

Alternate Paths to Power? Women's Political Representation in Nicaragua

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ABSTRACT

Political alternate positions (otherwise known as substitutes) can have important effects on women's abilities to enter politics. Using the case of Nicaragua, this study assesses whether these alternate positions are being used to increase women's political representation or as a tool to undermine women's advancement into positions of power. By examining patterns of women's representation as candidates in the 1996, 2001, and 2006 elections for the National Assembly and as elected officeholders (as both alternates for those assembly members and titleholders), the article analyzes how various political parties are utilizing these alternate positions. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, this study finds no evidence that these alternate positions are used to undermine women's political progress.

Alternate positions can be found from Algeria to Andorra to Angola.¹ Alternates are elected alongside candidates. If the candidate wins office, the alternate is available to serve in case the elected official (henceforth referred to as the titleholder) is unable to do so for any reason (travel, illness, death, etc.). The selection of alternates can be used strategically to increase women's representation by augmenting the potential pool of qualified candidates for future titleholder positions (which we will refer to as apprenticeship) or by strategically nominating women for alternate positions in which the titleholder is likely to step down shortly after taking office (we call this substitution).

The use of alternate positions, however, can also undermine women's access to power. Parties can nominate women to alternate positions to comply minimally with gender quota requirements instead of meeting those gender goals by placing women as candidates for more desirable positions as titleholders (which we call circumvention). In addition, by nominating women to alternate positions to "make up for" their underrepresentation as titleholders, parties or party leaders may be able to placate groups pushing for greater gender equity (we refer to this as compensation). This study seeks to assess whether alternate positions are being used to increase women's representation or to undermine women's advancement into positions of power.

The study analyzes the patterns of representation for women and men in these alternate positions in the Nicaraguan National Assembly. Nicaragua is an ideal country for this study because it uses alternate positions but has not yet adopted a national gender quota. We are thereby able to examine how these alternate positions are used, without the distortions that would be introduced by the need to comply with such a law.²

Nicaragua also provides longitudinal data across three election cycles with minimal changes to the electoral law during the period of study. This study required the collection of data on both alternates and titleholders in the last three congressional elections (1996, 2001, and 2006).³ It also involved interviews with both male and female alternates, as well as other members of the National Assembly and prominent actors from various political parties and feminist groups. This study thereby accomplishes three objectives: it reveals the gender breakdown among both alternates and titleholders; it provides data regarding the movement of alternates into titleholder positions during the course of their service as alternates (and allows us to know how often and for how long alternates typically step in); and it unearths data regarding the mobility of alternates into titleholder positions in subsequent elections. Furthermore, this study contributes more generally to the literature on women in politics by analyzing how these alternate positions can be used as a tool to advance women's political representation or to keep women from obtaining real political power.

The legal system in Nicaragua calls for alternates (known as *suplentes* in Spanish) for elected positions. Alternates were introduced in the Hispanic American system through the Cádiz Constitution (1812). In Nicaragua, alternates are elected alongside presidents, congress members, mayors, and council members. Although the Nicaraguan constitutions have maintained the alternate posts since the nineteenth century, these positions are nonetheless regularly attacked on the grounds that they either serve no purpose or are a financial drain.⁴ The lack of concrete information about the functions of alternates probably contributes to these criticisms. While the nominal functions of such alternates are found in legal texts, no study to date has systematized their day-to-day tasks. More important, the public knows little about the role these alternates play or could play in the legislature.

This project contributes to the literature on women's political representation that has focused on differences in women's access to power across political parties (Hinojosa 2009; Kittilson 2006; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Lovenduski and Hills 1981). Academic research has determined that discrimination by party elites has declined (Burrell 1998; Carroll 2001; Darcy et al. 1994). Yet scholars have also noted that the shortage of female officeholders is a result of a severe underrepresent-

tation of female candidacies and have continued to find that party elites seek qualities in candidates that are more closely associated with men than with women (Tremblay and Pelletier 2001; Norris and Lovenduski 1995).

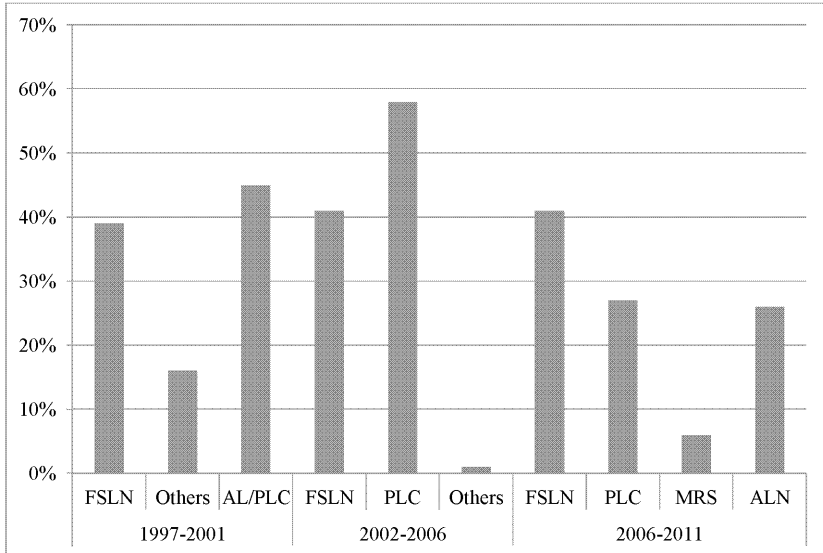
This article adds to the growing academic interest in candidate recruitment and selection and women's representation (Kittilson 2006; Sanbonmatsu 2006; Niven 2006; Fox and Lawless 2004; Fox and Oxley 2003; Lawless 2003; Caul 2001; Tremblay and Pelletier 2001; Niven 1998). The use and potential abuse of these alternate positions is an issue of candidate selection and nomination. Few studies have analyzed the importance of recruitment and selection for women's representation in Latin America (Hinojosa 2009; Heath et al. 2005; Baldez 2004). With a lone exception (Beckwith 1989, writing about the French and Italian cases), no work has focused on the effects of alternate positions on women's political representation, although a handful of scholars of Latin American women's representation have noted the link between the two (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008; Baldez 2007; Bruhn 2003).⁵

This article demonstrates how the role of alternates affects female candidates and officeholders by examining patterns of representation for both alternates and officeholders from 1991 to 2006. First, it provides brief overviews of the political situation in Nicaragua and the situation of women. Then it examines the representation of women as both alternates and titleholders in the last three legislative elections, including a brief analysis of gender differences in placement on candidate lists. A review of the typology for this study follows, explaining each of the four possible ways that *suplente* positions can be used. Then findings concerning each of these are presented.

POLITICS IN NICARAGUA

Much of modern Nicaraguan political history was dominated by the Somoza family, who ruled for more than 40 years. This period was characterized by forced exclusion of any real political opposition and by electoral fraud, censorship, and repression (Téllez 2009, 5–6). The triumph of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution launched a new period that represented a boon for women's representation. Women had been integrated into the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) since its beginnings in 1961, and the FSLN had long professed to want equality between the sexes (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008, 69). During the years of the revolution, women served as ambassadors and government ministers, made up half of the police force, and dramatically increased their representation in the legislature.⁶

Figure 1. Composition of the National Assembly



Source: Data compiled from CSE 1997, 2001b, 2006b.

The electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in the 1990 elections both ended this situation for women (see Kampwirth 2010) and ushered in the country's first female president, the conservative Violeta Chamorro. President Arnoldo Alemán of the PLC was elected in 1996, and was succeeded by fellow PLC member Enrique Bolaños in 2002. Daniel Ortega, head of the FSLN, returned to the presidency in 2007. In spite of the existence of a multiparty system, political power is concentrated in the FSLN and the Constitutionalist Liberation Party (PLC) elites, limiting the participation of groups outside this circle of power (Montenegro et al. 2003, 33). In 1998, prominent leaders of the FSLN and the PLC agreed to a power-sharing agreement—legitimated by constitutional reforms in 2000 and 2005—that caused the virtual disappearance of other parties (Kampwirth 2010; Téllez 2009; Luciak 2001).

The major political parties in the country are the FSLN, the PLC, the Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN), and the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS), though the last currently has only five seats in the congress. The FSLN and the MRS are both Sandinista parties, committed to the ideals of the revolution, including increasing popular participation and designing a mixed economy. The FSLN has been the best-represented party in the National Assembly (see figure 1). The much smaller MRS split from the FSLN in 1995 because of concerns about corruption, “taking most Sandinista intellectuals, social democrats, and feminists” with it

(Kampwirth 2010, 168; Luciak 2001); the two still share many of the same goals. The MRS has repeatedly sought to survive, fighting efforts (including the most recent one in 2008) to deny its legal existence.

The PLC and the ALN are both liberal parties, to the right politically of the Sandinista parties. The ALN split from the PLC in 2005 over former President Alemán's illegal activities and the PLC's power-sharing agreement with the FSLN (Guzmán and Pinto Scholtbach 2008, 131–32). Despite demonstrating its electoral strength in the 2006 elections, the ALN proved to be a short-lived party, effectively dissolving less than a year after the elections and leaving its supporters rallying behind a movement called *Vamos con Eduardo* to indicate their support of former ALN leader Eduardo Montealegre.

The FSLN has elected more women to the legislature than any other party. Its longstanding commitment to gender equality was evident from its earliest days as a guerrilla movement; in some of its early documents, the party stated its determination to “abolish the detestable discrimination that women have suffered with regard to men [and] establish economic, political, and cultural equality between women and men” (Luciak 2001, 167). The MRS, too, has been clear about its commitment to women's rights. The FSLN currently has a 30 percent quota for women, while 40 percent of the PLC's candidates must be women or young people.⁷ The MRS also had a 40 percent quota for women and young people, which was eliminated in 2006.⁸ The ALN has never had a gender quota in place.

Members of the National Assembly are elected for a five-year period through a proportional representation system. Voters elect them from two closed lists presented by political parties. The first list is a national list of 20 candidates, and the second is a different list for each department or autonomous region in the country. The conventional wisdom in Nicaragua is that election via the national list is more prestigious and that party elites are more likely to be nominated on these national lists. In the case of the departmental and regional lists, the number of candidates varies from 2 to 6, with two exceptions: the Department of Río San Juan, which elects only 1 candidate, and the Department of Managua, the capital city, which elects 19 candidates. Alternates are elected alongside titleholders. Political parties decide the order of candidates on their lists, as well as who runs as a titleholder or as an alternate.⁹ If the titleholder wins office, the alternate is available to serve if the elected official is unable to do so for any reason. Substitutions can be permanent (due, for example, to death or impeachment) or temporary (typically because of illness or official travel). Alternates may also end up stepping in for long stretches when the titleholder assumes another official post.

Since the 2000 constitutional reform, the Nicaraguan National Assembly has been composed of 92 titleholders. Ninety of these are directly

elected. One of the two remaining seats is reserved for the previous president, while the other is set aside for the second-place finisher in the concurrent presidential elections. All elected congress members have an alternate. The former vice president assumes the role of alternate for the former president, and the vice presidential candidate serves as the alternate for the presidential candidate who ended up in second place.¹⁰

The National Assembly works through commission meetings and plenary sessions; alternates step in when titleholders are unable to attend either of these types of sessions. As elected members of congress, alternates have the right to submit legislative proposals and are granted legislative immunity, which protects them from criminal and civil prosecution. Alternates, like titleholders, are remunerated. Alternates currently receive a salary equal to one-sixth of the titleholder's salary (approximately US\$700 per month), regardless of whether they are called in to substitute; in addition, they receive a stipend when they substitute.¹¹

THE SITUATION OF NICARAGUAN WOMEN

The Nicaraguan Constitution establishes “absolute equality” among men and women. However, this equality exists only on paper, as women actually lag behind men in a number of ways. Despite the advancements that women have made in education—girls and women are better represented than boys and men at all educational levels, from elementary school to university (Télez 2009, 16–18), and women and men are equally likely to be literate (UIS 2009)—women trail men in the labor force (with the most unequal rates of labor force participation in Latin America) and are underrepresented in all political institutions.

Women clearly have failed to catch up to men when it comes to their participation in the labor force and their remuneration for those activities. While men's labor force participation rates are nearly 87 percent, women's are 37.9 percent. Nicaragua also has the largest wage gap in the region. The estimated ratio of female to male earnings is .34, compared to .71 in Colombia and .46 in neighboring El Salvador (UNDP 2009).

According to the Nicaraguan Index of Fulfilled Commitment (IFC), the Nicaraguan government has fulfilled only 25 percent of the Beijing compromises in the area of women's participation and access to power (Váldes et al. 2005, 19).¹² Women earned suffrage in 1955 and first entered the legislature in 1957.¹³ By 1990, the country had its first female president and the first woman president of the National Assembly.

Despite these impressive gains, as of 2011 only 18.5 percent of current congress members were women. Table 1 provides data on women's representation in congress since 1984. Women in Nicaragua have also been unable to pass a national gender quota law.¹⁴ Furthermore, women were only 10.4 percent of mayors and 37.8 percent of council members

Table 1. Women's Representation in the National Assembly, 1984–2006

	Total Seats	Number of Women	Percentage of Women
1984	96	13	13.5
1990	92	15	16.3
1996	93	9	9.7
2001	92	21	22.8
2006	92	17	18.5

Note: Primary documents contradict the data found for the 2001 elections on the IPU website. The Nicaraguan data have been used rather than the IPU's figure.

Source: IPU 2010a; CSE 2001, 2006b.

in 2007. Women are also inequitably represented in appointed positions: 31.2 percent of ministers in 2007 were women (Hinojosa 2012).

WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

With the notable exception of the FSLN, female representation on party lists was scarce in 1996. Women from the Liberal Alliance (a coalition headed by the PLC) made up 8.9 percent of titleholder candidates and 15.6 percent of alternate candidates, and were likely to occupy the bottom positions on the list. In the 1996 elections, women composed 35.6 percent of all FSLN candidates, and women were equally represented on titleholder and alternate lists.

Analyzing only those candidates presented on the national list, we find that the FSLN far surpassed its 30 percent quota—45 percent of titleholder candidates were women, as were 40 percent of alternates—and the party opted to follow a *trenza* or “braid” strategy (where female candidates are automatically placed after male candidates on lists) for its titleholder positions, ensuring that female candidates were not clustered at the bottom of their lists.¹⁵ The same strategy was not used for alternates, and women candidates for these positions were more likely to appear near the bottom of the lists.¹⁶ Of the 93 titleholders elected in 1996, only 9 were women (9.7 percent), and 7 of these 9 (77.8 percent) were members of the FSLN. Of the 93 alternates, 22 were women (23.7 percent), and 15 of these (68.2 percent) were from the FSLN. The FSLN won 39 percent of seats in the 1996 national elections, while the Liberal Alliance won 45 percent of seats and other, smaller parties gained 16 percent of seats.

As table 2 demonstrates, 22.1 percent of all candidates in 2001 were women (22.5 percent among titleholders and 21.8 percent of the alternate candidates). Significant differences existed across parties and

Table 2. Percentages of Candidates and Officeholders, 1996–2006

		1996	2001	2006
Titleholders	♀ Candidates	19.3	22.5	24.7
	♂ Candidates	80.7	77.5	75.3
	♀ Candidates in High Positions	11.8	16.7	16.6
	♂ Candidates in High Positions	88.2	83.3	83.4
	♀ Candidates Elected	9.7	22.8	18.5
	♂ Candidates Elected	90.3	77.2	81.5
Alternates	♀ Candidates	25.4	21.8	21.6
	♂ Candidates	74.6	78.2	78.4
	♀ Candidates in High Positions	21.7	12.2	17.9
	♂ Candidates in High Positions	78.3	87.8	82.1
	♀ Candidates Elected	23.7	18.5	19.8
	♂ Candidates Elected	76.3	81.5	80.2
Total	♀ Candidates	22.1	22.1	23.1
	♂ Candidates	77.9	77.9	76.9
	♀ Candidates in High Positions	16.7	14.4	17.2
	♂ Candidates in High Positions	83.3	85.6	82.8
	♀ Candidates Elected	16.7	20.6	19.1
	♂ Candidates Elected	83.3	79.4	80.9

Note: Data included only for parties that won seats in the National Assembly.
Source: CSE 1996, 1997, 2001a, b, 2006a, b.

among lists (national, Managua, and other departments and regions). Women were 30 percent of titleholder candidates on the national list, 28.1 percent on the Managua list, and only 18 percent on the department and regional lists. It is interesting that the pattern was reversed for women on alternate lists: they were 26.3 percent of candidates on the Managua list, 21.1 percent on the departmental and regional lists, and 20 percent on the national list. Again, the FSLN presented the largest share of female candidacies for titleholder spots (32.2 percent), although other parties evidenced strides despite a lack of gender quotas (for example, the PC had 23.3 percent female candidacies and the PLC, 14.4 percent). In the case of candidacies for alternate positions, the PLC led with 26.7 percent, followed by the PC with 23.3 percent, and the FSLN saw a dramatic decline with only 17.8 percent from 34.4 percent in the previous elections. Regional parties presented no female candidates for either titleholder or alternate positions.

The rise in female candidacies from the PLC and the improved positions of female candidates from the FSLN for the 2001 elections resulted in a much higher number of women in office. Of the 92 titleholders, 21 were women (22.8 percent). The majority of these were members of the

FSLN (14, or 66.7 percent). Seventeen of the 92 alternates were women, a steep decline. Of those elected, the vast majority were members of the PLC (13, or 76.5 percent). The significantly lower number of female alternate candidates from the FSLN was felt after the election, when only 10.5 percent of alternates were members of the party, down from more than 40 percent after the last elections. The PLC witnessed a dramatic increase in female representation in the National Assembly after the 2001 elections: women's presence increased from 2.4 percent to 13.2 percent of titleholders and from 11.9 percent to 24.5 percent of alternates. The FSLN ultimately won 41 percent of seats in the 2001 elections, while the PLC won 58 percent and other parties received only 1 percent of seats.

Women's share of candidacies in 2006 was nearly identical to what it had been five years earlier. As in 2001, women were best represented on the national list (34 percent of candidates), followed by Managua (27.4 percent) and the departmental and regional lists (20 percent). Among alternates, women were once again less likely to be found on the national list (19 percent) than on the departmental and regional lists (20 percent) or the Managua list (27.4 percent). The FSLN again put forth the largest percentage of women as candidates for titleholder positions (33.3 percent) and was more likely to place them in top spots on the lists; it also positioned a much smaller percentage of women as candidates for alternate spots (15.6 percent). Women represented about a quarter of the candidates for alternate positions on the PLC list. For these elections, the PLC had set a 40 percent quota for women and young people, explaining the increase in female candidacies. The MRS, on the other hand, had voted just months before the election to eliminate its gender quota.

Women's representation following the 2006 elections dropped from 22.7 percent to 18.5 percent. Women from the major parties had less representation than they had after the previous elections. Women were now only 31.6 percent of deputies representing the FSLN. Women fared only slightly better as alternates: 19.8 percent of these were women. Of the 18 female alternates elected, 7 were members of the FSLN (18.4 percent of all alternates from the party), 6 represented the PLC (24 percent), and 5 were from the ALN (21.7 percent). The FSLN maintained 41 percent of all seats in the National Assembly following the 2006 elections, while the ALN won 26 percent, the MRS 6 percent, and the PLC received 27 percent of seats.

The percentages of women nominated for titleholder and alternate positions do not provide a complete story. It is possible that parties are placing large numbers of women in unwinnable positions on their candidate lists. We might expect that parties are more likely to place women in winnable spots for *suplente* positions but to award the top slots on the

Table 3. Probability of Placement in High or Low List Positions

			Low		High	
			1996 ^a	2006	1996	2006
Titleholders	Female	Incumbent	13–32	14–32	45–64	43–63
	Male	Incumbent	1–17	1–18	61–76	59–75
	Female	Nonincumbent	43–64	47–68	18–25	15–23
	Male	Nonincumbent	33–45	37–50	31–36	25–33
Alternates	Female	Incumbent		1–31		46–74
	Male	Incumbent		1–23		54–79
	Female	Nonincumbent		34–53		26–35
	Male	Nonincumbent		30–43		33–40

^aWe present the probabilities for the reference category (1996). Because the time of election was not significant in the case of alternates, these probabilities are representative of the other two elections (2001 and 2006). For titleholder lists, however, the 2006 elections differ significantly from 1996 and 2001.

Source: These probabilities were determined using a Zelig package (Imai et al. 2007).

titleholder lists to men. The conventional wisdom in Nicaragua is that candidates are likely to win if they occupy the first five positions on the national or Managua list, the first two spots in the six-seat districts, and the number one spot in the remaining districts. Those candidates occupying spots six to ten on the national and Managua lists or seats three and four in the six-seat districts are said to have a chance of winning, while those in the remaining positions are thought to be sure losers. We used this typology to determine whether women are more likely to be placed into “safe” seats or whether they are slated for certain defeat.

The results of ordered logistic regressions, controlling per year of election and incumbency, reveal that there are important differences in where incumbent and nonincumbents appear on party lists (as expected, incumbents are more likely to occupy higher spots) and differences in the placement of male and female candidates, as can be seen in table 3.¹⁷ Male candidates are more likely to be placed in high positions in both the titleholder and alternate lists, while female candidates are more likely to be placed in low positions for the titleholder lists and in both low and medium spots on the alternate lists. To establish the exact probabilities that male and female candidates would be placed in high, medium, or low positions on each list, we simulated quantities of interest (see table 3).¹⁸

Examining party-level differences provides a richer understanding of this phenomenon. The FSLN is significantly more likely than other parties to nominate women as titleholders and to place them in higher

positions on these lists. On the other hand, the PLC (for 1996, Liberal Alliance, or AL) is significantly less likely to nominate women as titleholders and less likely to place them in top spots. Results for the other political parties were not statistically significant. Results for the alternate positions tell a different story. The FSLN and the PLC are more likely to nominate women and more likely to place them in high positions, while the MRS is significantly less likely to do so.

THE ALTERNATE POSITION: FOUR TYPES

Although alternate positions are commonplace across the globe, these political offices have been overlooked by the academic literature. We argue, however, that analyzing these political positions can provide valuable information about a party's true commitment to women's representation. Therefore we turn to a less likely source for learning about gender equity in political parties.

Apprenticeship

Parties can strategically use the alternate positions to increase women's representation by providing women with valuable experience, treating the *suplente* role as an apprenticeship. Women placed as alternates can acquire campaigning and officeholding experience.¹⁹ By serving in these positions, women might better their chances of becoming titleholder candidates in the future (by proving themselves to their parties and familiarizing themselves with their party's own procedures for procuring candidates). In Mexico, there are indications that women, at least from the PAN, "experience their first campaign as *suplentes*" rather than as titleholders (Bruhn 2003, 113). Campaigning for and serving in these less competitive posts might function as "apprenticeships" in the political careers of women (Bruhn 2003, 113) and may provide women with "the training and exposure needed to become a candidate on the primary list in the next election" (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008, 92).

Substitution

The position of the *suplente* can be an important tool for parties that want to increase female representation. Political parties can place women as alternates for positions that have a high likelihood of being vacated; these would typically be the highest positions on the list, which regularly are assigned to the most important politicians in a party. Titleholders routinely abandon political office; it is not unusual for prominent politicians in Latin America to leave their elected seats to take appointed posts (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008; Morgenstern

and Nacif 2002). Parties can plan for this and line up female alternates for titleholders likely to be tapped for other offices. Beckwith characterizes this as a means of “sneaking” women into office and considers it a way “national party leaders can avoid (if they cannot win) confrontation with local party leadership over the direct nomination of female candidates for safe seats and still place women as representatives” (Beckwith 1989, 4–5).

Beckwith notes that this comes with a “relatively low political cost” (1989, 4).²⁰ Anecdotal evidence indicates that substitution has occurred in Nicaragua: “from time to time, it was known that one of the prominent people on the primary list would be appointed to an important full-time post . . . and so some highly regarded women were deliberately placed on the *suplente* list to fill [in] as *de facto* representatives for the entire legislative term” (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008, 92).

Circumvention

Alternate positions can also be used to keep women from power. Parties can nominate women to alternate positions to fulfill quota obligations (either party quotas or national quotas) instead of placing them as candidates for titleholder positions, thus circumventing regulations aimed at increasing female representation. Concerns are common across Latin America that parties either place women in alternate positions rather than titleholder positions as a means of minimally meeting their quota obligations, or place women as titleholder candidates but force them to abandon their seats to their male alternates after the election.²¹

Because parties can potentially undermine quota regulations in this way, these alternate posts can impede women’s abilities to reach positions of real political power. In the case of Mexico, political leaders fulfilled the 30 percent requirement mandated by the 1996 quota law by placing women as alternates for congressional seats (Baldez 2007, 76–77).²² The Mexican parties also used the alternate slots to fulfill their own internally mandated gender quotas; for instance, the PRI met its own requirement for gender parity for legislative candidacies by placing more women in alternate posts (Baldez 2007, 74). Parties can use *suplente* spots to meet the letter of the law while still undermining the spirit of quota recommendations or regulations. It is no wonder that one female council member from Mexico stated, “We no longer want alternate positions” (Female PRI Council Member 2003).

Parties can also use these alternate positions to bypass quota requirements by running women in titleholder positions alongside male candidates for the alternate spots but forcing those women who are elected to leave their posts and allow their male alternates to take over (Archenti and Tula 2008, 15). In the summer of 2009, a number of Mex-

ican congresswomen caused a stir when they renounced their positions immediately after taking office and allowed their male alternates to take their posts. Many observers had long suspected that these types of actions were “part of a previous accord that has taken place in order to make way for male candidates and deputies and in this manner get around the gender quota” (Huerta García and Magar Meurs 2006, 271).

Compensation

Political parties can undermine female representation by using *suplente* positions to “make up for” women’s underrepresentation as titleholders, giving women alternate spots to alleviate a gender imbalance on their lists. These alternate posts then are handed out as compensation for underrepresentation in other areas and are a “way of seeming to value the election of women without advancing women as serious candidates on the primary list” (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008, 91). Political parties could also use these alternate positions to appease groups demanding the greater inclusion of women by placing women in alternate positions rather than in titleholder positions. Parties could compensate for low levels of titleholder positions by nominating larger numbers of women as alternates, in effect balancing out a deficit in one position with greater representation in another (albeit less important) position.

Even when women are placed in alternate positions as part of a circumvention or compensation strategy, if alternate positions come with some measure of power, these positions can have an unintended positive impact on women’s representation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The preceding sections have outlined four possible ways that political parties can use the alternate positions either to boost or to undermine women’s political representation. The sections that follow detail the findings of this study.

Apprenticeship

Drawing on information from the congressional record, along with 16 interviews carried out between May 2009 and April 2010, this study identified four roles that alternates play in the Nicaraguan National Assembly. They substitute for their titleholders as needed in both plenary sessions and commission meetings. They substitute for other titleholders when the alternates for those titleholders are unavailable. Some alternates participate alongside their titleholders in weekly meetings organized by their parliamentary groups, and some alternates opt to

represent specific constituencies and lobby the National Assembly on behalf of these groups.

While all of these functions could serve to train alternates for positions as titleholders or prepare them for other political office, the data from this study indicate that alternate positions do not function as apprenticeships in the Nicaraguan case. For one thing, these *suplente* positions were not operating as an introduction into political office. Moreover, these positions were not regularly being utilized as a learning opportunity. Furthermore, serving in these posts did not make them a springboard to higher office.

One way that these alternate posts could serve as apprenticeships is by providing women with their initial entry into politics, or specifically into elected office. We find evidence to contradict the finding in Mexico that women “experience their first campaigns as *suplentes*” (Bruhn 2003, 113). By gathering data on the political backgrounds of 14 of the 18 women alternates elected in 2006 (including previous elected or appointed political positions, work with social organizations, and political positions within their political parties), we were able to compile a thorough picture of these women’s experience in politics.²³ We then supplemented this information with in-depth interviews with a small group of male and female alternates.²⁴

Female alternates had extensive political experience. Most had campaigned for other political office, and a few had already served as titleholders in the National Assembly (Vijil Gurdián 2010).²⁵ The *suplente* position did not serve as a launching pad for a political career; these women’s political careers had already been launched. This is substantiated by our finding that individuals were as likely to move from an alternate position into a titleholder position as they were to move from titleholder into a *suplente* spot.²⁶ It does not seem that it is easier for women to end up as *suplentes* than as titleholders, which explains why these posts do not serve as an introduction to officeholding. The percentages of female titleholders and alternates were very similar in both 2001 and 2006. This contradicts the conventional wisdom from across Latin America that women are more likely to end up in these “less important” positions.

These positions could also function as apprenticeships if alternates actually substituted for their titleholders and if they were involved in the legislative process. We found that nearly half of the *suplentes* never substitute for their titleholders and that some are not involved in the political work of the legislature. A review of all substitutions that took place between January and September 2009 for plenary meetings revealed that many alternates were never required to substitute (41.8 percent). Seven of the 91 alternates substituted for their titleholders either permanently or on a long-term temporary basis. Two of these, both members of the FSLN, were women. Less than a third of alternates (27.4 per-

cent) were called in to substitute between one and five days; 9.9 percent substituted between 6 and 10 days, and 6.6 percent were called in for 13 to 22 days. Women in these alternate positions were slightly less likely to substitute: 55.6 percent never served.²⁷

In addition to substituting for their titleholders, some alternates also participate in their parliamentary group's meetings alongside titleholders, and a number of interviewees for this project considered attendance at these strategy meetings to be one of the functions of alternates. There are, nevertheless, differences in parliamentary group meeting attendance. Alternates from the FSLN and the MRS seem to participate actively in these meetings, as do members of the PLC. However, both male and female members of the ALN seem less likely to participate in these meetings, and none of the ALN interviewees stated that attendance at these meetings was one of the responsibilities that came with their positions (Male ALN Alternates 1, 2, 2009; Female ALN Alternate 2009).

The potential for these positions to serve as a type of apprenticeship is dependent on political parties. There appears to be extraordinary variation in the roles that alternates play, and often these roles are determined by political institutions and the existing party culture surrounding these positions. Coalitions led to situations in which titleholders and alternates were not always members of the same party, especially in the case of the ALN, in which more than half (57.1 percent) of the alternates belonged to a different parliamentary group than their titleholders. Some alternates believe that they are called in less often to substitute for their titleholders because they belong to different political groups than their titleholders; interviews with three male alternates representing the MRS and the ALN indicated that this was the case (Male MRS Alternates 2009; Male ALN Alternates 1, 2, 2009).

Although some coalitions negotiated titleholder and alternate positions simultaneously, others did so separately. When the former took place, it became more likely that the alternate would hail from the same political party as the titleholder; when each list was drawn up separately, there was a greater probability that an alternate and his or her titleholder would be members of different parties, according to two male *suplentes* from the ALN (Male ALN Alternates 1, 2, 2009). Titleholders may be less likely to step away from their posts and allow their alternates to step in when these alternates represent a different political party. This situation is more likely to affect smaller political parties that are less well represented in their coalitions.

Some of the party differences in the treatment of alternates appear to be a result of norms that exist in political parties.²⁸ One male alternate representing the ALN felt that alternates were not well regarded (Male ALN Alternate 1, 2009), although another male alternate from the same party thought the party had been very supportive of his work as

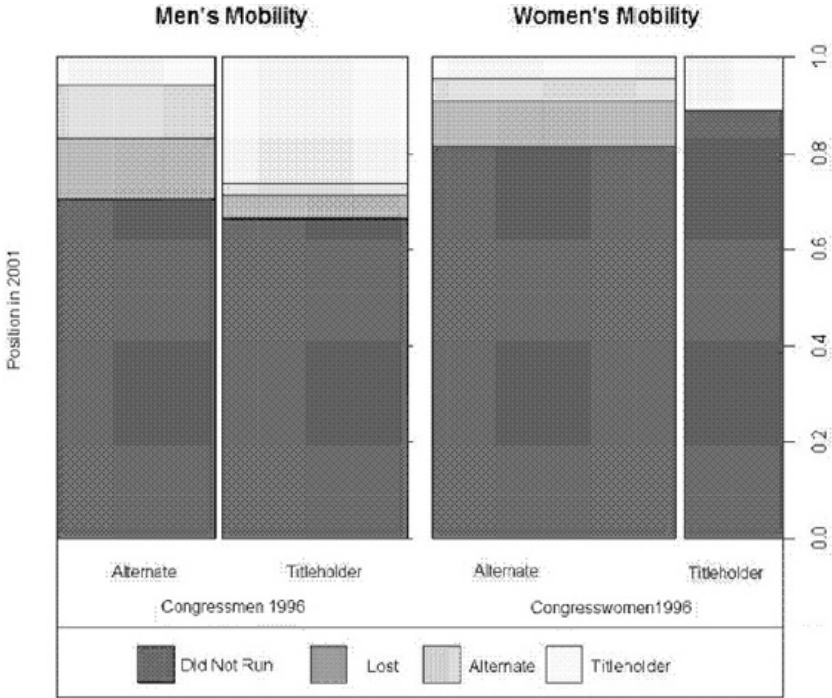
an alternate (Male ALN Alternate 2, 2009). The latter, however, had stopped attending parliamentary meetings months earlier, while the former was persistent about participating. Three male alternates from the MRS, moreover, stated that they actively participated in meetings and observed no differences between titleholders and alternates (Male MRS Alternates 2009). The MRS has the least representation of any party in the National Assembly, and it may be that its smaller size forces it to rely on its alternates; larger parties might be able to divide up work solely among titleholders.

The possibility for apprenticeship in the role of *suplentes* is dependent not just on political institutions and party culture, but also on individuals. While some *suplentes* described their duties as being “equal to those of the titleholder” (Male MRS Alternate 3, 2009) or stated that there was “no difference between titleholders and alternates” (Male MRS Alternate 3, 2009), others played only a minor role. Titleholders largely determine the amount of responsibility an alternate receives (Male MRS Alternate 2, 2009). Furthermore, alternates’ own levels of motivation affect the type of experience that they have. In addition to their other functions, some alternates attempt to represent specific constituencies in the National Assembly by lobbying on behalf of these groups. Alternates from the MRS met frequently with civil society leaders and presented their concerns to congress, according to a male alternate (Male MRS Alternate 2, 2009). Other alternates took it on themselves to represent groups with which they felt a personal connection; for example, one *suplente* representing the ALN lobbied in favor of former Contras (Male Legal Adviser, 2009).

We also expected that women would use the *suplente* position as a stepping stone to titleholder positions. Nicaragua’s low re-election rates allow us to study this phenomenon: only 24 percent of titleholders in 1996 were re-elected in 2001, though the percentage increased to 33 percent for the following elections. Incumbency rates for *suplentes* are also low: one-tenth retained their positions in 2001, as did 13 percent in 2006. To test whether alternate positions served as launching pads for women’s political careers, we examined whether titleholders and alternates were candidates in 2001 and whether they were elected to serve as either titleholders or *suplentes*. We did the same for the group elected in 2001 by examining candidates and officeholders from the 2006 elections.

The data in figures 2 and 3 demonstrate that men are not more likely than women to transition from being *suplentes* to being titleholders; that is, apprenticeship is not more likely for men than for women. Not only is it not the case that *suplentes* use the office as a stepping stone to higher office; we found that it is just as likely that alternates will go on to become titleholders as it is that titleholders will go on to serve as alternates. The vast majority of alternates in 1996 and 2001 either did

Figure 2. Political Mobility for Titleholders and Alternates, 1996–2001



Note: Column widths are weighted according to the percentage of candidate type in each category.

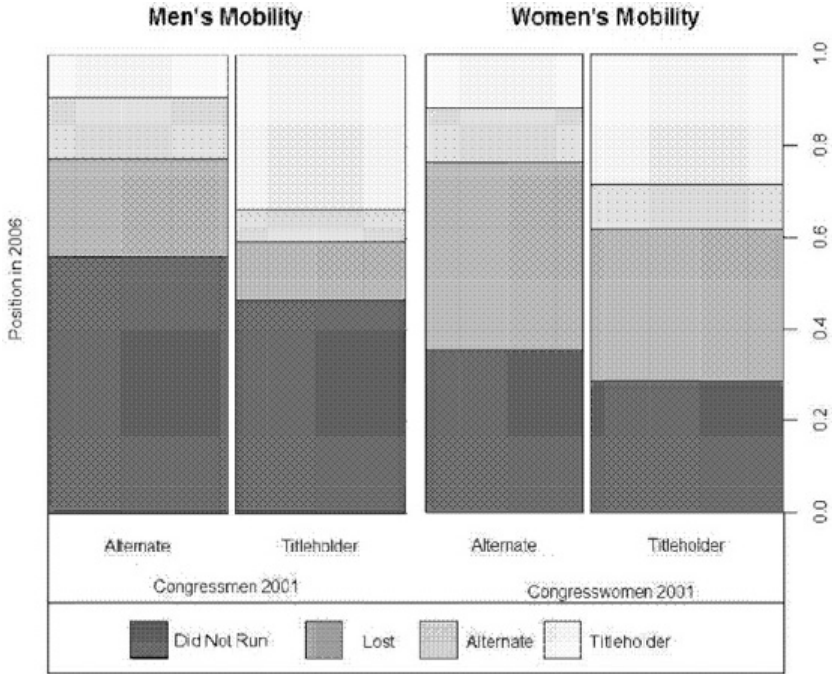
Source: Data compiled from CSE 1996a, 2001a.

not run for office in the next elections or lost their elections. Of the alternates elected in 1996, only 5.4 percent became titleholders in 2001. Among female alternates, the odds of ending up elected to titleholder positions in 2001 were slightly lower: only 4.5 percent of them went on to win titleholder seats. The 2001 alternates were more likely to end up as titleholders in the 2006 elections: 9.8 percent of those alternates won titleholder positions, and women were slightly more likely than men to end up in these offices (11.8 percent). It seems, then, that these positions are not a conduit to titleholder positions in the National Assembly or to higher office.

Substitution

The data from Nicaragua appear to support Beckwith’s findings that alternate positions can increase women’s representation when male

Figure 3. Political Mobility for Titleholders and Alternates, 2001–2006



Note: Column widths are weighted according to the percentage of candidate type in each category.

Source: Data compiled using information from CSE 2001a, 2006a.

titleholders are moved into other positions (Beckwith 1989), allowing their female alternates to move into positions of power. The strategic nature of these substitutions differentiates them from more commonplace instances in which alternates fill in for their titleholders. By *substitution* we are referring to a long-term arrangement that can provide women with seats (either because the titleholder has effectively renounced the seat or because of an opportunity that could have been foreseen, such as appointment to the cabinet).

In the 2006 Nicaraguan National Assembly, several male titleholders were selected for appointed positions in government, while others won municipal elections. Although these male titleholders did not renounce their congressional posts, their alternates did substitute for them on a long-term basis.²⁹ Of the alternates who filled these posts, 28.6 percent were women, considerably higher than the percentage of elected female titleholders (18.5 percent).³⁰ FSLN members were the most likely to leave their positions during the period studied (2009).

Nearly 14 percent of FSLN alternates substituted for their titleholders on a long-term basis, which indicates that more than one of every 8 titleholders vacated their posts.³¹

The *suplente* roles would be more of a conduit for substitution for larger and more successful parties, since in these parties there would be a greater likelihood of winning the executive seat and consequently pulling greater numbers of people for cabinet seats and other government offices. Also, the more obvious it is who is going to win the election, the greater the possibility for strategically using the alternate positions. Knowing this, parties can then place women as *suplentes* with the understanding that they are likely to inherit the titleholder positions. The electoral strength of the FSLN and the pact between the FSLN and the PLC allow political parties strategically to use alternate positions to increase women's representation. We expect that parties of the left would be more likely to use this mechanism, since leftist parties are more likely to employ mechanisms, such as gender quotas, which promote women's representation and to adopt platforms favoring gender equality (Caul 2001; Reynolds 1999). The FSLN's record indicates that such strategic promotion of women via the use of alternate positions is taking place.

Circumvention

We find no evidence that *suplente* positions are used to evade quota requirements. In other words, it is not the case that parties are using these alternate posts to meet their obligations rather than placing women as candidates for titleholder positions. The FSLN has applied its 30 percent quota to titleholders, and it nominated a greater proportion of women to titleholder positions than for alternate posts in both the 2001 and 2006 elections. The PLC has also fulfilled its quota obligation (40 percent of candidates must be either women or young people) by placing women into titleholder positions, not just alternate spots. However, while the FSLN placed women in safe positions on the list, the PLC predominantly relegated its female candidates to unelectable spots. The PLC and MRS fulfilled their quota requirements for both titleholders and alternates, while the FSLN applied the quota only to titleholder positions.

Compensation

There is some evidence that compensation may take place; parties can still use alternate positions to counteract a gender imbalance on their lists. Results from the FSLN indicate the possibility of compensation, though not in the manner that we expected. In 2001 we see a substantial increase in the number of female titleholders and a decline in the number of alter-

nates elected. Because the party put forth the same percentage of female candidates for titleholder positions as it had in the previous election and because it also won a similar number of seats to what it won in 1996, we believe that female titleholders were placed in “safer” seats in 2001.

Women in the party might have finagled better positions on the list in exchange for giving up *suplente* candidacies. The conventional wisdom is that women are placed in alternate positions to make up for a deficit in female candidates for titleholder spots; it may be that in some cases the exchange in titleholder-alternate positions may actually increase women’s representation on titleholder lists.³² Luciak has presented evidence that FSLN women have pushed for compensation from their party, eliciting a *quid pro quo*. In 1996, the low percentage of female candidates on the departmental lists elicited a response from party women, who demanded that more women be placed as titleholders on the party’s national list to compensate for their poor showing on departmental lists (Luciak 2001, 209).³³ Women have effectively pressured their party to increase female candidacies (Female PLC Titleholder 2010), and it may be that they have strategically opted to exchange *suplente* candidacies for higher positions on titleholder lists.

We see another indication of compensation in 2006. For those elections, the FSLN saw a slight increase in female candidacies for titleholder positions but a decrease in female titleholders elected to office. Women received list positions that were less electable and complained about the situation. However, women were placed in “safer” positions on the alternate lists, possible evidence of the party’s attempting to counterbalance gender inequities on the titleholder lists.

The bargaining that takes place within coalitions over candidacies has important effects for these alternate positions and for women in particular.³⁴ Coalition-level bargaining means that “efforts at the party level to promote female candidacies are less effective” (Hinojosa and Franceschet 2011), and it is “at this stage where women are most disadvantaged” (Franceschet 2005, 88). In the course of bargaining, parties often lose titleholder candidacies and are instead given *suplente* candidacies. Although candidates are sometimes in strong positions on their party lists, they may end up as *suplentes* rather than titleholders because of the bargaining that inevitably takes place. (Two of our interviewees wound up as alternates because of this coalition-level bargaining.) This could have important effects on possible compensation in the assignment of alternate and titleholder candidacies.

CONCLUSIONS

The data provided in this study clearly indicate that women in Nicaragua continue to be underrepresented in candidacies for both titleholder

positions and alternate ones, but the use of *suplente* positions does not appear to be further disadvantaging women. Women are not more likely to be placed as candidates for these alternate spots than they are to be nominated for positions as titleholders. Although it is the case that women have a greater chance of being placed in “safe” seats when they are candidates for alternate spots rather than titleholder positions, these differences are minimal and not statistically significant.

It is possible that the position of *suplente* can serve as an apprenticeship, but in the Nicaraguan case the office apparently has not served this purpose. Women have, however, been “sneaking” into titleholder positions via substitution, although in very small numbers. A greater percentage of women have ended up effectively working as titleholders because of these substitutions than have been elected directly to the National Assembly.

We also find that alternate positions are not being used to circumvent gender quotas, and while it is possible that there is some form of compensation taking place, it may be that party women are benefiting by trading alternate posts for titleholder candidacies. Further research would allow us to learn more about those alternates in Nicaragua and in other countries who do use these positions as launching pads for their political careers. *Suplente* positions appear to be quite desirable in Nicaragua. In national contexts where the alternate position serves as a potential training ground or where the position holds less value than in Nicaragua, women may have a different experience.

The *suplente* post is yet another mechanism that parties have at their disposal to increase women’s representation, yet the Nicaraguan case indicates that political parties underutilize this tool. Parties can use this position to encourage reluctant women to enter politics and then groom these women for titleholder positions or for other elected or appointed offices, or they can use this position to “sneak women in.” As one woman from the FSLN noted, she ran as an alternate because it was what her party desired; she did this out of “obedience” and “party discipline.” She went on to describe herself as a “soldier,” clearly willing to follow party orders (Female FSLN Alternate 2009).

Women seem willing to run as candidates for both alternate and titleholder positions. This study has illustrated how *suplentes* can introduce legislation, lobby on behalf of citizens, and participate in parliamentary group meetings even when they are not substituting for their titleholders. Regardless of whether parties are attempting to improve women’s lot or undermining their efforts to obtain more equitable representation, women can use their *suplente* positions to exercise real political power.

NOTES

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1. In Latin America, the following countries use alternates: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Uruguay. We are unaware of a complete listing of countries that use these alternate positions. However, a review of data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2010b) reveals that the following countries also employ these posts: Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Comoros, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Gabon, Iceland, Niger, Sweden, and Slovakia.

2. The circumvention of quota laws applies to the use of both nationally mandated quotas and party quotas. Some Nicaraguan political parties do use party quotas, which allows us to test for circumvention. We believe that by examining alternate positions in a context in which no national quota exists, we can more accurately assess how women are likely to be affected by the use of these alternate spots, since tremendous variation occurs in party compliance with national quotas. Of the countries that have alternate positions, only Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala have not adopted national gender quotas. It is interesting that although national quota laws have been applied in a large number of countries that use alternates, few of these have made specific provisions for alternates. In Bolivia, party lists for council member positions are required to have a female alternate in the top position unless the top spot on the titleholder list is held by a woman. If the first name on the titleholder list is a woman's, then she must have a male alternate. The same is also true of the second and third spots on the list (Bareiro et al. 2004). In Ecuadorian local elections, one woman must be on the list of alternates for elections in which three officeholders will be selected. If four to six officeholders are elected, then two of the alternates must be women.

3. We have chosen to focus on these elections because they are considered the only truly postwar elections (see Booth and Richard 1997, 386).

4. All of the Nicaraguan constitutions have stated that an alternate must be elected for each congressperson, with two exceptions. First, the 1826 Constitution established an alternate for each two congresspersons, two alternates for each three congresspersons, and so on (Article 71). Second, the 1893 version did not mention the alternate position in its original version, though this was later amended in 1896 to include these posts. Copies of the Nicaraguan constitutions can be found in Esgueva Gómez 1994.

5. Almost no academic work exists on alternates. The authors could find no study in English or Spanish that focused on the role of *suplentes* in Latin America, despite the prevalence of this institution across the region.

6. Many observers have noted, however, that "women were often asked to put gender-related issues and concerns on hold" and to focus instead on "the push to oust Somoza and then to reconstruct the Sandinista state" (Saint-Germain and Chávez Metoyer 2008, 70).

7. See Luciak 1998, 2001 for a detailed discussion of the FSLN's adoption of gender quotas. Most recently, the FSLN reformed its statutes in 2009 to establish parity for all internal leadership positions. In 1995 the MRS established a gender quota for leadership positions of 30 percent and a 40 percent quota for women and young people for all national and local elections. The PLC adopted a quota for women and young people (the party did not specify what percentage must be reserved for each group) of 40 percent in 2005. Although it is a more conservative political party, the PLC has one of the highest proportions of women in its leadership, a key factor in the establishment of the gender quota requirement in the party in 2005 (AFC 2010, 54; Female PLC Titleholder 2010).

8. Violeta Delgado, a high-ranking MRS leader, feminist, and titleholder candidate for the 2006 elections, and another high-ranking female member of the MRS interviewed do not attribute the elimination of the gender quota to a lack of commitment to female representation; instead, both argue that this was a means of preventing the FSLN-PLC pact from blocking the MRS from competing (AFC 2010, 56; Female MRS National Directorate Member 2010).

9. The Congress of the FSLN is formally charged with deciding candidacies. Since 1996, candidacies have been decided partly by using open primaries (Santiuste Cué 2001, 502). The PLC does not use "uniform and precise rules" to choose its legislative candidates and does not appear to adhere to its own statutes. Based on party member surveys, it seems that national elites often choose candidates, but that self-nomination and selection by assembly are also possible avenues to candidacies (Santiuste Cué 2001, 520).

10. Before the 2000 constitutional reform, all presidential and vice presidential candidates who won more than a set threshold of votes were able to serve in the national legislature, not just the second-place finisher and the alternate.

11. These benefits are not unique to alternates in Nicaragua. In El Salvador, *suplentes* also earn a salary, regardless of whether they are called in to substitute for their titleholders, and they, too, are given legislative immunity.

12. The IFC was created to monitor national compliance with the goals of the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

13. While most academic sources state that a woman was first elected to the National Assembly in 1972, newspaper articles covering the 1957 elections indicate that one woman gained a titleholder position and two were elected alternates.

14. More than 34 countries currently have nationally mandated gender quotas. The adoption of national gender quotas began in Argentina and quickly spread through the region. More than half the Latin American countries use these quotas, and many have seen substantial gains in women's political representation.

15. This strategy is often also referred to as a zipper strategy.

16. The braid strategy was not used for departmental and regional lists. It is interesting that on the Managua list, women made up 47.4 percent of alternates, and most appeared in the top slots.

17. We tested models with party, party size, and region, then all three of them together, and none altered the robustness of the estimates for gender. None of the new variables were significant in any model. Eliminating the high positions on the list—which are more likely to be occupied by male incumbents—

bents—did not yield much change and did not affect the significance of any of the variables.

18. These probabilities were determined using a Zelig package (Imai et al. 2007).

19. Although in some countries alternates do not participate in campaigning, in Nicaragua alternates do campaign, making this position especially useful as a learning opportunity.

20. Beckwith uses the French and Italian cases to illustrate the potential success of this strategy. In the 1981 French elections, 17.2 percent of alternates assuming titleholder positions from the Socialist Party were women, compared to only 5.3 percent of directly elected titleholders (Beckwith 1989, 8).

21. Both party quotas and national quotas vary tremendously. Quotas can be written to deter parties from circumventing the intent of these gender goals; for example, by setting placement mandates and clear enforcement mechanisms.

22. The 1996 Mexican quota “recommendation” did not include a placement mandate, which means that parties could place female candidates in unelectable titleholder positions or as alternates. Subsequent reform in 2002 mandated a maximum of 70 percent of titleholder candidates from the same gender (Baldez 2007).

23. We were unable to obtain curricula vitae for four of the female alternates. We did not carry out a similar analysis for women elected to alternate positions in 1996 or 2001, but we have no reason to believe that the 2006 cohort was substantively different.

24. Nine of the alternates elected in 2006 were interviewed for this project, representing 10 percent of the alternates. All incumbent alternates were asked to participate in the study in May 2009, and were interviewed between May 2009 and April 2010. The goal of these interviews was to clarify the role that alternates can and do play in politics and to gather information on the political backgrounds and ambitions of alternates.

25. Of the 14 women for whom we have data, 4 had held congressional office (as titleholders, not alternates), 5 had been elected to other political office, and 9 had held important positions in their parties. Many of these women were also leaders of social organizations or had held important appointed positions in the bureaucracy.

26. The benefits that come with these positions (salary, ability to propose legislation, legislative immunity) might increase the desirability of the post for potential candidates who are unable to become titleholders and may even be attractive to former titleholders.

27. The small numbers of women in these positions makes it difficult to interpret some of these results. These differences may also be a result of the relationship between an alternate and his or her titleholder.

28. Our sample of nine alternates includes one alternate from the FSLN, one from the PLC, three from the ALN, and three from the MRS. Please note that the sample unfortunately does not mirror the makeup of the legislature elected in 2006.

29. Congress members choose not to renounce their posts in order to maintain immunity, according to a legal adviser for the National Assembly (Male

Legal Adviser 2009). Congress members are the only officeholders in Nicaragua who can hold other political positions without having to renounce their current positions.

30. Two women ended up serving in these long-term substitutions. Please note the small size of the Nicaraguan National Assembly (92 seats) when reading these percentages.

31. Members of the FSLN were also more likely to abandon their alternate posts. About 1 in 10 FSLN alternates renounced their positions in order to accept another post, as compared to 4 percent of PLC members. This is not surprising, given that the FSLN is currently the party in government.

32. Interview data could potentially confirm that party women have negotiated away alternate positions in exchange for titleholder ones or have traded away some seats for better placement on lists. Unfortunately, *secretismo*, the official policy preventing officeholders from participating in interviews with groups other than the official FSLN media, has blocked us from conducting such interviews. Information about the policy of *secretismo* can be found in *El Nuevo Diario* 2007; Lauría and Simon 2009.

33. On this occasion, they were so effective that they were able to pressure the FSLN leadership to implement a “braid” strategy. This technique was not used for *suplentes*, who were placed mostly in low positions.

34. We learned that this bargaining also takes place when fissures emerge in a political party. As the ALN split in two over issues of corruption, some politicians demanded candidacies or higher spots on the party lists in exchange for staying with the ALN.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews cited in the text are listed here. All interviews were conducted by Ana Vijil Gurdíán in Managua, Nicaragua except May 23, 2003, which was done by Magda Hinojosa in Mérida, Mexico; and April 8, 2010, which was conducted by María José Uriarte in Managua.

Female ALN Alternate 2007–2011. October 29, 2009.

Female FSLN Alternate 2007–2011. Departmental/Regional List. October 22, 2009.

Female MRS National Directorate Member, Former MRS President, Former FSLN Titleholder 1990–96. March 23, 2010.

Female PLC Titleholder 2007–2011. National List. April 8, 2010.

Female PRI Council Member. May 23, 2003.

Male ALN Alternate 1. 2007–2011. Departmental/Regional List. May 26, 2009.

Male ALN Alternate 2. 2007–2011. Departmental/Regional List. May 27, 2009.

Male ALN Alternate 3. 2007–2011. National List. May 26, 2009.

Male Legal Adviser to National Assembly. May 26, 2009.

Male MRS Alternate 1. 2007–2011. Departmental/Regional List. May 18, 2009.

Male MRS Alternate 2. 2007–2011. Departmental/Regional List. May 29, 2009.

Male MRS Alternate 3. 2007–2011. National List. May 22, 2009.

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