I, well, ever since I was young I think I had noticed a sense of the inequality that existed. For example the way the female workers that were employed in my home were treated. As well as some of the sexual abuses committed against them by my father. And at the time that was the most normal thing in the world.

SG: How old were you when you, when you are remembering this?

D: I was eight at the time. Yes, I also would go to my grandfather's farm in Matagalpa. They had a large coffee farm. And at the age of eight or nine, I would notice the huge gap there was between the workers and the families that lived in the main house . . . I developed a friendship with the female cooks. They lived in very, very bad houses . . . At around thirteen or fourteen years of age I organized my first domestic workers literacy group. It was a group of five women, and we had a little book, a type of book that is known as a *coquito*, and it was used to teach reading. Their bosses, their owners of the house, would let them have these classes with me because I was, uh, me.

SG: What did your parents think of you doing this?

D: Well they had always thought I was a little strange you see. When I was fifteen I had stopped going to mass with them. I had become involved in a revolutionist Christian movement. Here there was a priest who was a great figure in the Revolution; his name was Father Julio César López, he was Colombian . . . I would frequently go with him and lecture about the need to renounce the dictatorship. . . . When I was in middle school things got intense because that is when the FSLN really came to prominence. In the year seventy-six I was already very involved with

the FSLN. Then my parents decided that I should leave Nicaragua, and they took me to go live with my sister in Guatemala. There, in 1977, I finished secondary school in another all girls' school in Guatemala called the School of the Sacred Heart for Young Women. I was really hurt by that decision, the imposition that my parents had put on me, because all of my friends were going into hiding, and there was a very strong consciousness among many of the youth that opposed the dictatorship and were ready to die for the cause of liberating Nicaragua from Somoza.

Then my parents decided that the following year I should study at Rafael Landívar University, which is like a Jesuit school in Guatemala. I was only there for about three months because I then decided for myself to go to the University of San Carlos, which is the national university. I studied political science and sociology. I changed at that school; in reality I became an atheist and Marxist. In January of seventy-nine, I left the university to come back. I flew to Costa Rica so that I could work in an underground hospital in Liberia, where there were forces from the Southern Front until I returned to Nicaragua. . . . A new school in sociology had opened at UCA [*Universidad Centroamericana*, University of Central America], and so I decided to continue my second year of sociology in Managua. And at that moment I had the idea that honestly only the hard workers and field hands would make it to the end. To quote Sandino, "Only after you focus your strength will you attain victory."

From that point on I truly wanted to become a worker. I involved myself in a factory that belonged to Somoza. They called it the textile factory, and I was a driver for a very large machine. In those years I wanted to erase from me the remnants of the petit bourgeois that remained in me and become a worker. . . . contradictory I know. In the end of 1984, I managed to combine my work at the textile with my university work. But it was very difficult because I had to meld two very different worlds . . .

In my fifth year of sociology, I became a research assistant in a very important study called "Women in the Exports in Nicaragua" by Ana Castillo from the Center for Research in Agricultural Reform. . . . It was the first feminist study in Nicaragua from the ATC. . . . Using the results from the study, I attempted to create a political proposal

to organize the women agricultural workers in the ATC. And I stayed working there during the final years of the Revolution in conjunction with Women's Secretariat of the ATC. The ATC represents one of the biggest historical outcomes for rural worlds, for the poorest people of Nicaragua, because the capitalist system and the dictatorship unleashed immense abuses to farm workers. Many people that had farms also had workers in states of absolute exploitation and vulnerability and denial of rights . . . Only the Sandinista Revolution and the ATC could change these situations for the field workers by organizing agricultural unions for groups of producers.

SG: Were there other women involved in the ATC?

D: Oh yes, there were some; there were many women that had shared experience, the horror of having been kicked out of the ATC. Many of the women that had positions that were in favor of women had a falling out with the male directors. Because after . . . well at first they were open to our demands, but then uh, well when issues about equality and power came up the directors would abandon us. You see this happens in all of the corners of the world, and the ATC was no exception. It was a mixed [men and women combined] organization; you see we had all given our all for the Revolution and for the ATC, but those who were our beloved comrades during the war would not compromise on our demands in regards to gender and women. And then the best thing for them to do was expel us from the organization; you see there were various fallings out during the nineties and in the years before the nineties and then they continued of course. And me, well I was kicked out from the ATC in 1993, when I was the director of the women's health program named Pine Flower. It was a clinic that attended to all of the workers from the tobacco fields. And then there was uh, bit of a scandal; they did great harm to me to tell the truth. They accused me of a lot of things that were simply not true; they did it to simply get me out of the ATC . . .

SG: Why do you think they kicked you out?

D: Because, in my opinion, we were the women who had the moral authority to confront and demand from the leaders that they make compromises that would favor women . . . I had acquired a few contacts with organizations in Austria, and those organizations would send letters to the National

ATC and protest over my firing. And that came with a great political cost to the national board, to the ATC. But it was very painful you see; it was one of the biggest crises in my life . . . And from that came the idea to create a foundation between women. The lesson that I learned was that in mixed organizations it was not possible to work towards a real agenda that was in favor of gender equality. I had to construct legitimate organizations, transparent organizations, and create them with the women that it would affect in the process. And without autonomy we would not be able to do anything either; autonomy from the state, from partisanship, from the mixed organizations, and from the directors. Only women could do something on the behalf of women. Therefore I had to create la FEM.

SG: In what year was that?

D: La FEM was founded in 1995. . . . And that the culture of the nineties, ninety-five worsened the conditions, the lives of the people of Nicaragua due to privatization. And because of the structural changes in place brought by Violeta Barrios's¹⁶ government.

SG: Can you explain those structural changes; what was it like during the Sandinistas, and how did Chamorro change those policies?

D: Yes, well clearly we had a great revolutionary state where we had free education, free healthcare, scholarships, social programs, programs for production. A great state that assisted cooperatives, there was childcare available in rural areas, there were collective agreements between the workers and the institutions or between the companies they represented. There were rights that never had existed. But when I saw the changes Violeta was making, the state began to collapse; it was weakened completely, and it left the population in peril. For example healthcare was privatized, education was privatized; we began to feel as if we no longer had a roof over our heads. And uh they began to return land that belonged to Somocistas, and new people would come and claim their land, and other capitalists would emerge to look and take advantage of the privatization of Nicaragua. Then obviously the people from the fields always are left behind; they were ignored even more, and under these circumstances the need to create an alternative form of resistance led to the birth of la FEM.

. . . We decided that this organization would not have professional women, or women from the upper classes as leaders, but rather the women from the communities would be the board of directors. And thus la FEM was born out of the women from the fields. Only I am not from the fields, but I already told them about my past and that in my heart I feel that I am from the fields myself . . . And one of our priorities was to buy land for women. Thinking that without the land we could not make structural changes on the status of subordination. Because we transform subordination, it is essential to be aware of gender. Both are complementary, with no consciousness of gender; the land is useless given to the women, because men make the decisions on the land. But there is no purpose to gender awareness if the women do not have land and the resources necessary to be productive. So we began linking the purchase of land with feminist thinking, becoming aware of how women have been constructed, to deconstruct the model that was the obstacle to leaving the kitchen, and work in the field, to leave the care for home, and to dedicate ourselves to visible work and recognition outside the home. . . . And we have also developed other strategies at the same time to educate adults, health care programs on proper self-care, educate them about parts of the body part of themselves, control of their sex lives, they control their reproduction, and also, uh, now after fifteen years, uh, the possibility that some women can recognize that they have alternate sexual preferences. In the rural world it is rare that women are out as lesbians for example, and this is a huge thing . . .

We have maintained stable strategies that stem from a conversation about the theoretical concepts that are, uh, in the best interests of women, for example the fight against violence, the creation of self-managed organizations. For example, economic power. The creations of cooperatives and having our coffee be a part of the fair trade market . . . These aren't short-term changes; they are long and process driven, profound changes that cannot occur overnight . . . For example, the theme of sexual diversity is a very salient and important issue in the community. Fifteen years ago you never would have thought about those things. . . . And la FEM feels very comfortable in

this space because we can enrich ourselves by learning from the lives of what the women of African descent network from the Caribbean coast. And all these new groups like Pink Flag give a face to the new feminism, the different, uh, a rural feminism, we could not imagine before. One that is different from the feminism of the very, very middle class, high, urban, ally to the upper class, right? That is what had been considered feminism, but this feminism that we defend, that we created, we believe that it is possible is a feminism embodied in the actual processes of life of women . . .

SG: Can you define feminism for me? The way that you mean it?

D: All right, for me feminism is a proposed policy. It is an alternative means for change that is in favor of equality for women. And it is a proposal as well, a concept in relation to the inequality of genders, we cannot believe there to be a feminist that is against abortion, one that is not against sexual violence, one that is against sexual and reproductive rights and liberty for women . . .

SG: You mention during the Revolution that the state was responsible for healthcare. Can you tell me in recent years, what is the role of women's organizations in meeting women's health needs?

D: The government maintains a concept eh, very androcentric concept over the health of women. The priority is the parental rights for women, newborn care, pregnancy. The government wants at all costs to be recognized by the Millennium Goals and take the high rate of maternal death that the country has and make it drop, and they put a lot effort into that. But they limit women from being seen from the state's perspective as an integral subject, where not only the reproductive health counts. Contradictorily, they have made a suspension in the penal code criminalizing medical abortion. Since 2006, the feminist movement has been leading a fight for reinstatement of medical abortion in Nicaragua - one of the things that most threatens the lives and health of women . . . Therefore health conditions are not favorable and there is no chance that things will improve any time soon. So, much of our agenda is based on our fundamental belief in the reinstatement of medical abortion, but we as feminists not only want to be able to perform medical abortion, but elective abortion

as well . . . The country also has, well, the issue of violence to tell the truth. There is a large amount of abused women and violence of all kinds is also a public health problem. And we have an increase in AIDS and HIV cases, and women, groups and groups of women, housewives, who are infected, and no clear policies for prevention, no policies that see us as women, a subject that uh, leading to our lives and our health, because the state has a conception of ourselves as women beggars and, not as subjects of rights.

Diana's story reflects how early encounters with injustice enabled her to create solidarities based not on preconceived identities, but on circumstances that were constraining the lives of laborers and women who worked for her family. The experience she gained, both as a student and as a textile worker, further sharpened her oppositional, feminist consciousness. Like Martha, Diana also experienced political hostility with FSLN-affiliated organizations when confronting the existence of gender inequity. In both cases, there are clear tactics of marginalization discussed, whereby the women responded with resistance. Similar to Martha, in the end Diana's strategies involve creating an organization that is autonomous to any party-affiliation that allows for the mobilization of progressive collective voices committed to the rights of women. The transformative potential of la FEM that Diana describes focuses on increasing the rate of women's share of paid economic activity as rural producers, rather than employing women in low-wage service work. In addition, the evolution of Diana's oppositional consciousness includes a critique of other social inequities (e.g., sexual orientation) and the importance of broadening the women's movement to incorporate the numerous intersections of oppression experienced by women. Finally, Diana's resistance strategies embody solidarity and an affirmation of the grassroots as a site from which claims on women's political organizing should be staked.

Rural Feminism and Oppositional Consciousness

Martha and Diana's stories underscore Sandoval's (2000) notion that oppositional consciousness is not a lost utopian ideal. Rather, with a differential form of consciousness, and the alliance-building strategies it demands, revolutionary resistance is possible. Both women demonstrate the diverse ways that women respond to political hostility and marginalization and how their activism can pose challenges to dominant narratives. For example, Martha's creative manner of interjecting

rights discourse into *campesino* organizing, and strategically positioning herself to organize rural women, reflect strategies that led to changes in participatory processes and greater social equality for rural women. Similarly, Diana's perseverance and commitment to facilitate a space for rural women, in the face of unremitting obstacles, reflects the power of solidarity at the same time it underscores the imperative to have local women be the drivers of their own transformation.

Despite being from very different class backgrounds and being located in different parts of the country, both women were involved in actions that challenged gender forms of structural inequality by facilitating women's access to land as a means of restructuring gendered power relations. The narratives suggest that among rural feminists there is a breaking away from the conventional notion of the male head-of-household as the principal landowner and rural producer. In this manner, land and productive means were discussed not only in material terms, but access to land and production was presented as a new basis for the construction of women and the gender relations they experienced. This is reflected in the analogy Martha uses with a male co-worker to explain women's rights. In the analogy she moves clearly beyond women's ownership of land as an important indicator of economic efficiency and demonstrates instead recognition for the importance of rural women's rights and pursuits of autonomy. The rural feminism represented in these women's stories reflects how gender and land are central elements to a new social, political, and gendered identity that can facilitate social justice.

The women's *testimonios* flesh out the behind the scenes mechanisms by which women become marginalized within the agricultural sector, but more importantly connect obstacles to the creation of political subjects and agents who seek change. In each case the women's stories demonstrate how breaking dominant narratives provides a space for the 'other's' perspective to be privileged, thereby reflecting a counter narrative that more accurately reflects a just world. In enacting an oppositional consciousness, Martha and Diana provide access to a different way of conceptualizing not just oppositional activity in general, but the importance of a rural feminist consciousness. Understanding differential forms of consciousness and social movements through an activist standpoint can generate a new form of knowledge. One meeting ground for activists and researchers is the mutual awareness that the production and dissemination of information gathered is imperative for transformative social change (Melucci 1992). Indeed, as a beneficiary of this knowledge, the doubting senior colleague I referenced earlier is now one of the staunchest supporters of this line of work. But, more importantly, disseminating knowledge informed by a rural

feminist consciousness is critical to the struggles of women within communities, who are often invisible to researchers, who face discrimination and marginalization all over the world.

Notes

1. Anastacio Somoza García took power as the director of the National Guard in 1933 and president in 1936. He was succeeded by his sons, and the Somoza dynasty ruled Nicaragua until the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979.
2. The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN) was a guerrilla movement founded in 1961 that overthrew the dictatorship in 1979. Converting itself into a political party after the overthrow, the FSLN won the first institutionalized election in 1984 (Walker 1985).
3. The autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua is comprised of 150 organizations in various sectors. The leaders of each organization meet semiregularly to ensure coordination. The movement has a manual of by-laws, agreed upon strategies, operates on consensus decision-making, and has had an elected representative since the 1990s. In 2007 members of the movement voted to create an organization that would serve as the umbrella for the whole movement and named it Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres. The coordinated efforts of the movement have placed it in the national public agenda earning it recognition as a main political actor in the country.
4. I intentionally use the word "receipt" when describing violence against women over other widely used terms such as "incidence." Terms such as incidence, more commonly used in public health, suggest passivity, as if violence is a disease with epidemiological rates that are not connected to a power structure. The word "receipt" highlights the interpersonal nature of the act, or at the very least, that something has been done to the woman.
5. The Global Feminisms Project (GFP) is a collection of individual life stories of women activists and scholars archived through the Institute of Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan. The incentive for collecting life histories of Nicaraguan activists came from a conversation with the GFP project coordinator, Abigail Stewart. This project could not have been completed without the generous methodological and financial support provided by the GFP. The GFP also transcribed, translated, and archived eleven of the interviews. They can be viewed and read,

- along with interviews with women from China, India, Poland, and the United States, at <http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem>.
6. Comparable to high school in the United States.
 7. Martha enrolled in her adult literacy classes and began reading for the first time at age twenty-seven. She completed advanced classes over the course of ten years.
 8. The term is used to refer to a member of the Revolution, often an armed combatant.
 9. The Sandinistas triumphed July 19, 1979.
 10. Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (National Farmers and Ranchers Union, UNAG).
 11. Female peasants, farm workers.
 12. A plot of rural or agricultural land, often a large farm or ranch.
 13. Companions, comrades in struggle.
 14. She is referring to Carmen Diana Deere, coauthor of *Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America* (2001). Deere is a Distinguished Professor of Latin American Studies and Food & Resource Economics at the University of Florida.
 15. Somozism refers to the ideological and political structure and system organized by the former dictator, Somoza.
 16. Violeta Barrios Torres de Chamorro was the elected president in 1990 who unseated the FSLN. Her administration implemented structural adjustment programs driven by neoliberal lenders.

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