

A MICRO-POLITICAL EXPLANATION OF THE 1979 NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION*

Alfred G. Cuzán, University of West Florida

Richard J. Heggen, University of New Mexico

Introduction

This paper presents a tentative explanation of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution using a "micro-political" model of political profit, governmental efficiency, and political stability applied to data on the history of Somoza's fall. The revolution is explained as the outcome of a loss of stability by a government that attempted to control a greater share of the resources of the nation than its capabilities to persuade and coerce the population would allow. The initial results of the model, though preliminary, permit us to raise some important questions about the future of Nicaragua's political economy.

We realize, of course, that a simple micro-economic application (hence the term "micro-political") to a phenomenon as complex as a revolution cannot provide an all-encompassing explanation of what happened in Nicaragua in 1979. Our model does not rule out alternative insights into the recent political history of the country. Rather, we wish to provide a theoretical framework that explains several quantifiable attributes of Nicaragua's political economy in a parsimonious fashion. It should be noted that the indices used to measure the variables of the model are rather crude. We urge fellow scholars to refine them or devise better ones, and hope that this paper will stimulate the community of Latin Americanists to subject the theory to systematic scientific scrutiny in the years ahead.

*An earlier version of this paper was presented before the 1980 meeting of the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 5 April, 1980. Cuzán thanks James L. Busey, James Buchanan, William Glade, and Gordon Tullock for their criticisms and encouragement while these ideas were being developed. He also expresses appreciation to his students in political economy at New Mexico State University who listened and argued sympathetically as the model was presented to them in lectures and individual discussions. Finally, he gratefully acknowledges the intellectual and moral support provided him by Paul Sagal and Cal and Janet Clark.

*The Theory*¹

Government is an organization that, under certain constitutional conditions, seeks to control resources for the general welfare. It can also be a political “firm” through which the rulers of society attempt to maximize the real income obtained from the legal use of power; this income may take the form of salaries, kickbacks, bribes, “perks,” servants, access to valuable information, status and prestige, publicity and fame, and the making of contacts and friends. Holding public office presents opportunities to realize ideological goals and to derive personal satisfaction from doing what is perceived to be in the “public interest,” and most political leaders pursue a combination of idealistic and material, community and personal goals. However, the motives of some public officials are not altruistic at all but rather are concerned solely with the material welfare of their persons. Spencer had few illusions on this point:

It is a tolerably well-ascertained fact that men are still selfish. And that beings answering to this epithet will employ the power placed in their hands for their own advantage is self-evident. Directly or indirectly, either by hook or by crook, if not openly, then in secret, their private ends will be served. Granting the proposition that men are selfish, we cannot avoid the corollary, that those who possess authority will, if permitted, use it for selfish purposes.²

The paradigm of “public choice” consistently applies this maxim in the study of political actions and their consequences.³

The amount of political control over a nation’s resources exercised by its rulers—i.e., the relative scope of the “state” in society—is dependent on two factors. Plato discovered them long ago. In *The Laws* he wrote: “. . . Legislators never appear to have considered that they have two instruments which they might use in legislation—persuasion and force; for in dealing with the rude and uneducated multitude, they use the one only as far as they can; they do not mingle *persuasion* with *coercion*, but employ force pure and simple. . . .”⁴ All governments must exercise a minimum of both persuasion and coercion in order to survive. Even the most despotic states are headed by individuals who depend for their survival on the voluntary cooperation of some key figures in the military and the secret police. As Hume puts it: “The sultan of Egypt or the emperor of Rome might drive his harmless subjects like brute beasts against their sentiments and inclination. But he must, at least, have led his *mamelukes* or *praetorian bands* like men, by opinion.”⁵

The ability of the rulers to persuade the populations under their control is a function of the legitimacy of their government. Behaviorally, legitimacy is manifest in the willingness of the citizens to subject themselves to the authority of their leaders. If the vast majority of the public, especially the most politically active of them, surrender their income and wealth to the government without protest or even enthusiastically,

the legitimacy of the rulers is secure. Under such conditions, those who control the government will devote most of their political efforts at trying to persuade the population to comply with their instructions and commands. Such a choice would be economically rational since, in their view, persuasion is relatively inexpensive.

Processes and outcomes affect legitimacy. A people's respect for the authority of government depends on (1) the constitutional rules and legal procedures by which the rulers control and allocate resources under the scope of the state and (2) the outcome of political decisions on the economic welfare of society.⁶ The more arbitrary and self-serving the rules under which public policy is made and enforced, and the less beneficial government actions on the economy are perceived to be by the citizenry, the lower the legitimacy of the government and its rulers.

In Latin America, those who control the government traditionally have sought to acquire legitimacy by adopting democratic constitutions. As Needler puts it: "One of the most interesting features of Latin American politics is the extent to which legitimacy derives from elections. . . . The principal source of legitimacy for Latin American governments is constitutional legitimacy, enjoyed by governments that originate in popular elections."⁷ Societies where the people have a history of democratic practices or even aspirations have little tolerance for arbitrary measures that restrict political freedom. If a ruling group attempts to monopolize power dictatorially, the result is a loss of legitimacy for the regime; hence, Latin American dictators are generally regarded as illegitimate regardless of their professed ideology.

Another way of acquiring legitimacy is by providing the legal conditions under which an economy may grow and prosper. Hume calls this source of legitimacy the "opinion of interest." He explains: "By opinion of interest, I chiefly understand the sense of the general advantage reaped from government, together with the persuasion that the particular government which is established is equally advantageous with any other that could easily be settled. When this opinion prevails among the generality of a state or among those who have the force in their hands, it gives great security to any government."⁸

Coercion is the force, threatened or applied, which the rulers employ on the population under their control. This involves imprisoning, exiling, and/or executing opponents and rebels. It also includes the confiscation of property for political reasons, since this deprives enemies of the regime of the material means to fight or resist it. In order to exercise force, a government must have the loyalty of the military, the police, the prison system, and similar organizations of individuals willing and able to use the instruments of coercion on its behalf. If the authority of a government is rejected by the people, those who control it would waste scarce resources in trying to persuade them to obey. In-

stead, they would resort to coercion, even on a mass scale, as long as it was economical for them to do so, i.e., as long as the benefits from power exceed the costs of coercing the citizenry.⁹

The ruling elite of a country will accumulate power—or expand the scope of the state—until the benefits from greater control are offset by the costs of additional effort spent on persuading and coercing the population. Control of the government yields valuable resources which are partly used to expand the scope of the state which yields additional resources which can be plowed back into expansion of the government and so on until the rulers attain what Wittfogel calls their “rationality optimum.”¹⁰ When it is no longer profitable to expand the scope of the state, the total benefits from the exercise of political power are maximized.

The Model

The greater the persuasive ability of public officials, the lower the level of coercion they need to exercise in order to control a given amount of resources, i.e., a constant level of scope.¹¹ This relationship is illustrated in figure 1. The S_1 curve represents a constant level of scope under the jurisdiction of the state. This amount of resources may be controlled with an infinite number of combinations of persuasion and coercion, provided the rulers stay within the boundaries marked off by P_0 and C_0 . These represent the minimum of persuasion and coercion which any government controlling that much scope must maintain in order to survive.

In order to control greater scope, a government must acquire greater coercive capabilities, become more persuasive, or both; figure 2 illustrates this point. Expanding scope from S_1 to S_2 while persuasion efforts remain at P_1 requires that the amount of resources allocated to coercion be raised from C_1 to C_3 . If coercion is held at C_1 , S_2 can be managed only if the amount of persuasion is expanded to P_3 . The identical result can be achieved by moderate increases in both factors, to C_2 , P_2 . Note that, if a government finds itself at C_2 , P_2 on S_2 , a loss of either factor must be offset by a corresponding increase in the other, or by a contraction in scope.

Political stability can be viewed as coincident points of persuasion, coercion, and scope. In figure 3, the line AB, which connects the two axes, represents the relative costs of persuasion and coercion to the government. We call this line the “political constraint.” If the rulers of this government devoted all their resources to trying to persuade the population, their efforts would amount to OB. Conversely, if all their resources were devoted to attempting to coerce the citizenry, their total effort would be OA. Since the two factors have to be “mingled,” the optimal combination for the rulers is the one that yields the greatest

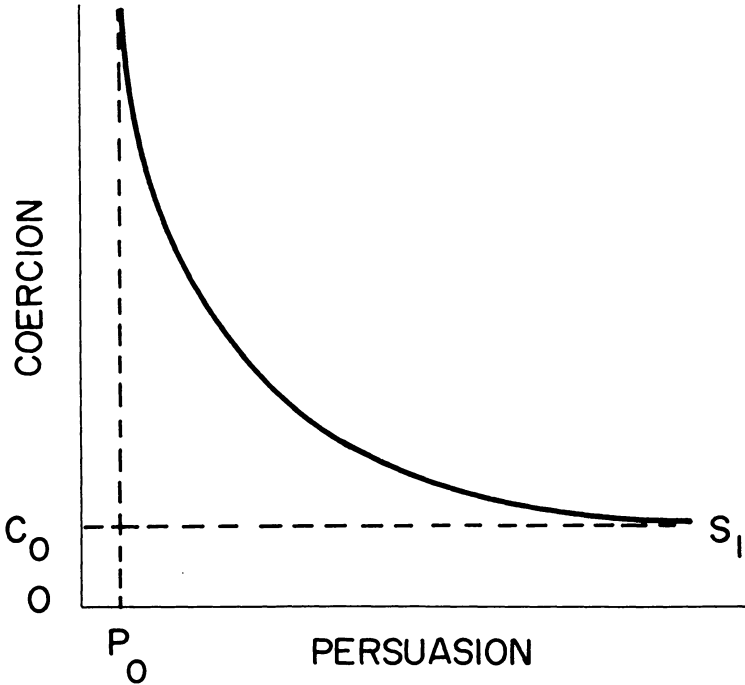


FIGURE 1 *Persuasion, Coercion, and Scope*

scope. This is found where the political constraint line is tangent to the S curve which is furthest from the origin. In figure 3, M is that point, since any other combination of persuasion and coercion would place the rulers on a lower S curve, i.e., would yield them less control. At M the government is in equilibrium; it controls the maximum amount of resources which its capabilities permit. It would be extremely difficult if not impossible for rivals of the regime to dislodge it from power. The government is stable.

However, if the rulers attempted to control more scope than their capabilities allow, they would be in disequilibrium. For example, suppose that in figure 3 the government tried to hold on to N on S_2 , even though the maximum its resources allow is M on S_1 . They would now be in an unstable position. Lacking the means to implement its decisions, the government would be vulnerable to challenges or open defiance, unable to enforce its commands. So it would have to contract scope; but the process of "decompression"¹² could be viewed as weakness by its opponents, further eroding its position. Failure to reduce scope, given no increase in the ability of the government to persuade or coerce the

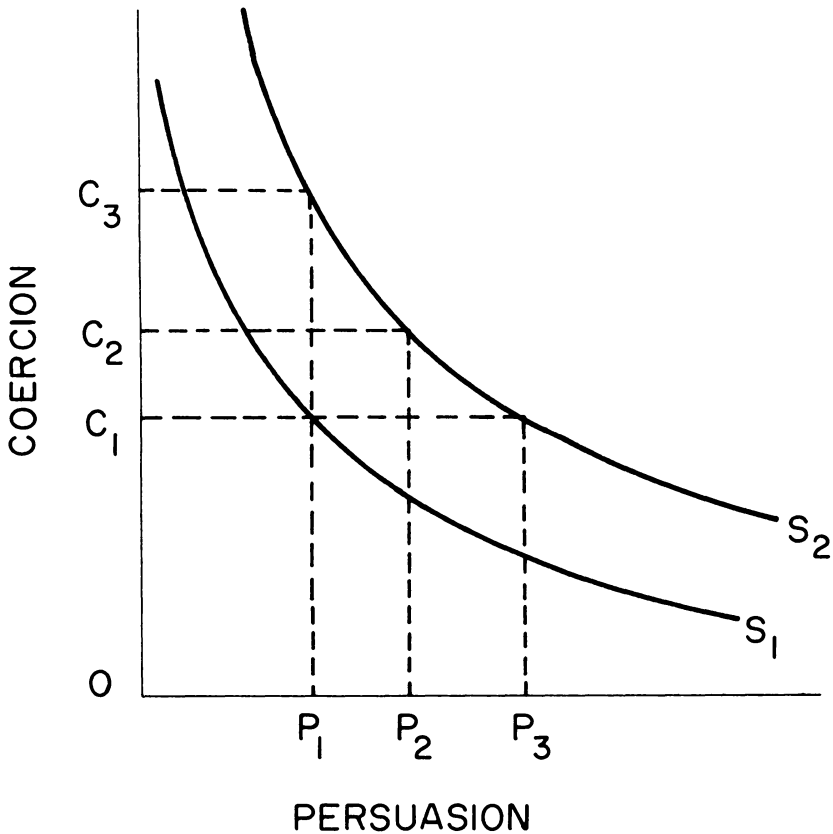


FIGURE 2 Means to a Change in Scope

population, places the government in an unstable position, attempting to govern more than it has the ability to control. A government might survive this situation for a short time. The rulers may gamble that its legitimacy might grow, increasing its persuasive abilities, or that the means for additional coercion could be developed, perhaps with the assistance of a foreign power. This is analogous to a business firm which absorbs a loss for a short while in order to retool for future production without losing its market position. But firms and governments which overextend themselves do so at a risk. A firm without capital cannot withstand market perturbations. Similarly, a government becomes vulnerable if it tries to administer more scope than its capability for persuasion and coercion allow. Without the ability to control the populace through public appeals or measured shows of force, no government can survive political challenges.

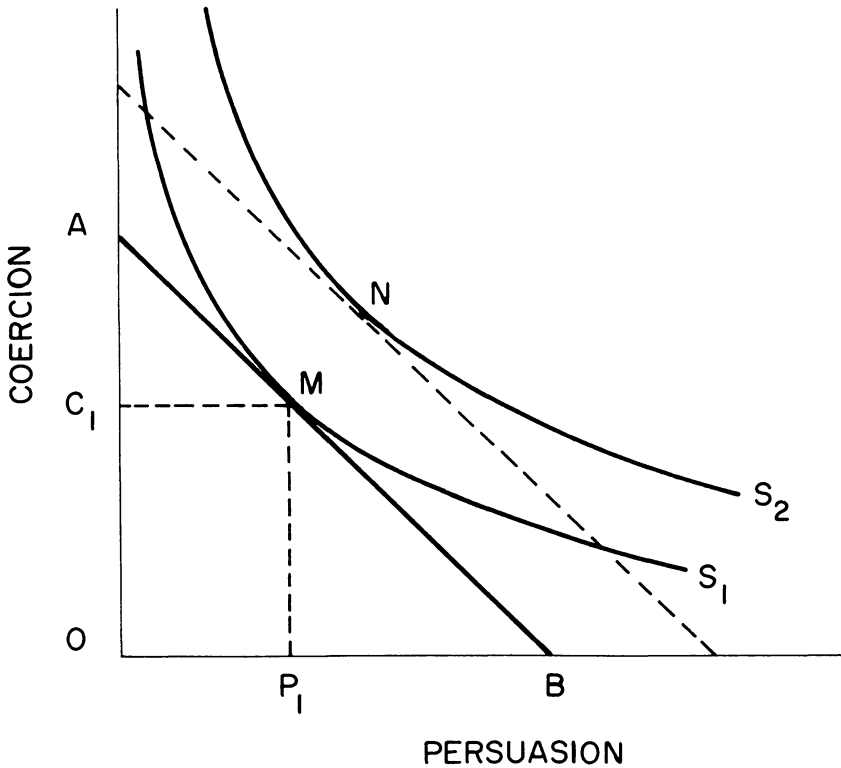


FIGURE 3 Political Stability and Instability

Why Somoza Fell

The model we have just presented provides a concise explanation of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution. The table (see "Scope") shows that between 1965 and 1977 the government consumed roughly the same share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Between 1971 and 1973 this share declined by about 20 percent but it climbed back again in the next three years.) Yet, during roughly the same period, 1965–1975, the government reduced its coercive capabilities. The ratio of military men per one thousand inhabitants dropped by almost 40 percent, the biggest decrease in Central America.¹³ According to our theory, the government could have remained stable *only* if legitimacy, and hence its ability to persuade the population, had increased by a factor big enough to offset the reduction in its coercive capability. Did it?

The last two decades of Nicaraguan history would lead one to conclude that it did not. Two Somoza brothers controlled the govern-

Coercive Capabilities, Respect for Constitutional Rights, Scope and Per Capita GNP, Nicaragua, 1965–1977

Year	Coercion ^a	Respect for Rights ^b			Per Capita GNP (constant dollars)
		Political	Civil	Scope ^c	
1965	3.61			8	413
1966	3.51			9	415
1967	3.41			9	432
1968	3.31			9	421
1969	3.21			9	430
1970	3.11			9	436
1971	3.03			9	445
1972	2.93	4	3	8	449
1973	2.83	5	4	7	445
1974	2.74	5	4	8	490
1975	2.21	5	4	8	477
1976		5	5	9	490
1977		5	5	9	

Source: *Statistical Abstract for Latin America* (Los Angeles: University of California) vols. 18 and 19.

^aMeasured by the number of military men per 1,000 inhabitants.

^bMeasured on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means most, 7 least respect for rights. Political rights are associated with democratic, civilian government and civil rights with freedom of expression and of association, an impartial judiciary, and a lack of political prisoners.

^cMeasured by the percentage of GNP consumed by government.

ment during this time, either as president, or as commander of the national guard. Anastasio Somoza, Jr., the third member of the Somoza family to become president, arranged in 1972 for a provisional junta to head the government while a new constitution was drafted that would permit him to rule again as president. In the meantime, he retained control of the national guard. In 1974, he became president for the second time. It is doubtful that the Nicaraguan people regarded the constitutional revision as anything more than a self-serving maneuver in order to perpetuate the Somoza dynasty. The regime certainly gained no legitimacy of process. In fact, government profiteering from relief supplies sent by the international community to aid the victims of the 1972 earthquake, together with an erosion of political and civil rights during the 1970s (see table) probably resulted in a loss of constitutional legitimacy. As Thomas Walker notes, "By the late 1970s the popularity of the Somoza dictatorship had dropped precipitously and most important power contenders had come to question the regime's legitimacy."¹⁴

What about outcomes? Was the impact of government on the economy such that, judged by its effect on the material welfare of the population, it could have acquired greater legitimacy of results? As the table shows, between 1965 and 1976, Nicaragua's per capita income in

constant dollars increased 19 percent, compared to 24 percent for Central America and 35 percent for Latin America. Thus, Nicaragua's economic performance probably did nothing to raise that portion of legitimacy based on the outcome of government on material welfare; if anything, it decreased it.

Our estimate, then, is that legitimacy probably declined during the period, while at the same time government was reducing its capability to coerce the population. Yet, scope remained roughly constant throughout the period. According to our theory, this should have led to a loss of political stability. Indeed, this appears to have happened. As early as 1974 a small band of Sandinista guerrillas invaded a social gathering in the capital and held hostage a number of prominent people until the government agreed to pay \$1 million in ransom, broadcast a lengthy communiqué over the national radio system, and fly them, along with fourteen imprisoned comrades, to Cuba.¹⁵ During the next four to five years, the government's control over the population inexorably deteriorated. When the Sandinistas launched major offensives in 1978 and 1979 in several cities, the government did not have enough manpower to stop them. So it retaliated with arbitrary arrests, indiscriminate bombings, and other atrocities. By the time it tried to build up the national guard, it was too late. This, combined with favorable international conditions for the rebels—such as help from Venezuela, Cuba, Panama and Costa Rica, and reluctance on the part of the U.S. government to back Somoza to the hilt—led to his overthrow.

Could the government have survived the Sandinista challenge? It is possible that, had Somoza received massive military aid from abroad early enough, he could have doubled or tripled the size of the national guard which, as late as 1975, amounted to a mere five thousand men. With the additional manpower, he could have imposed a tight state of siege and threatened the Costa Rican government with an invasion if it continued to provide a sanctuary for the rebels. In order to do this, however, the government had to be prepared to carry on a ruthless campaign of repression for some time. This is because, as Hibbs puts it, “. . . the nearly instantaneous response to repression is most often more mass violence. . . .” In the long run, however, repression is effective against what he calls “internal war,” organized challenges to the regime such as the one mounted by the Sandinistas.¹⁶

Conversely, Somoza could have tried to obtain greater legitimacy. However, this factor is difficult to raise in the short run, for it requires a gradual building of trust in the intentions and capabilities of the rulers. Given Somoza's image as a corrupt dictator, perpetuating a hated dynasty and profiting from national tragedies such as the Managua earthquake, the chances of this happening were slim indeed.

Finally, Somoza could have contracted the scope of the state.

Note that, between 1973 and 1976, the share of resources under the political control of the Somoza government actually *increased* by 28 percent, perhaps in response to the earthquake. Thus, at a time when its capabilities for control were being eroded, the government was expanding scope. What was required in order to increase the probability of survival for the regime was to contract scope, while coercion, if not legitimacy, expanded, until a stable balance between capabilities and control was restored. Somoza failed to do this, and the failure led to his overthrow.

Once the country was in open insurrection, as it was in 1978, nothing short of massive repression would have helped Somoza stay in power. But in order to do that, Somoza needed to triple or quadruple the size of the national guard until the ratio of soldiers per one thousand inhabitants reached 10 or more. This is the ratio maintained by the governments of Chile (10) and Cuba (12), where dictatorial rulers have overcome organized resistance with sustained and systematic brutality over a number of years. Hibbs concludes that a totalitarian police state, such as those found in communist countries, effectively deters political challenges, which lends support to our conclusion.¹⁷ Of course, we do not argue that such a course of action is morally desirable; we are simply specifying the conditions under which Somoza could have survived, had he been willing to pay the costs.

It is interesting to note that Nicaragua's coercive ratio in 1975 was the sixth lowest in Latin America and only 10 percent above the Central American mean. However, a substantial increase in this factor in the order discussed above probably would have required generous military assistance from other governments, namely the U.S.; a more favorable image in the media, which would have excused repression in the name of "anticommunism"; and a determination on the part of Somoza to fight until he either triumphed or was defeated militarily. The first two conditions were not present, and probably the last one was missing as well. It is possible that after several years under fire, Somoza simply decided that it was no longer worth it to continue to fight, especially in light of an apparent change in U.S. policy toward him. This hypothesis is not too far-fetched: by quitting when he did, Somoza escaped with tens of millions of dollars; had he stayed on to fight, he might have lost his life.

Somoza might also have reacted earlier to the Sandinista threat, say in 1974 or 1975, by trying to acquire greater legitimacy for himself and his government by taking the following actions: (1) announcing that he would retire from politics at the end of his term; (2) ceasing to dominate the Liberal party; (3) relaxing control over the national guard by appointing as its head an officer who was regarded as "moderate," acceptable to many groups across the country's political spectrum;

(4) treating congress, the judiciary and other organs of government as independent centers of authority; (5) freeing local governments from central control, granting them fiscal and electoral autonomy; (6) separating his personal estate from government contracts and other benefits; (7) giving away or selling at favorable prices many of his holdings to Nicaraguans of low to moderate means; (8) making sizable personal contributions to the endowments of charitable organizations and churches; (9) scrupulously respecting freedom of the press and encouraging discussion and constructive criticism of his government; (10) abandoning self-aggrandizement and arbitrary rules of conduct. In short, had Somoza given away portions of his wealth and power and adopted democratic procedures, he could have acquired enough legitimacy to persuade the population to recognize the authority of his government and reject the appeals of Marxist revolutionaries.

As for contracting scope, this could have been accomplished by abolishing or even ceasing to enforce restrictive economic regulations, selling public enterprises to private capital, declaring free international trade, and reducing taxes. This contraction would have made it possible for alternative political and economic centers to develop and transform Nicaragua into what Wittfogel calls a "multi-centered society."¹⁸ This would have neutralized most of the appeals for violent change.

What Next for Nicaragua?

The government of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) has been in power since July 1979. Since that time, it has assumed control over much of Nicaragua's political economy; i.e., the scope of the state has expanded. All the wealth Somoza could not take with him has been nationalized; by some estimates, this includes 50 percent of the best farmland in the country, shipping companies, interest in most industries, and "all sorts of rackets whose only purpose [had been] to enrich the Somoza family."¹⁹ In addition, the government has taken over banking, the mines, much of commerce, and the property of real or alleged Somocistas. A newly established Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (INRA) controls more than five thousand haciendas. Price controls and new regulations have been imposed. In short, the scope of the Nicaraguan state has been expanded well beyond the "sultanistic"²⁰ domain of the Somozas. As Busey concludes: ". . . the present regime, being more ideologically coherent and intellectually alert, is carrying the matter of monopolization by state control beyond even the levels achieved by the gangsters who preceded it. . . ." ²¹ The FSLN makes no apologies for this development. Some of its leaders have openly announced that a socialist state is their goal. The USSR, North Vietnam, and Cuba have been brandished as models for the "new Nicaragua."

The echoes of Joseph Stalin, Fidel Castro, and Karl Marx, the rhetoric of "class struggle," and "enemies of the people" appear in the public pronouncements and propaganda of the regime or its partisans.

Yet, many people who helped the FSLN and who fought the dictator independently of it had different goals for the "revolution." What many of them had in mind was a benign capitalist democracy of private property, free elections, and individual rights, something like a nineteenth-century Great Britain or the United States. John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and John Stuart Mill provide the philosophical inspiration for their constitutions. Still others envisioned a "social democracy," which combined individual freedom with communitarian institutions and practices. These people look to Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Western Europe for their model societies. Will they have a chance to persuade the population to adopt them as their rulers in free elections, or will it be only the FSLN vision that can seek converts throughout the nation? Busey succinctly describes the present situation:

Many Nicaraguans thought of themselves as struggling to overthrow a hated, U.S.-related dictatorship, not as fighting to achieve Marxism. They hoped for full democracy on the western model, with civil liberties, elections, and the sociopolitical pluralism so often mentioned in *La Prensa's* editorial columns. That was not the view of the FSLN, and the FSLN is in charge. If the FSLN succeeds in the realization of its aims, a lot of other thinking Nicaraguans are going to be bitterly disappointed, if not worse.²²

Figure 4 shows three possible "expansion paths" for the Nicaraguan state that conform to the politicoeconomic models espoused by the ideologies described above.²³ Starting at N_s , Nicaragua under Somoza, one is toward N_c , the Nicaragua of the followers of Adam Smith and John Locke, i.e., with less scope, less coercion, and more persuasion than the old Nicaragua. This is the ideal of the capitalist democracy. Another is toward N_a , what the "social" or "Christian" democrats have in mind; that is, more scope but with more persuasion and less coercion. Finally, the new government can move in the direction of N_m , a Marxist, "socialist" Nicaragua ruled by a one-party state using coercion in order to enforce its monopolistic rule.

After two years in power, the FSLN administration seems to be moving toward the last option. The original junta, which was put nominally in charge of the "revolutionary" government even before Somoza fell, has broken up. The two non-FSLN members resigned in less than a year, one for "health reasons," the other in protest over the direction the government was taking. Power is firmly in the hands of FSLN *comandantes* in charge of the ministries of interior and defense, where the instruments of coercion are concentrated. A new Sandinista armed forces has been organized, along with a militia. A network of paramilitary *Comités de Defensa Sandinista*, modeled after Cuba's CDRs, is

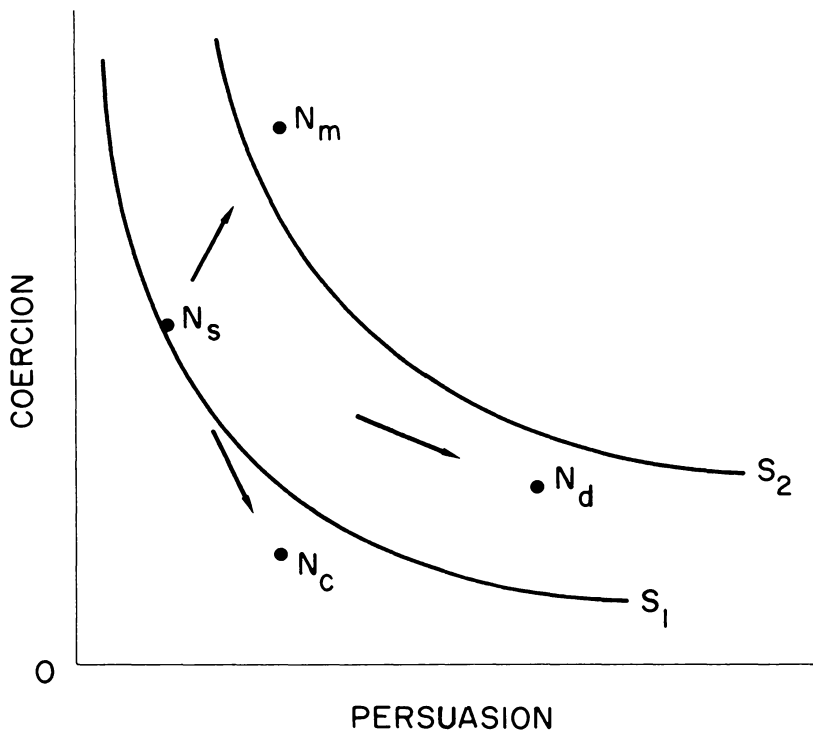


FIGURE 4 Possible Expansion Paths of the Nicaraguan Government

now in place. These organizations together provide Nicaragua's new rulers with a coercive capability that is probably greater than what was available to the Somozas.

About seven thousand Somocistas, low and mid-level functionaries, and guardsmen of the old regime, are still in prison. Neo-Somocistas are also in trouble with the new government. Freedom of the press, for whom the martyred journalist Pedro Chamorro fought so vigorously during Somoza's dictatorship, is in peril. At least one newspaper has been closed. Politically motivated strikes and family feuds have hampered the work of *La Prensa*, Chamorro's newspaper. All journalists must belong to a single union with the power to take away their credentials for political reasons. Most of the media is now under Sandinista control. The universities have been purged of faculty and students who do not "adjust" to the new order. Militarization of the youth has begun. In March 1980, 265,000 teen-agers were organized into the Ejército Popular de Alfabetización. They are to wage "war" against il-

literacy and carry out "political education" on behalf of the FSLN in all regions of the country. There are no plans for free elections. Political pluralism has been condemned as bourgeois by FSLN spokesmen. Unity or "identification with the revolution" constitute the only officially acceptable modes of political behavior.²⁴

Although the option of increased use of persuasion is still open, it would appear that the FSLN goals have little chance of implementation unless the government resorts to a great deal of coercion. Vocal segments of the population may resist or challenge the regime and appeal to people in Nicaragua and elsewhere—Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Miami, and Washington—for support. Unless the FSLN wants to risk being overthrown in another war, it will have to deal harshly with these people, perhaps imprison, deport, or even execute them and confiscate their property. But, then, the outcome of this revolution, as in previous historical instances,²⁵ will again be the replacement of an old, decadent and incompetent dictatorship by a young, determined, and efficiently ruthless one.

NOTES

1. For a complete exposition of the theory see the following papers by the authors: Richard J. Heggen and Alfred G. Cuzán, "Legitimacy, Coercion and Scope: An Expansion Path Analysis of Five Central American Countries and Cuba," *Behavioral Science* 26, no. 2 (Apr. 1981):143–52; Cuzán, "Authority, Scope, and Force: An Analysis of Five Central American Countries," *Public Choice* 35 (1980):363–69; "Political Profit: Taxing and Spending in Democracies and Dictatorships," and "Political Profit: Taxing and Spending in the Hierarchical State," both in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (in press).
2. Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1969), pp. 217–18. This book was originally published in 1851.
3. See, for example, Gordon Tullock, *The Politics of Bureaucracy* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965) and Richard D. Auster and Morris Silver, *The State as a Firm* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishing, 1979).
4. Plato, "The Laws," in B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 493. (Emphasis added).
5. David Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government," in Henry D. Aiken, ed., *Hume's Moral and Political Philosophy* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1948), p. 307.
6. There are other sources of legitimacy, such as the one derived from the personality of political leaders. However, as Max Weber pointed out, that is an unstable source. See "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 245–52.
7. Martin C. Needler, *An Introduction to Latin American Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), p. 107.
8. Hume, "First Principles."
9. In the first paper listed in note 1 we argue that rulers seldom pay the full costs of coercion themselves. Rather, these are borne in large part by the victims of the regime. Hence, rulers have a tendency to use too much of this factor, as Plato observed in the quote cited earlier (see note 2).
10. Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 128–36.
11. Empirically, legitimacy has been found to vary negatively with coercion. See Ted

- Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 185–92.
12. This term was suggested by an anonymous referee of LARR.
 13. *Statistical Abstract for Latin America* (SALA) (Los Angeles: University of California, 1978), pp. 140–41.
 14. Thomas W. Walker, "Nicaragua: The Somoza Family Regime," in Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline, eds., *Latin American Politics & Development* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), p. 324.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
 16. Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., *Mass Political Violence: A Cross-National Causal Analysis* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), pp. 182, 185. We are grateful to another anonymous referee of this journal for bringing this excellent book to our attention.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
 18. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, p. 429.
 19. James L. Busey, "Nicaragua and *La Prensa* after Somoza," paper presented at the Caribbean Studies Association V Annual Meeting, Curaçao, N.A., May 1980.
 20. According to an anonymous referee of LARR, that is the term used by Juan Linz to describe the Somoza regime.
 21. Busey, "Nicaragua and *La Prensa*," p. 157.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
 23. The theory of "expansion paths" is explained in the first paper listed in note. 1.
 24. The history of the FSLN government through 1 April 1980 is carefully documented in Busey, "Nicaragua and *La Prensa*."
 25. On the French revolution see Alexis de Toqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955; originally published in 1856); on the Russian and Chinese revolutions, see Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, pp. 438–46.