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**THE THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZING:
MARXISM, FEMINISM, DEMOCRATIZATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY
IN MOZAMBIQUE AND NICARAGUA**

by

JENNIFER LEIGH DISNEY

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, The City University of New York**

2002

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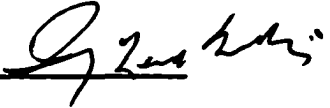
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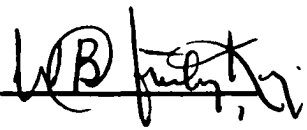
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK GRADUATE SCHOOL

Abstract

**The Theories and Practices of Women's Organizing:
Marxism, Feminism, Democratization and Civil Society in Mozambique and Nicaragua**

By

Jennifer Leigh Disney

Advisor: Irving Leonard Markovitz

This dissertation is a comparative analysis of women's organizing in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua. It examines the nature of the analyses articulated by the revolutionary parties in power (FRELIMO and FSLN), as well as how differences in origin and mobilization techniques adopted by the national-level women's organizations (OMM and AMNLAE) influenced the formation and implementation of a feminist agenda in each country. I argue that a gendered analysis of women's oppression was absent from the theories and practices of both revolutionary struggles, particularly in understanding the economic, cultural and personal intersections of production and reproduction. My research reveals that women have gone from being *mobilized by* the revolutionary state parties in power in each context for the purpose of achieving the socialist/nationalist goals of FRELIMO and the FSLN to *organizing themselves* for feminist political change, to varying degrees, within both countries today. This has varied in each case to a large extent due to: (1) the degree of ideological and organizational autonomy achieved by women; and (2) the nature of the party politics.

This dissertation also examines the contemporary women's movements that have emerged in each country, measurable to a large extent by the degree of proliferation of autonomous women's organizations in 'civil society.' Throughout this analysis, I pay particular attention to the relationship between production and reproduction, taking issue with the way women's gender interests are usually understood within the literature on women in the developing world. I argue that 'feminist agency' has emerged in both countries from the process of women's organizing around both *practical gender needs* and *strategic gender interests*. Moreover, I show that, despite the differences that have existed in women's organizing in each country, the feminisms that are emerging in *both* countries challenge the equality/difference, practical/strategic, and economics/sex-culture-violence divides that exist in many American and European feminisms by: (1) attempting to unify women and men by focusing on gender and the common struggles of empowerment and development; and (2) looking for intersectional ways to address issues such as domestic violence, health, reproductive rights, education and economic opportunities both inside and outside the home.

Acknowledgements

For as long as I can remember, I have been aware of and willing to speak out against injustice. I remember as a child getting into arguments with people in my white, working-class neighborhood about racism. It is not that I had much experience with diversity at that age, but something told me that making generalizations about the inherent inferiority of large groups of people different from oneself was wrong. I have been blessed with having the most supportive family network imaginable, and I have to believe that it was the love, courage, strength and support that was provided for me at home that gave me the foundation to identify categories of justice and injustice, question acts of oppression, and ask what I could do to try to stop them.

I have to first thank my mom and dad, without whom I would not be the person I am today. Thanks to my mom, Lila, for constantly telling me that I could be and do anything in the world that I wanted to be and do, and for providing me with the material, emotional and intellectual support to do so. She also read, commented on, and edited an entire draft of my dissertation, for which I am eternally impressed and grateful. Thanks to my dad, Donald, for instilling in me an intellectual curiosity to ask questions and seek answers, and for proving to me that a household can be based on equality and a man can be a feminist. My dissertation is dedicated to them.

Thanks also to my two older sisters, Stephanie and Debbie, my earliest mentors, who gave me models of achievement, moments of laughter and more material support than I can ever repay. They also taught me what 'sisterhood' could be like, so I knew how to find it as I established friendships with caring, strong, powerful women throughout my life. My brothers-in-law, Nick and Kevin, and nephews and niece, Christopher, Lindsay, Robert and Lukas, have kept me grounded so that I always remember the important things in life: love, laughter, support, care, and connection.

The driving question which led me to this dissertation was the following: to what extent can a movement be created which attempts to fight oppression as such, in its various manifestations, including race, class, gender, sexual, cultural, national and post-colonial, to name a few? My development as a political subject began in my family, continued through grade school and in my UMYF community group, but really took shape in college and graduate school. As I continue my acknowledgments, I would like to share two short anecdotes to help situate my location and explain how I came to choose the topic I did.

My mentor from Western Maryland College, Christianna Nichols Leahy, was a Marxist Comparativist who turned me onto Mozambique. She was the country expert for Amnesty International for the formerly Portuguese colonized countries in Africa. My last year of college she was reading Catherine MacKinnon's Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, and thought I might like it. My love for the intersection of Marxism and Feminism was born. I knew at that moment that Socialist-Feminist theories would be my passion for some time to come. Thank you, Christianna, for everything you taught me about the world, and for lighting a fire in me that burns bright to this day.

Then, I came to the City University of New York Graduate Center. My first semester in New York City, I got involved in an International Socialist Organization (ISO) reading group. After one of our meetings, one of the leaders asked me to share with him how I saw the world, what was wrong with it, and what I thought needed to be done to fix it. I proceeded to share with him my usual bent about the need to identify, understand, and fight multiple oppressions, to which he responded, "We don't think that. We feel that there is no room for feminism in Marxism." Thus, my aversion was created for organizations and/or movements that *claimed* to be emancipatory while perpetuating oppressive power relations, and either ignored, or even explicitly stated a hostility toward, emancipatory struggles *other* than their own. So, I need to thank the individual who made me realize in my own organizing experience the need for an intersectional framework before I had even heard the word.

I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to work with an amazingly supportive dissertation committee. Each of my committee members takes seriously his/her role as a scholar, teacher, mentor and friend, truly gifted in each of these areas.

First and foremost, I thank my dissertation sponsor, Irving Leonard Markovitz. Lenny has been my strongest advocate for years, consistently going above and beyond the call of duty as an advisor, including giving me thorough comments to a complete draft of my dissertation in one week. When it comes to being an advisor with the wisdom, experience, integrity, commitment, motivation, focus, and personal touch to truly be an advocate both materially and intellectually, there is no one else that compares.

Secondly, thank you to Frances Fox Piven and Hester Eisenstein, each of whom, like Lenny, read drafts of each chapter of the dissertation along the way. Fran, your scholar-activism, including opening up your home to a monthly dissertation workshop with your graduate students, is a model for me to emulate with my students. And Hester, you have sat with me discussing my ideas over dinner, often seeming to understand more clearly what I was saying than even I did! Thank you for years of friendship support and intellectual encouragement that I know will continue for years to come.

And finally, thank you to Ken Erickson and Kathy Jones. Ken has always given me the most detailed comments of my work, from seminar papers to the dissertation. And Kathy, you flew in as a CUNY alum, giving me not only detailed editorial comments to my writing, but also substantive theoretical feedback to make me a better scholar and thinker!

My years at CUNY have been greatly supported by a community of faculty, particularly those with whom I have taken courses in the Political Science Department and the Women's Studies Certificate Program. I would like to thank Joyce Gelb for the opportunity to conduct research on U.S. women's movement organizations, resulting in a co-authored publication. Not all professors offer students such material support. Thanks also to Sibyl Schwarzenbach and Joan Tronto for reading and commenting on earlier chapter drafts. Finally, W. Ofuatey-Kodjoe has given me years of scholarly advice, material support, and personal friendship. Thanks, Kodjoe, for everything!

I have been blessed with numerous friendship support networks throughout my life. From High School, thanks go to Missy, Mel, Traci, Amy, Aimee, Gwen and Andrew for standing by me all these years. From college, thanks go to Emily, Skip, Maura, Adam and J for being there for me through the best of times, and the worst of times. From camp, thanks go to Tiy, Judy, Moose, Robb and the rest of my CMST family, for providing me with years of love and laughter.

My community at the Graduate School has been more rewarding, fulfilling, and inspiring than I could ever have imagined. I have to begin by acknowledging my seven favorite women, my closest group of friends, my "Feminist Sisters," who now go by the more institutional name of WKWA: Susanna, Jocelyn, Dorinda, Effie, Tracy, Ronni and Dot. For years, my feminist sisters have given me the emotional support and intellectual strength to carry on. Thank you guys for everything you have done for me and will continue to do for me for years to come! Special thanks to Susanna, for hundreds and thousands of conversations over the years that contributed to my intellectual and personal growth and development. I owe you my mental sanity for all of the times that you told me to focus, that I could go on, that I could do it. I couldn't have done it without you!

Moreover, there has been a large, interdisciplinary network of friends, scholars and activists that I have been able to draw on for personal and intellectual support. Thanks to Martin, Margaret, Ron, Chris, Tatiana, Glen, Andrew, Dan, Vicki, Miriam, Kevin, George, José, João, Noland, Terrence, Ernie, Rhonda, Hollace, Rob, Ian, Mike, David, Mitu, Mark, Kristen, Amy, Menser, Ananya, Michelle, Heather, Penny and Christine. Thanks to Charles Price Reavis for giving me a copy of his dissertation. His was the first complete copy of a dissertation I had ever held in my hands. At that moment, for the first time ever, completing a dissertation felt real, material, finite, and possible. Special thanks also go to Anthony Hightower, for years of personal, material and intellectual support.

My research could not have been conducted without the support of the Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations, the Jewish Fund for the Education of Women, the PSC, and the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, including the guidance of Sue Rosenberg Zalk and Elizabeth Small.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“One of the tools of feminism is to question, to challenge ideas. This is so important for a revolution! We must re-invent the politics, re-name reality, return it to the people, understand ourselves. Many people say we lost the revolution because of the American War. This would have been paradise. But what about the endogenous reasons?”

Sofia Montenegro, Nicaraguan Feminist Theorist and Activist, Interview, 1/25/00

1.1 Introduction

Political scientists have long analyzed movements attempting to democratize the state or the market, but the analysis of movements attempting to democratize civil society and the family are relatively new. Recent trends in women's organizing and feminist theory have emphasized the gendered construction of the spheres of the public and the private, which has historically identified men as the actors within the 'public' realm of politics and the market while relegating women to the 'private' realm of household and family. This is arguably why feminist struggles around the politics of interpersonal relations and societal constructions of the family have been the final frontier of emancipatory organizing. Feminists have had to convince social movement organizers that the personal *is* political. While democratic movements have attempted to establish democracy in the state, and socialist movements have attempted to establish democracy in the market, both movements overall have tended to *ignore* the political power dynamics that take place within the socio-cultural sphere of civil society and the 'private' reproductive sphere of the family. This has been the focus of much recent feminist movement organizing, which contends that a fully emancipatory movement will be one which identifies the similarities among oppressions in all their forms, and seeks to establish democracy in all spheres of everyday life.

This dissertation explores the extent to which women have been able to mobilize within national liberation movements and integrate a feminist analysis into the vision and practice of social change of revolutionary movements seeking to overturn political, social, and economic structures and claiming to establish an emancipatory vision of society. I explore this question by examining the experiences of women in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua. These countries provide a unique opportunity for comparison. In both Mozambique and Nicaragua, guerrilla movements committed to implementing a socialist agenda were successfully able to seize state power. In 1974, after fighting a ten-year War of Liberation from Portuguese colonization, FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique) became the government of an independent Mozambique. In 1979, the United Opposition led by the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional de Nicaragua) defeated the forty-six-year dictatorship of the Somoza dynasty. In addition, both countries experienced post-revolutionary civil wars fostered by foreign-supported counterinsurgency forces (RENAMO, Contras) attempting to destabilize their socialist experiments. With the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, and the decision of FRELIMO to adopt a Western-style liberal democracy in 1992, the socialist agendas in both countries were overturned. However, the electoral victories of FRELIMO in 1994 and 1999, in contrast to the electoral defeats of the FSLN in 1990, 1996 and again in 2001, provide very different post-revolutionary contexts for the development of autonomous women's movements in each country.

What has the situation been like *for women* in Mozambique and Nicaragua? Were the concerns of women incorporated into the FRELIMO and Sandinista agendas? What was the relationship in Mozambique and Nicaragua between the goals of the socialist transformation of society and the liberation of women? Have women organized autonomous feminist movements on their own behalf in the post-revolutionary periods in either country? Do women need to organize autonomously in order to articulate their

interests into the vision and practice of social change, or can women successfully integrate a feminist analysis into existing revolutionary organizations? What impact has democratization had in both countries? What kinds of women's organizing is taking place in 'civil society' today? How is 'feminism' being constructed in Mozambique and Nicaragua? These are the questions I will address in this study.

Basically, my research reveals that while women were mobilized by the revolutionary parties in each country, FRELIMO and the FSLN, a gendered analysis of women's oppression was absent from the theories and practices of the revolutionary struggle, particularly with regard to the economic, cultural and personal intersections of production and reproduction. This was due to the origin, mobilization strategies and theories adopted by FRELIMO and the FSLN, and subsequently by the national level women's organizations in each country: the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) in Mozambique, and the Association of Nicaraguan Women 'Luisa Amanda Espinosa' (AMNLAE) in Nicaragua.

The theories of women's emancipation were flawed, and the organizing practices did not allow women the autonomy to develop a gendered or feminist analysis of their own oppression. Although the women's organizations in each country were very active and participatory, they lacked both the *ideological autonomy* to theorize women's oppression and the *organizational autonomy* to make their own decisions. In particular, the parties and women's organizations wanted to integrate women into the fields of defense and production, thus circumscribing their understanding of women's emancipation. Women's emancipation within the 'reproductive' sphere of the family, (including family farming, unpaid domestic and care-giving labor, reproductive autonomy, freedom from domestic violence and gendered cultural attitudes and expectations of appropriate behavior for women and men) was not addressed by either revolution. FRELIMO, the OMM, the Sandinistas and AMNLAE each adopted a strictly

class-based analysis of oppression generally, and of women's oppression in particular; this analysis offered little or no conceptualization of the *productive* power of the 'reproductive' sphere of labor, of socio-cultural forms of oppression, or of the connections between the needs of women and the goals of the revolution.

A comparative examination of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods in the two countries reveals that women have gone from being *mobilized* by the revolutionary state parties in power for the purpose of achieving the socialist/nationalist goals of FRELIMO and the FSLN, to *organizing themselves* for feminist political change, to varying degrees, within both countries today. This has varied in each case to a large extent due to: (1) the degree of ideological and organizational autonomy achieved by women; and, (2) the nature of the party politics. In Nicaragua, many more spaces for women's organizing emerged during the 1980s than in Mozambique due to the multi-dimensional organizing strategies adopted by Nicaraguan women. As a result, not only did autonomy struggles begin much earlier, but the electoral *defeat* of the Sandinistas in 1990 created an environment conducive to autonomous organizing separate from the party, in contrast to the electoral *victory* of FRELIMO in 1994.

Despite the fact that the organizing strategies adopted by women in Mozambique and Nicaragua during the revolutionary periods and under the periods of the post-revolutionary governments have been different, the conceptions of *feminism* emerging in both countries are remarkably similar. I will show that the contemporary constructions of feminism emerging in *both* countries, and, I would argue, in much of the developing world¹, challenge the equality/difference, practical/strategic, and economics/sex-violence

¹ There has been much debate in the literature over the terms 'developing,' and 'Third World' to describe the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East that have historically been incorporated into the global economy as colonies of European powers and producers of raw materials. Each of these terms is flawed, Euro-centric, and based on a linear, hierarchical understanding of world cultural, political, social and economic development. 'Post-colonial' offers an alternative, but can be misleading given the continuation of neo-colonial relationships globally. I have yet to find a satisfactory alternative, nor can I argue for a preference of the three out of context. I will use each of these terms interchangeably.

divides that exist in many American and European feminisms. As a result, they offer critical insights for the direction of future feminist theorizing and organizing.

The achievements of these revolutions cannot be understated, particularly in the areas of health, education, and access to basic economic resources for populations that dictatorial and colonial authorities had denied the basic right to rule and govern themselves for centuries. However, it is necessary to understand that the greatest *limitation* of both of these revolutions was their inability (or unwillingness) to translate such public, political and economic gains in the productive sphere of the state and the market into *private* political, economic, and *cultural* gains in the reproductive sphere of home and family. What is perhaps most striking is the fact that two countries, on two different continents, with very different cultural histories, produced such *similar* stories about women's experiences within Marxist-Leninist revolutions. Post-revolutionary societies will remain as unequal as non-revolutionary societies as long as the sexual division of labor and the secondary status of women in the sphere of home and family remain unchallenged.

1.2 Significance

The recent wave of democratization and the alleged triumph of capitalism which have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as well as in various countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, make this an opportune time to explore the extent to which political and economic transformations which *claim* to be emancipatory - whether socialist, capitalist, or liberal democratic - have produced greater freedom and equality for all citizens involved. While more countries than ever before have adopted democratic electoral systems and neo-liberal capitalist economic systems, there is continuing evidence of increasing economic inequality throughout the world. The gap between rich and poor is widening between advanced industrial societies and the developing countries of the periphery. According to the 1998 UN Human Development Report, the 20% of the

world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures, while the poorest 20% account for only 1.3% of total consumption (2). Today, over a billion people around the world are deprived of basic consumption needs; the average African household consumes 20% *less* than it did 25 years ago (1998 UN Human Development Report, 2). Meanwhile, 'economic development' for rural women in the developing context continues to mean that women assume the quadruple burden of unpaid subsistence agriculture/family farming, paid agricultural labor on farming cooperatives, child-rearing and the reproduction of social relationships, and all of the unpaid domestic labor of the household, including food preparation, water retrieval, and household maintenance. The 1995 UN Development Report estimates that in addition to the officially estimated \$23 trillion of global output, \$16 trillion of unpaid and underpaid work is performed around the world, \$11 trillion of which is the unpaid, invisible work of women (8).

These conditions make a Marxist critique of capitalism relevant, an economic critique of democracy necessary, and a feminist critique of both democracy and economic development - both the Marxist and the capitalist variant - urgent. Most of the dominant literature on democracy (Higley and Gunther, 1992; Huntington, 1990; Przeworski, 1991; Ruschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992; Schneider, 1993) still defines democracy as universal [male] suffrage, revealing the gendered nature of the concept of 'democracy.' There is also an extensive literature which addresses the gendered nature of the discourse and practice of 'development' (Boserup, 1970; Beneria and Sen, 1981; Sen and Grown, 1988; Young, 1992; Braidotti, et al. 1994; Mies and Shiva, 1994; Visvanathan, 1997). Both capitalist and Marxist paths toward development have focused on increasing women's activity in the public sphere of paid labor, without acknowledging the 'productive' value of women's unpaid activity in the 'private' sphere of 'reproductive labor.'

This dissertation makes a contribution to the body of knowledge attempting to understand gendered constructions of 'work,' 'production,' 'reproduction,' 'development,' 'democracy,' and movements for 'emancipatory' change by collecting and analyzing empirical evidence of the status, organizing conditions and struggles of women in the political, military, economic and socio-cultural spheres of life during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods in Mozambique and Nicaragua. It is my contention that focusing on the *interconnections* between the "private, reproductive sphere" of the family and the "public, productive" sphere of the state and the market within developing countries provides a unique vantage point through which we can construct an emancipatory vision of a new society, precisely *because* these interconnections highlight the intersection of gender, race, and class-based oppressions. Examining women's oppression from the perspectives of women located at the *intersections* of gender, race, post-colonial and class-based oppressions within developing countries experiencing economic dependency and counterinsurgency will provide not only a heightened understanding of the problems suffered by women globally, but also a unique perspective with which to articulate the theory and practice of a movement to eliminate *all* forms of oppression.

1.3 Theoretical Issues Raised

My work is necessarily located at the intersection of various literatures, and therefore draws on some of the most provocative theoretical debates within the fields of comparative politics, political theory and women's studies: Marxism and feminism, women and development, democratization and civil society, and women's movements in

the Third World. I begin with the assumptions accepted within a political economy/dependency/world systems framework so that I can take as my problematic the political, economic, and socio-cultural interests of women in the Third World.

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to examine how women's movement organizations in the developing world have been organized both within, and autonomously from, anti-colonial/anti-dictatorial socialist revolutionary movements; and (2) to consider to what extent a *feminist* analysis of the spheres of production and reproduction has been articulated. Here, I would like to address briefly the theoretical issues raised in this study, each of which is explored in detail in Chapter 2.

Women's Oppression: Production and Reproduction

This dissertation is rooted in a comparison of Marxist, Feminist, and Socialist-Feminist analyses of the causes of, and thus the solutions for, women's oppression. While orthodox Marxist analyses of women's oppression have focused on the category of 'productive' labor, defined as wage labor performed in the marketplace, socialist feminists have introduced the importance of examining the category of 'reproductive' labor, defined as unpaid labor performed in the family, subsistence and informal economies, as the locus for understanding both the *root cause* of women's oppression and the path toward women's emancipation. I assess the revolutions in Mozambique and Nicaragua according to the extent to which they have incorporated a *gendered* or *feminist* analysis of the spheres of production and reproduction into their theories and practices.

In addition, the literature on women in developing countries and the nature of women's movements in the Third World reveals a new focus on feminist policy concerns.

This focus pertains to power relations in the home and family, and emphasizes the interconnections between women's productive and reproductive roles, and the need to challenge the "public-domestic dichotomy" in order to establish "democracy in the country and the home."² This study measures the extent to which these concerns have surfaced in Mozambique and Nicaragua by examining the existence of struggles surrounding feminist policy concerns in the political, economic, socio-cultural, and familial spheres of life, the degree to which women demanded changes in these areas, and the extent to which policy changes were implemented.

Democratization and Civil Society

As Mozambique and Nicaragua have undergone 'democratic transitions' to usher in the post-revolutionary periods in both countries, it is essential to address the changes that have taken place in the transition from a socialist revolutionary paradigm to a liberal capitalist democracy. The post-revolutionary periods in both countries have been characterized by liberal capitalist democratization and a transition from mass organizations of the party-state-government to autonomous organizing in 'civil society'. Discussions of democratic consolidation require a critical analysis of exactly what constitutes 'democracy.' As a result, I examine the gains and losses each country has experienced in political democracy, economic democracy and participatory democracy, with a particular focus on the potential and the limitations of 'civil society.'

² This slogan was used in the Chilean women's movement as discussed in Jane Jaquette's Women and Social Movements in Latin America, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994.

Autonomy and Women's Organizing

Much of the work that has been done on women's movements in the developing world examines them within the context of other movements for social change (anti-colonial, anti-dictatorial, socialist, and democratization struggles). This has been the case because much of the mobilization of women in the Third World has taken place within the context of other human rights movements. Women's gender interests have often been subsumed within these other social movements. It was assumed that when the anti-colonial struggle was won, national liberation was achieved, or socialism or democracy were in place, women would automatically be emancipated. This has proven **not** to be the case around the world, and thus this scholarship has also become rightfully preoccupied with issues of women's autonomy.

This study explores the degree to which the national level women's organizations in Mozambique and Nicaragua (OMM and AMNLAE) were able to achieve *ideological autonomy* and *organizational autonomy* in relation to the state revolutionary parties in each country (FRELIMO and the FSLN). I define *ideological autonomy* as the ability of women in the women's organizations of the OMM and AMNLAE to theorize, understand, and analyze the oppression of women from a gendered or feminist perspective, and, as a result, to shape and conceptualize women's emancipation accordingly—of, for, and by women. *Organizational autonomy*, on the other hand, refers to the ability of women in the women's organizations of the OMM and AMNLAE to act, make decisions, elect leaders, issue statements and shape policies on behalf of women

given their analyses of the causes of women's oppression, and thus the solutions for women's emancipation.

Feminist Agency and Women's Interests

Feminist agency has emerged for women in both countries through the process of *mobilization, participation and organization*. Women were first mobilized by the leaders of the revolution for the purposes of achieving the successful implementation of the revolutionary agendas. As women began to actively participate in pre-existing revolutionary organizations of social justice, they communicated with other women, shared their experiences, saw the emergence of both the *contradiction* and the *intersection* between their labor in public production and private reproduction, and learned that their oppression was not unique. Women's feminist agency has grown as women have come to bring a specifically *gendered* analyses of women's oppression into the revolutionary organizations in each country. And finally, as women have felt stifled and repressed within male-led revolutionary structures, they have ventured off to create *their own* organizations in civil society during the post-revolutionary periods which have explicitly feminist structures, goals and agendas. This process of feminist agency, emergent in both Mozambique and Nicaragua, is the focus of this study.

1.4 Methodological Reasons for Comparison

Mozambique and Nicaragua provide unique comparative case studies for examining the ability of women to mobilize *as women* and develop a feminist agenda within the context of national liberation movements fighting for social change. I selected Mozambique and Nicaragua because I wanted to do an *inter-regional, cross-cultural*

comparison of revolutionary liberation movements from the perspective of women. In both countries, national liberation movements fought to implement a self-identified, emancipatory agenda within the context of colonization, dependency, and counterinsurgency directed by foreign powers. While one may not have expected the socialist revolutions occurring in Russia in 1917, China in 1949 and Cuba in 1959 to integrate a feminist analysis of women's oppression into their revolutionary struggles, it seems reasonable that revolutions occurring in the 1970s and 1980s would be more likely to do so, as feminist ideas had become an articulated part of the global public discourse, as evidenced by international meetings on the status of women (Mexico City, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; Bogota, 1981; Nairobi, 1985). Moreover, both countries have adopted multi-party liberal capitalist democracies in the 1990s, and have seen a tremendous increase in autonomous women's organizing in the past decade. As a result, the two countries provide the basis for comparing the conditions and consequences of revolution, democratization and feminism on women's organizing efforts.

1.5 Basic Demographics

Mozambique and Nicaragua are small, dependent, peripheral countries that have been incorporated into the world economy as producers of raw commodities. Both have predominantly agricultural, export-led economies which rely heavily upon the traditional exports of cashews, sugar and cotton (Mozambique) and cotton and coffee (Nicaragua). Mozambique exported \$300 million and imported \$1.6 billion in 1999 (World Factbook, 2000). Nicaragua exported \$573 million and imported \$1.5 billion in the same year

(World Factbook, 2000). Each country, therefore, has an unfavorable balance of trade, with Mozambique's import/export ratio even lower than Nicaragua's.

Both countries have struggled with colonization, foreign intervention, and underdevelopment and remain among the poorest countries in their regions. Mozambique has a total population of 17.3 million people, while Nicaragua has a total population of 4.9 million people (World Bank Database, 2000). Both countries have a dramatically young population, with age distributions breaking down almost identically. In Mozambique, 43% of the population is between the ages of 0 and 14, compared to 40% in Nicaragua. 54% of the Mozambican population is between the ages of 15 and 64, with 57% in the same age group in Nicaragua. Only 3% of each country's population is 65 years old or older. The age of the population reflects low life expectancies, high fertility rates, low standards of living and years of war. Both countries suffered massive destruction and human tragedy due to 'civil' wars initiated by counterinsurgency forces (RENAMO, Contras) funded by foreign governments.³

Mozambique has a 99.66% indigenous African population, including Shangaan in the South, and Macua and Maconde in the North. It was never a typical settler colony, with the Portuguese investing very little in infrastructure. Most of the Portuguese who were there fled after the coup in Portugal in 1974 and subsequent Mozambican

³ 50,000 Nicaraguans died in the war against Somoza, 25,000 died in the Contra War, and 500,000 were displaced. Similarly, in Mozambique, tens of thousands died and hundreds of thousands were displaced in the war with RENAMO. Addressing the magnitude of human loss, destruction and tragedy due to the Contra and RENAMO wars is outside the limitations of this dissertation. Numerous other sources attempt to address the impact of the wars. See, for example, William Minter (1994) Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique; Alex Vines (1990) RENAMO: Terrorism in Mozambique; Holly Sklar (1988) Washington's War on Nicaragua; Thomas Walker (1987) Reagan Versus the Sandinistas: The Undeclared War on Nicaragua.

independence in 1975. Nicaragua, in contrast, experienced a much longer history of settler colonization, and has a 69% Mestizo population. Officially independent from Spain since 1821, Nicaragua has suffered at the hands of U.S. neocolonialism and military involvement for over 150 years. Each country is divided into regions, 10 provinces in Mozambique, and 15 departments and 2 autonomous regions in Nicaragua. Each country has a unicameral legislature, with 250 seats in Mozambique and 93 seats in Nicaragua. In 2000, the ruling and opposition party seats broke down as follows: FRELIMO, 133 seats, RENAMO 117 seats in Mozambique; Liberal Alliance 42 seats, FSLN 36 seats in Nicaragua.

Human Development Statistics and Gender

In order to compare women's experiences in the two countries, it is important to understand the basic economic and social development context of each country. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistic created by UNDP designed to assess and compare basic indicators of human development across countries internationally. The HDI is a simple average of three other indicators: longevity, measured by life expectancy at birth; educational attainment, measured by a combination of adult literacy and the combined gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrollment ratio; and standard of living, measured by adjusted real GDP per capita (PPP\$) (Human Development Report, 159-160). The Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) uses the same indicators as the HDI, but breaks down the results to reveal any disparities which may exist between women and men. HDIs and GDIs range between 0 and 1, with 0 being the lowest possible index and 1 being the highest. In 1999, HDIs and GDIs were calculated for 174 countries.

How do Mozambique and Nicaragua compare in terms of economic and social development? Mozambique has an HDI of 0.281, an HDI rank of 169th, a GDI of 0.341 and a GDI rank of 138th (1999 Human Development Report). Nicaragua has an HDI of 0.616, an HDI rank of 121st, a GDI of 0.609 and a GDI rank of 100th (1999 Human Development Report). How each of the indicators breaks down gives a rough estimate of the disparity between the two countries:

	<u>Mozambique</u>	<u>Nicaragua</u>
Human Development Index Human Development Report 1999	0.281/Rank #169	0.616/Rank #121
Gender-Related Development Index Human Development Report 1999	0.326/Rank #138	0.609/Rank #100
Life Expectancy	45.2 years	67.9 years
Women/Men Human Development Report 1999	46.6/43.9 years	70.6/65.8 years
Adult Literacy Rate	40.5%	63.4%
Women/Men Human Development Report 1999	25.0%/56.7%	63.4%/63.3%
Pri/Sec/Ter Education	25.0%	63.0%
Women/Men Human Development Report 1999	20.0%/29.0%	65.0%/61.0%
Real GDP per Capita (PPPS)	\$740	\$1,997
Women/Men Human Development Report 1999	\$612/\$872	\$1,169/\$2,835

Obviously, there are vast disparities between human development in Mozambique and Nicaragua: a 20 year difference in life expectancy, a 20% difference in adult literacy, a 40% difference in total primary, secondary and tertiary educational enrollment, and a \$1200 difference in purchasing parity per capita. These differences in economic, social and human development have affected the struggles for *women's* liberation in both countries. In Nicaragua, there is a much stronger infrastructure upon which to build a foundation for the movements of women, which have emerged to a greater degree than in

Mozambique. The 'massification' of education, the access to and impact of global discourses on gender equality and women's rights, and the opportunities for women's collective communication and organization all seem to have had an impact on the degree of emergence of *feminist agency* in Mozambique and Nicaragua.

1.6 Defining 'Feminisms' in the Third World

Many scholars have questioned the relevance of Western feminist ideas for women in the Third World. For some, the assertion has been based on a privileged arrogance that "poor Third World women" do not have the luxury to support, advocate, or even understand feminist ideas. For others, the claim has been that feminism itself is a bourgeois ideology of the First World which privileges gender oppression and struggles against patriarchy at the expense of oppressions based on race, class and nationality. As First and Third World feminists began to dialogue, the notion of many feminisms emerged, incorporating a dedication to focus on the *intersection* of gender, race and class-based oppressions in specific, local and historical contexts.

Cagatay, Grown and Santiago (1986) acknowledge that although a significant number of First World women at the UN Conference on Women held in Copenhagen in 1980 advocated focusing on issues they perceived as common to all women despite nationality, race and class, a minority of First World women and most Third World women argued that gender oppression cannot be separated from national, class or racial oppression (403). Between Copenhagen in 1980 and the Second UN Conference on the Status of Women in Nairobi in 1985, researchers and activists began integrating gender, class and race in more effective ways. First World feminists began to see survival issues

as feminist issues, and Third World feminists began to realize that national liberation movements need to struggle around women's specific issues (Cagatay, et al., 404). As Jane Parpart summarizes the issues, while many Third World women have often argued that global inequalities, and not men, were their main enemy, recent scholars have come to recognize the relevance of some feminist concerns to the condition of African women - namely, the impact of reproductive burdens on paid labor (162). This leads Parpart to claim that feminist categories of analysis "can and should be applied cross-culturally, but always in specific historical and cultural contexts" (178). In the words of Anne McClintock (1995):

There is not only one feminism, nor is there only one patriarchy. Feminism is imperialist when it puts the interests and needs of privileged women in imperialist countries above the local needs of disempowered women and men, borrowing from patriarchal privilege. In the last decade, women of color have been vehement in challenging privileged feminists who don't recognize their own racial and class power (384).

As Chandra Mohanty (1991) has argued, defining feminism in purely gendered terms assumes that identities of 'womanhood' have nothing to do with race, class, nation or sexuality: "ideologies of womanhood have as much to do with class and race as they have to do with sex" (12).

What is needed, then, is an understanding of feminism which allows for multiple articulations within the context of multiple oppressions on a global scale. That is why I will be using a definition of feminism constructed from the vantage point of a *standpoint of intersectionality* of women located at the intersection of gender, race, class, national, cultural and post-colonial oppressions. According to Gita Sen and Caren Grown, attempting to write from precisely this vantage point:

Feminism constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. There is, and must be, a diversity of feminisms, responsive to the different needs and concerns of different women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is only the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda (Sen and Grown, 13).

This description works well in conjunction with bell hooks' (1981) definition of feminism, expanded to apply within a global context:

To me, feminism is not simply a struggle to end male chauvinism or a movement to ensure that women will have equal rights with men; it is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels - sex, race, and class, to name a few - and a commitment to reorganizing [U.S.] society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires (194-195).

What is my working definition of feminism? A concept like feminism is very difficult to define much less operationalize, as it changes according to historical, cultural, political, national, and economic contexts. Part of my dissertation project is to examine how women construct feminism in two specific Latin American and African contexts. Nevertheless, I adopted a working definition of feminism in order to conduct my research consisting of the following three components:

1. Feminism is an *analysis* of the oppression of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, and familial spheres of life.
2. Feminism is a *movement*, based on this analysis, to improve the status of women of all races and classes in the political, economic, social, cultural, and familial spheres of life.
3. Feminism is a *theory*, aimed at sharpening the analysis, that attempts to understand both the gendered nature of everyday life and the ways in which systems of oppression based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, culture, and post-coloniality intersect and are constructed by, within, and through one another in order to better inform the strategies and tactics of the movement.

1.7 Research Questions

My main questions include the following: 1. To what extent were the understandings of women's oppression and the goals of socialist revolution of the Sandinistas and AMNLAE in Nicaragua and FRELIMO and the OMM in Mozambique framed by a Marxist-Leninist analysis, and how did this encourage or restrict revolutionary change for women? 2. To what extent did women's movement organizations in Nicaragua and Mozambique articulate *feminist* understandings of the causes of and thus the solutions for women's oppression? 3. What difficulties and successes did women have in asserting their own agendas within the pre-existing revolutionary organizations? 4. What difficulties/successes did women have in asserting their own agendas within autonomous women's organizations? By answering these questions, I hope to compare the alternative strategies of (a) integrating women into pre-existing organizations and revolutionary struggles and (b) creating autonomous women's organizations, in order to assess their relative success in furthering feminist agency.

In this dissertation, I explore both the **achievements** made by and for women within these two revolutions as well as the **limitations** of a revolutionary reorganization of society because of the *framing* of the revolutions and the subsequent unwillingness to challenge multiple forms of oppression, particularly those occurring in the socio-cultural sphere of civil society and the private sphere of the family. AMNLAE and the OMM, the national women's organizations of Nicaragua and Mozambique, effectively became the women's arm of the FSLN and FRELIMO respectively, each of which had a strong say in setting the agendas of the women's organizations and a veto power in determining their

limitations. Both the FSLN and FRELIMO saw women's concerns as subsumed by and secondary to the interests of the revolution (See Deighton, Horsley, Stewart, and Cain, 1983 and Urdang, 1989). The *theoretical framing* of both the revolutions and the women's movements in Nicaragua and Mozambique led to a lack of ideological and organizational autonomy and limited the development of a feminist analysis of women's oppression. Because leaders framed the revolutions in terms of class struggle and subsumed women's issues within this frame, the theory and practice of both revolutions upheld the false dichotomies of production versus reproduction, class versus gender, public versus private, and market versus household to the detriment of full revolutionary change for women.

The problem, then, is that if leaders consider women's specific interests secondary to establishing a "new social order," how will women and their interests become an *integral part* of that new social order? For the most part, the goals of the FSLN, AMNLAE, FRELIMO and the OMM were to integrate women into the revolutionary process in order to change *women*, not to change the process. My research reveals that although women were invited and, in fact, *encouraged* to become participants in the implementation of the vision of the FSLN and FRELIMO, the vision *itself* was to a large extent not up for discussion. I am not addressing the question of the overall 'success' of the revolutions, as Margaret Randall (1995) did. Randall asserted that it was the unwillingness of twentieth century revolutionary parties to alter their vision to include all groups in society, particularly by developing a feminist agenda, that led to their failure. Rather, my concern is the relative success of the revolutionary movements in addressing

the needs and concerns of *women*. I also want to assess these revolutions against an emancipatory ideal type, based on the notion that a revolutionary movement will not be fully emancipatory - and therefore should not claim to be - unless it attempts to fight oppression in all its manifestations and to achieve the democratization of not only the state and the market but also of civil society and the family.

1.8 Research Design and Data Collection

By conducting interviews and analyzing the activities, speeches, ideologies, and policy implementations of the revolutionary parties and national-level women's organizations in Mozambique (FRELIMO, OMM) and Nicaragua (FSLN, AMNLAE), I have examined the nature of the revolutionary analyses articulated as well as how differences in origin, decision-making structure, and mobilization techniques by OMM and AMNLAE influenced the formation and implementation of a feminist agenda in each country. In order to assess the framing of the revolutionary analysis, I carried out textual analyses of organizational and party documents, speeches of party and organizational leaders, and policy statements issued by the revolutionary parties and the women's organizations. In order to assess the nature of the relationship between FRELIMO and the OMM and the Sandinistas and AMNLAE and to evaluate the documentary evidence, I traveled to both countries and conducted over one hundred, in-depth, qualitative, open-ended interviews (Appendix 1: List of Interviewees).

I conducted my field research in Mozambique in July-August 1999 and in Nicaragua in January-February 2000. I conducted fifty interviews in each country, with women and men who were active in the revolutionary struggles, who have been leaders

and members of the parties (FSLN and FRELIMO) and the national-level women's organizations (AMNLAE and OMM), as well as women who have left the parties and women's organizations to become leaders of autonomous women's organizations and other NGO's that have emerged in each country during the 1990s. In Mozambique, I traveled to each of the three regions of the country, Nampula in the North, Beira in the Center, and Maputo in the South, interviewing women from both patrilineal and matrilineal societies. In Nicaragua, I conducted interviews in Managua, Leon, Granada and Matagalpa. I used a snowball sampling technique, making contacts for my interviews through scholars and activists of each country in the New York area, followed by outreach on the ground in each country of revolutionary leaders, party leaders, women's organizational leaders, members of parliament, and directors of autonomous women's organizations and NGOs in the capital cities of Maputo and Managua and other major urban areas in each country. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, or Portuguese and were assisted by translators in each country. Both the original language and the translations were recorded to ensure accuracy.

The data I collected include the following: (1) the status and conditions of women in each country from the revolutionary period to the present, including political and military participation, legal and civil rights, access to economic resources, degree of participation in paid and unpaid labor, equality in social conditions and cultural customs; (2) official public policies, as well as expressed aspirations to improve women's status, in the above areas, with a particular focus on women's realities in the productive and reproductive spheres of everyday life; (3) the decision-making process by which policies

in the above areas were adopted, with a focus on the participation of and different positions taken by revolutionary party leaders, women's organization leaders, grassroots members of women's organizations, union and other regional workers' associations; and (4) the body of ideas conceptualized within the revolutionary analysis by state party leaders and women's organization leaders, with a focus on the extent to which the relationship between women's oppression in the productive and the reproductive spheres of life, and ideas of 'feminism' itself, *were* and *were not* articulated.

In order to assess the theoretical framing of the revolutionary analysis and the national-level women's organizational analysis, as well as the degree of ideological autonomy achieved by the national-level women's organizations, I examined the analysis of and proposed solution for women's oppression of FRELIMO and the Sandinistas, and of the OMM and AMNLAE. To assess the degree of organizational autonomy achieved by the OMM and AMNLAE, I examined the nature and purpose of the origin of the organizations, as well as the decision-making structure of the organizations and the organizing strategies adopted.

In order to assess the degree to which a *feminist* analysis was articulated and a *feminist* agenda was implemented during the revolutionary periods, defined as the formation of policies improving the status of women in the productive and reproductive spheres of life, I examined the nature of the articulations, policy implementations and political successes of women in the areas of: (1) political participation, legal rights and cultural restraints (women's political representation, constitutional rights and legal provisions, increasing literacy, educational opportunities, decreasing roles of

dominance/submission in family relations, cultural customs, reproductive rights and violence against women); and, (2) military participation, economic production, and myths of women's incapacity (women's military participation, women's economic participation and status, access to an equal share of income, degree of shared roles in paid labor, subsistence production, family farming and other reproductive labor including food preparation, household maintenance, water retrieval and childrearing).

1.9 Research Conclusions

My research leads to the following conclusions: (1) The revolutionary analyses of FRELIMO, the OMM, the Sandinistas and AMNLAE were framed by Marxist-Leninist understandings of the causes and thus the solutions of women's oppression, which, both theoretically and empirically, impeded the articulation of a *feminist* analysis of women's oppression. Three fundamental elements were missing from both revolutionary analyses of women's oppression: (a) an analysis of women's oppression in the 'reproductive' sphere; (b) a gendered reconceptualization of 'production' and 're-production'; and (c) an analysis which showed the intricate connections between these two spheres, as well as between material and ideological levels of oppression, socialism, and feminism, and the specific concerns of women and the interests of revolution; (2) The *framing* of both the revolutionary movements and the women's organizations in Nicaragua and Mozambique led to a lack of *ideological* and *organizational* autonomy for the national level women's organizations, AMNLAE and the OMM respectively; (3) The contemporary women's movements in each country have evolved to a large extent based upon the party politics. In Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas were defeated in the elections

of 1990 and 1996, AMNLAE is simply one autonomous women's organization among many which constitute the autonomous women's and feminist movements of Nicaragua. In Mozambique, where FRELIMO won the multi-party elections of 1994 and 1999 and is still the party in power, the OMM has decided to return to the party after a period of autonomy, and remains the predominant women's organization among an emerging autonomous women's movement; (4) While significant gains were made for women in both revolutions in the areas of political participation, legal protections, and challenging various myths of women's incapacity, women's unequal status in the spheres of culture, the economy, and the family was given little attention; (5) During the periods of democratization in both countries, there have been gains in political democracy and losses in economic democracy. Participatory democracy has seen both advancements and setbacks. Revolutionary mass participation through a centralized state has given way to post-revolutionary autonomous organizing in civil society characterized by greater freedom and more diversity. However, NGOs are rising within an expanded civil society to fill the void left by an ever-shrinking neo-liberal state. As a result, 'civil society' is becoming a *weak* substitute for a fuller understanding of democracy; (6) Feminist agency is constructed through women's organizing around both *practical gender needs* and *strategic gender interests*⁴ in the productive and reproductive spheres of life, in both autonomous organizations and in mixed organizations with men. However, women's feminist agency appears to have the fullest development if women have an autonomous space to cultivate a gendered analysis of their own oppression at some point during their

⁴ See discussion in Chapter 2, section 2.6.

organizing experience; (7) The feminisms emerging in both Mozambique and Nicaragua challenge the equality/difference, practical/strategic, and economics/sex-violence-culture divides that exist in many American and European feminisms by: (a) attempting to unify women and men by focusing on gender and the common struggles of empowerment and development; and (b) looking for an intersectional way to address issues such as domestic violence, health, reproductive rights, education and economic opportunities both inside and outside the home.

1.10 Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2 examines the main theoretical bodies of literature relevant to this analysis of women's organizing in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua. First, I examine Marxist, feminist, and socialist feminist analyses of women's oppression. The literature on women, gender and development adds a crucial international dimension through its focus on subsistence production and the superexploitation of women in the developing world. Next, I examine the literature on democratization and civil society in order to locate the post-revolutionary changes that have taken place in each country. Finally, I examine the literature on autonomy, feminist agency and women's organizing in the developing world, and I critique the predominant distinction in the literature of women's interests in the developing world between practical and strategic gender interests. I contend that a standpoint of intersectionality offers a better way to theorize and research women's interests in the developing world.

Chapter 3 provides a history of the OMM and AMNLAE, examining both the theories and practices adopted by the two women's organizations in relation to the state

parties in each country, FRELIMO and the FSLN respectively. To shape the history, the theories of women's emancipation adopted by FRELIMO and the FSLN, and by directive, the OMM and AMNLAE, will be briefly examined, highlighting the distinctions made between *marxist* production and *feminist* reproduction. I discuss the relationship between the OMM and FRELIMO and AMNLAE and the FSLN in great detail, arguing that both women's organizations lacked the ideological and organizational autonomy to develop a *gendered* or *feminist* analysis of women's oppression.

Chapter 4 focuses on the struggles that emerged for ideological and organizational autonomy, both between the organization and the party and within the organizations themselves. Both the OMM and AMNLAE experienced similar organizational identity and autonomy struggles throughout the 1980s. However, each organization emerged from the 1990s quite differently due to: (1) the nature of the organizing strategies adopted, and (2) party politics. In Nicaragua during the 1980s, many more spaces for women's organizing emerged than in Mozambique due to the multi-dimensional organizing strategies adopted by Nicaraguan women. Not only did autonomy struggles begin much earlier in Nicaragua, but the *electoral defeat* of the Sandinistas in 1989 created an environment conducive for women's autonomous organizing, in contrast to the *electoral victory* of FRELIMO in 1994.

Chapters 5 and 6 attempt to measure the 'value added' of a socialist revolutionary analysis for women by providing an assessment of the policy impact of FRELIMO, the FSLN, the OMM, and AMNLAE on women in Mozambique and Nicaragua in the areas of women's conditions, equality, status, and rights in the political, economic, social,

cultural, and familial spheres of life. The areas to be examined are politics, the law, culture, and the family (Chapter 5), and military participation, economic production and reproduction, and gendered participation in paid and unpaid labor (Chapter 6). Particular attention will be paid to regional differences as well as to the distinction between matrilineal and patrilineal societies in Mozambique. Generally speaking, the greatest advancements have been in the political sphere in terms of women's participation in public office and guarantees of basic civil rights, while the weakest achievements remain in the spheres of economics, culture, and the family. While the economic limitations of women in both contexts have both exogenous and endogenous causes, the limitations for women in the spheres of culture and the family are primarily endogenous.

Chapter 7 examines the complicated changes that each country has undergone in the period of 'political democratization.' The concepts of democracy, democratization, and civil society will be discussed critically, examining what changes have taken place in each country in the post-revolutionary period. In this chapter, I argue that although there have been gains in political democracy, economic democracy has decreased in both Mozambique and Nicaragua. In addition, I assess the potential and the limitations of post-revolutionary participatory democracy, occurring in the form of autonomous organizations in civil society. Although there is more organizing, greater freedom and a greater diversity of voices represented today, these voices seems to have less power to effect change on a national level. Moreover, NGOs are rising within an expanded civil society to fill the void of an ever-shrinking neo-liberal state. I contend that civil society is

becoming a weak substitute for a fuller understanding of democracy; expansion of civil society is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of democracy.

Chapter 8 examines the contemporary women's movements in Mozambique and Nicaragua. The theoretical debates and strategic challenges existing in both contemporary women's movements are discussed, as well as key examples of the kinds of women's organizing taking place today. In Mozambique, women's organizing focuses on the law, economic development, and, more recently, violence against women. In Nicaragua, women's organizing is coalescing around an intersectional approach to body politics, attempting to link between practical gender needs and strategic gender interests such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, women's health, and economic opportunities. In addition, I examine the contemporary constructions of feminism that are emerging in each country. In this chapter, I argue that the constructions of feminism emerging in *both* countries challenge some of the dualisms that are taken for granted in many American and European feminisms, and as a result, have much to offer to the future of feminist theorizing and organizing globally.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation by summarizing my research findings, discussing why women's oppression persists globally, and arguing that a reproductivist approach is necessary to achieve women's emancipation in the spheres of production and reproduction, as well as to consolidate democracy in the state, market, civil society and the family. Moreover, I argue that adopting a standpoint of intersectionality as scholars and activists is necessary to envision and enact an emancipatory, anti-oppression politics.

CHAPTER TWO

Marxism, Feminism, Democratization, and Civil Society in the Third World

What has to be stressed is that women's role in the family is socially constructed as a subordinated role - even if she is a 'female head of household.' For it is the female role to do the work which nurtures children and men, work which appears to be purely private and personal, while it is the male role to represent women and children in the wider society. And it is the representative role which confers social power (Elson and Pearson, 28).

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin with an examination of the historical theoretical debate between Marxism and Feminism. The party leaders of the revolutionary guerrilla movements that seized power in both Mozambique and Nicaragua subsequently adopted a Marxist-Leninist understanding of emancipation in general and women's liberation in particular. Therefore, in order to understand the difficulties women had in mobilizing *as women* within a socialist revolutionary framework, one must examine the differences between Marxist and feminist analyses of the *problem* of women's oppression, which have resulted in dramatically different conceptions of the *solution*, as well as of the overall agenda of social justice. The goal here is to begin to understand how integrating women into a revolutionary *process* may dramatically alter the emancipatory *vision*.

Next, I examine the literature on socialist feminism which attempts to bridge the gap between class and gender-based analyses of oppression internationally, particularly the literature on women and development in the Third World. Analyses of subsistence agriculture and family farming around the world offer much to theories of productive labor, reproductive labor, and the *superexploitation* of non-wage labor. In order to examine the postrevolutionary periods in Mozambique and Nicaragua, I also review the literature on democratization and civil society, and challenge the predominant

understandings of democracy from a Marxist and a feminist perspective, questioning those who champion 'civil society' as the cure-all for the establishment of democracy.

One of the most often cited frameworks for understanding women's interests in the developing world, and subsequently for analyzing women's organizing strategies, is Maxine Molyneux's discussion of practical and strategic gender interests¹. I will lay out Molyneux's framework and explain why it is an inadequate and in fact misleading way to understand women's interests and women's organizing strategies. My analysis of women's organizing in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary contexts in Mozambique and Nicaragua reveals that a standpoint of intersectionality is a better theoretical framework for understanding women's interests by revealing the connections of women's multiple subject positions and, as a result, the complex manifestations of oppression in women's everyday lives. Moreover, I argue that feminist agency emerges from women's organizing experiences precisely *because* they reveal the intersections of materiality and ideology, production and reproduction, and economics and culture in the lives of women.

2.2 Marxist and Feminist Analyses of Women's Oppression

Marx on Production and Reproduction

Marxist and feminist theorists have traditionally disagreed on the origin of the oppression of women, the reason for its perpetuation and the means to achieve its demise. Marxist theory has argued that the cause of women's oppression is located in the distinction between the spheres of production and reproduction. However, Marx spends very little time dealing with reproduction, and when he does, he clearly distinguishes between the "simple" *reproduction* of daily life and the higher level *production* of man positing his subjectivity into the objective world by mixing his labor with natural

¹ Molyneux's argument is laid out in her article "Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women's Interests, The State, and Revolution in Nicaragua" *Feminist Studies* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1985), p. 227-254. My discussion of Molyneux's framework is in section 2.6.

resources to create commodities for exchange. In *The German Ideology: Part I*, Marx devalues reproduction when juxtaposed with production:

They [Men] themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence....By producing their means of subsistence, men are indirectly producing their actual material life.....This mode of production must not be considered *simply* as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather, it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life.... (150).

Reproduction is referred to as *simply* fulfilling the physical existence needs of individuals. Production is identified as a definite form of activity and expression. I would argue that the daily reproduction of life and the actual reproduction of offspring are both definite forms of activity and expression. The problem is that for Marx, reproduction refers only to the biological act of creating future laborers, maintaining their minimum requirements of existence, and is undervalued. He fails to consider the range of activity which contemporary scholars have called "reproductive labor," defined as all of the physical, emotional, and intellectual labor required to maintain the private sphere of the household and the individuals within, enabling workers to successfully enter into the public sphere of production in the first place. As Joan Tronto (1993) and Sibyl Schwarzenbach (1997) have pointed out in their analyses of reproductive care-giving activity, it is the care that is performed by women in the background, in the "private" sphere of the family and civil society, expected yet ignored, which has reproduced the relationships needed for the "public" realm of the state and the market to function.

Marx himself identifies both the reproduction of human beings as laborers and the production of daily life and existence as essential to the materialist conception of history - and then he never discusses reproduction again. In fact, Marx ends up narrowing the definition of "productive" labor to that which creates surplus value or capital. Thus, orthodox Marxism considers domestic labor to be non-productive. What Marx does not acknowledge is the **productive** power of women whose domestic labor goes toward the

daily production and reproduction of material life itself. As Schwarzenbach (1997) has argued, it is critical to note the distinction between 'productive' and 'non-productive' labor which surfaces in the modern period. Immanuel Kant distinguishes between the barber, who simply serves another and thus is **non-productive**, and the wig-maker, who produces an object independent of himself, and by definition is **productive**. Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, as Marx does in Capital, would mean that the entire service sector of the advanced industrial economy is non-productive. Following this logic, Marx did not consider domestic labor performed by women in the home as 'productive.' Thus, a classical Marxist analysis of production and reproduction perpetuates the undervaluing of the unpaid domestic labor of women.

How does a Marxist analysis of production explain the origin of the oppression of women? First of all, Marx and Engels both state that there is a *natural* division of labor in the family. In The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Engels (1884) asserts that there is a natural division of labor in which men engage in *production*, which he defines as those activities related to the means of existence, food, clothing, shelter, and the tools necessary for survival, and women engage in *reproduction*, the propagation of the species through the reproduction of human beings. Not only is reproduction considered predominantly biological, but biological propagation of the species is considered the only contribution women make. Engels contended that class oppression originated around the time of the Neolithic Revolution, when a surplus of goods became available for the first time in human history. Thus, class oppression is analyzed by Marxists as resulting from the existence, and subsequent appropriation of, this surplus. According to Engels, women only became subordinate to men when production became a more important sphere due to its generation of surpluses. What, then, is the solution to gender oppression for a proponent of orthodox Marxism? To increase women's participation in the productive sphere of paid labor.

Many feminist scholars have disagreed with this analysis of the cause and subsequent solution to women's oppression. First of all, feminist theorists have critiqued this solution by pointing out the phenomena of the dual labor burden which results for women who take on paid labor outside the home while performing the unpaid domestic labor expected of them inside the home. Moreover, a Marxist analysis of women's oppression takes as a given the natural sexual division of labor and does not account for or explain the pre-existent power relation which allows "men" to relegate "women" to the lesser valued sphere of reproduction.

Second, this solution does not adequately address the problem because it reduces women's oppression to inequalities in the *economic* sphere. In fact, both Marxist and capitalist development discourses have reduced the *material* to the *economic*. While socialism is offered as an alternative economic system with emancipatory aims, Marxist notions of emancipation do not adequately address the problem of *human* emancipation because they ignore the materiality of the political, social, cultural and personal manifestations of women's subordinate status historically. What a materialist feminist analysis can offer is an acknowledgment of the economic contribution of women's unpaid work around the world as well as a *transcendence of the economic* by theorizing and attempting to eliminate the material impact of political, social and cultural forms of oppression.

From a feminist theoretical standpoint, the cause of women's oppression is patriarchy, the historical and continuing system of male domination over women, which predates both capitalism and class-based oppression. Patriarchal values are argued to perpetuate a sex-gender system in which socially constructed values, attributes and behaviors are said to emanate from males and females *by nature*, creating the historic binary dualism of masculine-feminine, in which characteristics associated with the former are more highly valued than those associated with the latter. Any emancipatory political

movement or revolution will need to address the gendered nature of oppression which flows from patriarchy, as well as the class-based oppression which flows from capitalism.

There is an extensive socialist-feminist literature of theorists who have tried to bridge the gap between class-based and gender-based oppressions by attempting to theorize the nature of capitalism and patriarchy as well as to understand the relationship between production and reproduction. I would like to briefly highlight this literature, most extensive in the 1970s, to explain why a socialist-feminist understanding of the spheres of productive and reproductive labor must be re-examined and resurrected as we consider the successes and failures of revolutionary movements for social change in the twenty-first century.

Socialist Feminist Thought: Alternative Analyses of the Causes of and Solutions to Women's Oppression

Numerous scholars have pointed out the inadequacies of an orthodox Marxist framework to fully explain the oppression of women (Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Mies, 1986). Many point out how Marx mentions both production and reproduction, and then proceeds to ignore reproduction and focus only on production (Stichter, 1990; Schwarzenbach, 1997). Thus, many Marxist-Feminists have subsequently attempted to take Marx's concepts of 'production,' 'reproduction,' 'surplus value,' 'class,' and 'exploitation' and apply them to the situation and experiences of women (Benston, 1969; Eisenstein, 1984). As a result, there has emerged a much heated debate on the nature of domestic labor - labor performed in the realm of the household for no wage. Some authors argue that understanding domestic labor is the key to understanding exploitation in the modern capitalist era (von Werlhof, 1988). The argument most often made is that the contradiction between paid and unpaid labor around the world is based upon a sexual division of labor in which paid labor performed in the public sphere of the market predominantly by men is considered productive, while unpaid labor performed predominantly by women in the private sphere of the home and family is considered non-

productive or reproductive (Mies, 1986; Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen, von Werlhof, 1988). There has also been a remarkably intricate modes of production debate about whether domestic labor performed in the household constitutes value-producing capitalist production (Dalla Costa, 1972; Mies, Bennholdt-Thomsen, von Werlhof, 1988), or a pre-capitalist or non-capitalist remnant of our feudal past perpetuated or co-opted by capitalism to fulfill certain functions (Laclau, 1971; Harrison, 1973; Smith, 1978; Molyneux, 1979), or even its own autonomous domestic mode of production (Delphy, 1976). Some point to the inherently gendered nature of Marx's concepts of production, reproduction, productive labor and non-productive labor and assert that the only way Marxism can explain the oppression of women is if Marxism itself is transformed (Beechey, 1977).

Socialist feminists offer an essential component for any emancipatory vision for women globally because of their focus on the economic conditions and material realities of women all over the world. Generally, socialist feminists accept the analysis of capitalism as the fundamental cause of alienation and exploitation in advanced industrial societies today. However, they shift the focus of Marxism to explain the specific exploitation of women within capitalist production. Thus, they emphasize the roles of domestic labor, reproductive activities, the family, and the distinction between the public and the private spheres of production as these have changed throughout history and still continue to perpetuate the system of capitalist patriarchy. In addition, many socialist feminists have analyzed women's oppression in the developing context through a comparison of the exploitation of women, nature, and colonies by examining the process of colonization by advanced industrial countries within an imperialist international economic order.

The Domestic Labor Debates

One of the most important ways socialist feminists have advanced Marx's analysis of surplus, production, and women's oppression is through their analysis of the alienation and exploitation of domestic labor - unpaid labor performed in the private sphere of the home, still predominantly by women. "Wages for housework" was a goal of socialist feminists in the 1970s who defined domestic labor as slave labor - labor for which there is no wage, no acknowledgment in the realm of public labor value, and yet which forms the foundation upon which industrial capitalism is based.

The domestic labor 'debate' was initiated in 1969 with Margaret Benston's "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation." Benston uses a political economy approach to construct a definition of women in capitalist society. She argues that women have a different relationship to the means of production than men, thus placing the roots of the secondary status of women in economics. Using an argument from Ernst Mandel, she argues that not all production under capitalism is commodity production for exchange. Rather, there are two classes of products that remain simple use-values: subsistence production by the peasantry for its own consumption and all things produced in the home (Benston, 33). Commodity production has thus transformed the way that *men* labor by creating a sphere in which men *don't* labor: the sphere of socially necessary production known as household labor. Benston thus defines women as "that group of people who are responsible for the production of simple use-values in those activities associated with the home and family" (33-34).

Benston was the first to draw attention to the fact that housework must be taken seriously in any analysis of the workings of the economy, and not relegated to marginal or non-existent status (as it was by Marx and Engels). According to Benston, women's work is not counted because it is not wage labor. Thus, it is not worth money. It is therefore valueless, expected and not considered work; it is this reality that serves as the

material basis for the inferior status of women. Since women do not earn money for the work they perform in the home, this activity is considered valueless. Why should women expect to be worth as much as men, who work for money? From a Marxist perspective, to think that a wage compensates for value created is to idealize capitalism. But, as Catherine MacKinnon points out, "no Marxists are heard to argue that, therefore, workers should not be paid" (70).

Benston goes on to argue that the emancipation of women is best pursued by using industrialization and converting private production of household work into public production: "Equal access to jobs outside the home, while one of the preconditions for women's liberation, will not in itself be sufficient to give equality for women; as long as work in the home remains a matter of private production and is the responsibility of women, they will simply carry a double work-load" (39). Why is there a sexual division of labor which encourages women to perform domestic labor for no wage? First of all, the amount of unpaid labor performed by women is very large and very profitable to those who own the means of production. "To pay women for their work, even at minimum wage scales, would imply a massive redistribution of wealth" (Benston, 41). In addition, keeping women out of the labor market, yet on hand as a reserve labor pool, is the most beneficial for capitalism, while the cult of the nuclear family serves as a stabilizing element in society.

Catherine MacKinnon (1990) examines the role of women in capitalism within the realm of appropriated sexuality. She argues that the social construction of motherhood has been used to keep women from the public domain of work and in the private domain of work. Thus, women have been kept from the wage-earning labor outside the home and have been expected to fulfill the unpaid and in fact, slave labor within the home:

...whatever the economic value of the domestic industry of women is, they do not get it... 'wages for housework' becomes a perspective seeking to explain the subordination of women to men under capitalism in terms of the critical role

of housework in capitalist production. The housewife role is then generalized to explain the exploitation and hence powerlessness of unwaged workers, argued to be the foundation of the exploitation of waged workers (MacKinnon, 64).

If the proletariat are slaves to wage labor, what is the housewife? Women have historically worked, but historically work has been defined as what men do (Hubbard, 3). Women's work is often trivialized, ignored and undervalued, both in political and economic terms. It is not called **work** when women **only** care for their households, raise their children and keep the private domain of family running so that men can be the "breadwinners" in the public domain. Because so much of women's work is unpaid, women's wage labor is about 76% of men's. Ruth Hubbard (1983) emphasizes the value of women by warning that "if women stopped doing all the work for which we are not paid, this society would grind to a halt..." (3).

What type of equality results when women are given the opportunity to work for a decent wage outside the home? The version of liberation that results in both capitalist and socialist systems is that women become as free as men to work outside the home while men remain free from work within it (MacKinnon, 10). And it is of course obvious that work opportunities outside the home fall into specific division of labor categories, those which pay less money, often involve performing care-giving functions, are devalued, and are seldom in a position of ownership.

Maria Rosa Dalla Costa offers a critical analysis to this discussion of wages for housework by questioning the very concepts used in the discourse itself. In her 1972 essay, "The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community," Dalla Costa challenges the Classical Marxist position that housework is 'non-productive.' Marx argued that only labor which produced a commodity for exchange and thus had surplus value leading to capital was 'productive.' Dalla Costa argues that what the housewife produces in the family is not simply use-value but surplus value through the commodity 'labor-power', and, as such, *is productive in the Marxian sense* [emphasis mine] (31). It

seems impossible that any Marxist who claims that the only thing a worker has to sell "is his own labor power" would ignore the labor power of the unpaid domestic worker as a commodity - as productive work. Even Marx's concepts of 'worker,' 'work,' and 'production' are gendered. He fails to see how the housewife and her labor are the basis of the process of capital accumulation:

Capital is able to hide behind the figure of the husband called 'breadwinner,' with whom the woman, called 'housewife,' has to deal directly and for whom she is supposed to work out of 'love', not for a wage (Mies, 32).

What Marx failed to address was that women *are* producing a commodity in the home: the commodity of *labor power*. While production has been going on in the 'public' realm of the market, the **reproduction** of everyday life (including food preparation, cooking, cleaning, child-rearing and emotional support) has been going on in the 'private' realm of the home, assumed, ignored, and yet providing the foundation for economic, socio-cultural and political development in the state, the market and civil society. This is still true and highly applicable in the case of advanced industrial societies, but the situation for women in developing countries like Mozambique and Nicaragua suffering from physical threat and economic scarcity is obviously greatly exacerbated. Not only must this work in the reproductive sphere be considered "valuable" to the rest of society, it must be realized as **essential** to the very functioning of society itself. If it were to be seen as such, revolutionary visions and emancipatory projects would be dramatically altered.

While Dalla Costa argues that women's work is both socially necessary and productive in the Marxian sense, Paul Smith (1978) disagrees. For Smith, domestic labor is not the object of Marx's labor theory of value because it is not commodity production for the purpose of exchange, and thus by definition is not value-producing (211). In volume I of *Capital*, Marx elaborates on his definition of the value of labor power:

The value of labor power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labor-time necessary for the production,

and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article. So far as it has value, it represents no more than a definite quantity of the average labor of society incorporated in it....Given the individual, the production of labor-power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance, he requires a given quantity of the means of subsistence. Therefore the labor-time requisite for the production of labor-power reduces itself to that necessary for the production of those same means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labor-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer (Marx, 1974a, p.167).

If "the value of labor-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer," then the woman/mother/housewife/subsistence farmer is producing the value necessary to sustain the man/father/breadwinner/migrant worker/paid laborer as well as the non-working children in the family. And how exactly do we measure the "means of subsistence necessary to maintain the laborer"? Maxine Molyneux states that "at the very least, the value of labor power must be equivalent in value to the **bundle of commodities** required for the reproduction of the wage-earner's labor power" [emphasis mine] (1979, 11). At what level of food, clothing, housing and health care? Precisely what "bundle of commodities" is required to re-produce the wage-earner's labor power? Soap to bathe with? Beer to drink at night in front of the TV after work to ensure his quiet acquiescence to capitalism? How about diapers to prevent his baby from excreting waste all over his house? Or a sexy negligee for his wife to surprise him with when he gets home?

I am trying to make the point that identifying the 'bundle of commodities' necessary to reproduce labor is arbitrary and will vary according to economic, cultural, political, and social factors. In a global capitalist economy where some wage earners use their wages for the procurement of luxury goods, while others cannot afford rent, medicine, or health care for themselves and their families, I would hardly say capital always purchases labor at its subsistence cost. Does this mean that women cost 76 cents an hour to reproduce while men cost \$1.00 an hour to reproduce? Paul Smith (1978) and Maxine Molyneux (1979) may disagree with the arguments by Seccombe (1974) and

others that labor-power is necessarily sold at below its value because of the value added by domestic labor, but their argument that labor power is necessarily sold *at* its value is even more ridiculous. Molyneux perpetuates the economic reductionism and functionalism she says she is avoiding by repeating economistic theories that revolve around the need to reproduce the wage-laborer and the assertion that it always necessarily happens. What about the bundle of commodities necessary to reproduce all of the non-wage laborers in the household and around the world?

My work picks up where Molyneux (1979) leaves off. Although she accurately states that within the domestic labor debates there is a tendency toward economic reductionism and functionalism as well as a narrow focus on labor in the domestic sphere at the expense of theorizing the family and the household, her analysis perpetuates these problems while not theorizing the non-economic elements of the family and household:

The principal questions addressed by the debate have been whether domestic labor creates value or not, whether it produces the commodity labor power or not; whether it is subject to the law of value, whether it is productive or unproductive - and so on. This may have been inevitable given that the original concern of the debate as it developed within Marxism was, as we have seen, to ground an analysis of female oppression in a 'materialist analysis of women's labor'.... But the domestic labor approach was limited not just by its economism, but also by its narrow concentration on housework and on housewives, at the expense of analyzing the ensemble of women's economic (and non-economic) activities and the relations within which they were inscribed. Thus even on its own limited terms it failed to provide a *comprehensive* theory of the political economy of women (1979, 21).

While Molyneux tells us what should be done, she does not advance us in this direction. And by including the so-called 'non-economic' activities as a parenthetical aside, she perpetuates the false notion that a materialist analysis predominantly means an economic one.

In this work, I further challenge Molyneux on her distinction between practical and strategic gender interests (1984) (See my discussion in section 2.6). I argue that this

dualism, much cited in the literature on women's movements, continues the division between the ideological and material levels of women's oppression. I hope to bridge this gap by exploring the relationship between the material and ideological levels of oppression for women within both the productive and reproductive spheres by focusing on the *interconnections* between these levels and the *relationships* between these spheres. There should not have to be an either-or choice between theorizing the economic or the non-economic elements of women's experiences in the household and family. I would like to attempt to theorize women's oppression within the economic, social, political, and cultural spheres of productive and reproductive activity in the family, state, market and civil society where they *intersect*. As Jane Parpart and Sharon Stichter (1990) argue: "the task ahead is...to raise women's status within the global political economy, and this cannot be accomplished without a recognition of the totality of women's productive and reproductive contributions, and an understanding of the interrelations between them" (9). In addition, I hope to shed light on the Eurocentric bias and Western-based perspectives presented in the domestic labor debates by exploring the oppression of women in the developing context of two of the poorest, least industrialized countries in Africa and Latin America which recently vocalized their dedication to the liberation of women and attempted to implement larger goals of social justice.

2.3 Women, Gender, and Development: The Essential Component of Subsistence (Re) Production and the Superexploitation of Third World Women

The very use of the term 'development' implies a notion of historical change derived from western European secular and scientific thought. We assume that change is more linear than cyclical. Development is, by definition, an historical process, so one presumes direction in this process....The notion of development assumes the human ability to influence and control the natural and social environment. Static, agrarian societies may seek to live in harmony with the environment, but virtually every non-static society attempts to influence it, whether by tools, laws, religion, or even magic. What is distinctive about our modern

times is the rationality that is associated with scientific knowledge in societies' efforts to influence and control (Charlton, 1984).

An extensive literature has emerged on the need to integrate gender as a category of analysis into global development debates. There have been four dominant theoretical approaches within the field of women, gender and development: (1) Women in Development (WID); (2) Women and Development (WAD); (3) Gender and Development (GAD); and (4) Women, Environment and Development (WED) (See Visvanathan, 1997). These approaches developed within the context of both the modernization and dependency debates of the 1950s-1970s and the growing discourse of feminist theory and women's studies from the 1960s through the present. They represent a range of perspectives, including: (1) simply integrating women into the development project as it was constructed within the modernization literature (WID - See Boserup, 1970); (2) pointing out women's already valuable contributions to development within the framework of the dependency critique of the international economic structure (WAD - See Beneria and Sen, 1981); (3) questioning the social construction of gender roles and gender relations globally by focusing on the sexual division of labor, the public/private dichotomy, and the differing natures of patriarchal and capitalist constructions of gender (GAD - See Young, 1992); and (4) linking the male control of nature with the oppression of women and seeking more sustainable (female or indigenous) approaches to the environment and development (WED - See Braidotti, et.al. 1994, and Mies and Shiva, 1994). In addition, some feminists of the South have demanded an *intersectional* approach to development which includes race, class and gender by theorizing from the perspectives of poor Third World women (DAWN - See Sen and Grown, 1988) while more recent postmodern and postcolonial feminisms have questioned the role of representation in 'othering' and essentializing 'the poor Third World woman' (See Mohanty, 1991; Hirshman, 1996).

Both Marxist and capitalist notions of development have been critiqued for being Eurocentric and male, while the current predominance of neo-liberal capitalist democracy continues to reinscribe the gendered, racialized, and classed global order. Maria Rosa Dalla Costa is one of the first theorists to challenge the use of the term 'housewife' and its distinction from women as wage-workers, not to mention its inherent industrialized first world bias. She interprets such divisions among women as a result of a colonizing process, creating the family and the household as a colony, dominated by the 'metropolis', capital and state (Mies, 32). Using terminology created by dependency theorists, who describe core capitalist countries as having conditioned the **under-development** of peripheral countries (Frank, 1969; Theotonio dos Santos, 1970; Rodney, 1972; Ake, 1981), Dalla Costa advanced a theory about the structural similarities between women's struggles, the struggles of Third World countries against imperialism, and the struggles of all peoples marginalized by capitalism.

Maria Mies takes this discussion to a brilliant level of clarity. She states that the subsistence production of life, performed mainly "through the non-wage labor of women and other non-wage laborers as slaves, contract workers, and peasants in the colonies," forms the basis upon which 'capitalist productive labor' can be built and exploited (Mies, 48). Without the "superexploitation" of non-wage laborers (women, colonies, peasants), wage labor would not be productive. What distinguishes Mies' analysis from others in the domestic labor debate is her interest in going beyond 'fitting' household labor into Marxist theory by examining unpaid labor in the context of the developing countries of the Third World:

In contrast to the West's debate on housework we were not mainly concerned with the integration of housework into Marxist theory in which, so far, it had been 'forgotten.' Our main concern was to show that capitalism was more than the relation between wage labor and capital. The analysis of housework and of other non-wage work of subsistence producers in the colonies leads to a fundamental critique of the common perception of capitalism (Mies, 1988, 6).

Mies theorizes the connections between the exploitation of women, peasants, and the colonies themselves, thereby revealing her commitment to a global common ground upon which to build a feminist struggle uniting women and peoples of color against imperialism.

Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen's (1988) work also reveals an excellent analytical blend of socialist feminist domestic labor debates, discourse on dependent capitalism, and the merger between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production. Thomsen analyzes the parallels among all non-wage labor performed throughout the world - subsistence agricultural production engaged in by peasants in the 'Third World' and domestic labor performed by 'housewives.' This unpaid labor "reduces the cost of labor for capital and so ensures the super-exploitation of both peasants and women" (Pearson, Whitehead, Young, p.xi). Bennholdt-Thomsen (1988) argues that there is a fundamental contradiction within the capitalist mode of development between subsistence production and social production which is necessary for the accumulation process:

Within the present capitalist world economy, housewives and peasants (men and women) are the main subsistence producers; in different concrete forms both reproduce labor power for capital without compensation....these two groups are integrated into the capitalist mode of production through their marginalization, i.e., they form the consolidated mass of the industrial reserve army of labor, and as such they are continuously reproduced as part of the process of extended reproduction of capital (41).

Claudia von Werlhof (1988) also argues that women's work has effectively been the 'blind spot' in the critique of political economy and that all unpaid labor around the world within First and Third World contexts exemplifies the 'over-exploitation' of labor in that less than the costs of the reproduction of labor is covered by wages. She agrees with Bennholdt-Thomsen that capitalism creates unpaid labor relations outside the sphere of wage labor as an original form of accumulation, and thus these relations cannot be considered 'non-capitalist':

This supposedly 'non-capitalist' relation ('non-capitalist' because it is outside wage labor), that is, a production relation in which life (for capital the potential-commodity labor power) is (re)-produced by unpaid, use-value oriented subsistence work; this relation is very convenient for capital, precisely because of its difference from the wage labor relation. Without risking or paying anything, capital appropriates (it robs) the surplus labor made day in, day out by these subsistence producers, whose labor has been transformed into labor power usable for capital as wage labor, or in other forms. Only on this very basis does the 'real' process of capital valuation and accumulation begin (16).

In theorizing the connection between unpaid domestic labor and subsistence agriculture performed mostly by women in developing countries, von Werlhof argues that there is an analogous relationship between the macro relation First World/Third World and the micro-relation man/women. She not only attempts to make the case for women as a class similar to slaves and serfs, but also challenges the predominance of the wage-labor relation and the two-tiered class structure within capitalism by arguing that the non-wage-labor relation is an integral part of capitalism and constitutes the third and lowest tier in the class hierarchy.

Barbara Rodgers (1980) identifies the "domestication of women" - the sexual division of labor which separates out of the modern economy the domestic or subsistence economy occupied predominantly by women - as a critical component of the development process in the Third World (22). Rodgers also points out the gendered division of labor which often results in developing agricultural economies between cash-crop production, performed predominantly by men, and food-crop production, performed predominantly by women: "The process by which women become involved in the domestic subsistence sector, and men in the modern cash sector, is one that closely approximates the dualistic model as described by Clifford Geertz. He sees the dual economy as comprising a capital-intensive modern sector and a labor-intensive traditional one..." (Rodgers, 41). The fact

that women tend to work within the labor-intensive sphere while men tend to work within the capital-intensive sphere is not disputed: but the question remains, *why* is this the case?

Ume Lele (1975) discusses the disproportionate amount of field work performed by women in Africa as compared to men, even if all non-farm work is excluded. Rodgers (1980) begins the discussion of the economic importance of women's subsistence work in the developing context, pointing out how all food preparation work performed after the harvest is usually not counted as 'work' by development planners (152-158). She adds that despite the fact that most of women's energy goes into the preparation of food and retrieval of water, women perform many other essential, care-giving subsistence tasks:

These include house-building and repair, the production and sale of handicrafts and other manufactured goods, marketing, care of the sick, and of course, the care and training of children - which are essential to health, welfare and the maintenance of the social structures on which a family's subsistence is based. Not only is women's labor input a major determinant of production in non-farm subsistence work, but there is some evidence that it is increasingly a constraint on the production of subsistence crops in terms of the field work itself. In some studies, women's labor input has been shown to be the critical constraint on crop production (p.158).

There are three problems which emanate from these conclusions: 1. Women's subsistence production must be counted as productive work essential to the overall development and functioning of society; 2. Women's reproductive work must be considered as *essential*, and *necessary*, and not as a *constraint on*, women's productive work in the field; and 3. The connections between women's productive and reproductive work must be recognized. Success in both areas will require challenging the sexual division of labor and getting men more involved in the reproductive sphere. As M. Thea Sinclair (1995) argues, "women's participation in the world of paid work and their representation within it cannot be understood in isolation from their position in kinship and family structures and their relationship to childbearing and reproduction. Their positions in paid and unpaid work are mutually determining" (2).

Jane Parpart's (1990) work on women in Nigeria reveals the fact that while women's employment outside the home has increased, there has been no lessening of women's heavy domestic responsibilities, resulting in the "double day" phenomena. Jane Jaquette's (1994) volume in Latin America raises the double burden to a triple burden by including women's activity in community organizing, political associations and women's groups. While the Classical Marxist analysis adopted by most revolutionary socialist parties (including the Sandinistas and FRELIMO) asserts the liberating aspects of women's paid work, Lazreg, Sharma, Parpart (1990) and I all assert that this is only the case to the extent that women's burden of productive and reproductive labor in the household is lessened. This will only occur when we challenge the sexual division of labor and when men fulfill their share of unpaid, domestic duties globally. Stichter (1990) argues that more research is needed on the worldwide variations in household structures and the relationships between women's unpaid work in the family/household and women's paid employment in the Third World (62). This dissertation is a contribution to just such research.

Production, Reproduction, and Maldevelopment: The Patriarchal Will to Power Over Women/Nature/Peoples/Colonies

We reduce things to mere Nature in order that we may
'conquer' them. We are always conquering nature because
'Nature' is the name for what we have, to some extent,
conquered" (C.S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man)

Could 'women' be substituted for 'nature' in C.S. Lewis' statement? That which is dominated is often first 'feminized' or 'naturalized.' In addition to socialist feminist attempts to link patriarchy with global capitalism, imperialism and colonization, eco-feminist critiques come full circle by linking global capitalism with the domination of women and nature. According to Vandana Shiva (1990), 'development' has been reduced to a continuation of colonization, a system of capital accumulation that relies on the reproduction "not merely of a particular form of creation of wealth but also the

reproduction of the associated creation of poverty and dispossession" (189). Development is merely an extension of the project of modern Western patriarchy, characterized by "an economic vision based on the exploitation or exclusion of women (of the West and non-West), on the exploitation and destruction of nature, and on the exploitation and destruction of other cultures" (189-190). Shiva explains how patriarchal assumptions about 'productive' activity (using technology for commodity production) and 'unproductive' activity (natural processes, use-value) get constructed. My analysis and data will demonstrate that the socially constructed distinction between the 'public sphere' of productive paid labor and the 'private sphere' of reproductive unpaid labor not only serves as the critical component of the continued oppression of women, but also acts as the divide which perpetuates development as *maldevelopment*.

Shiva defines maldevelopment as a paradigm which identifies all work that does not produce profits and capital as nonwork or unproductive work, and contends that it is predicated upon a European, male conception of productivity:

There is no universal and neutral concept of productivity. Productivity means different things from different perspectives. From the point of view of capitalist patriarchy, productivity is a measure of the production of commodities and profit. From the point of view of Third World women, productivity is a measure of producing life and sustenance. That this latter productivity has been rendered invisible does not reduce its centrality to survival. It merely reflects the domination of modern patriarchal economic categories that see only profits, not life (192).

Western-style development or maldevelopment is based upon a reductionism, duality, and linearity which cannot understand equality, unity, and harmony in diversity (Shiva, 192). Maldevelopment is associated with economic growth and increasing GNP, which only measures goods and services produced in the money economy. There is no qualitative needs-based assessment of the *nature* of the goods and services produced, nor is there any accounting of the goods and services provided by women in the subsistence sector or reproductive sphere of the household and family. It is important to make a distinction

between subsistence living, which adequately provides for the reproductive needs of families, and the poverty and misery constitutive of deprivation which is caused by large-scale development schemes, including export-led cash crop production, cultivated at the expense of the food crop production base.

My project departs from Shiva's when she asserts that what we need to do is recover the "feminine principle." Not only is this term not clearly defined, but it also leads to the danger of essentialism, as well as the reification of the categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine', which are culturally, historically and socially constructed. When women in a particular localized context define a set of principles as 'feminist', on the other hand, it clearly delineates them as a chosen set of values defined against a normatively patriarchal project. In contrast to Shiva, my approach is more of a feminist anti-oppression politics, which is based upon seeking empowerment of the subject rather than power-over another. A feminist conception of power-as-empowerment seeks to provide the basic material and social conditions necessary for autonomous decision-making (see Copelon, 1991) and human flourishing (see Nussbaum and Sen, 1993) through the valuing of reproductive and care-giving activity in our society (see Tronto, 1993; Schwartzenbach, 1997).

A feminist anti-oppression project which uses a *reproductivist approach* as its foundation will result in a very different set of theories and practices than a revolutionary project which uses a *productivist approach*. A **productivist approach** focuses on the nature of the relations of production in an orthodox Marxian sense: the land, labor and capital that are required in the 'public sphere' of the marketplace to produce the goods, services, and surplus required for economic growth, development, and an equitable distribution of wealth. A **reproductivist approach** focuses on the replenishment of the relationships of everyday life in material, bodily, cultural, ideological, and psychological ways within the 'private' sphere of the home and family. Both approaches are intrinsically

necessary to ensure the functioning of the public and private spheres of the state, market, household, and civil society. And yet the discourses of modernization, development, and economic growth in both the socialist and capitalist traditions have valued one (production) at the expense of the other (reproduction). They are two halves of a larger whole, each required to achieve the fulfillment of women and men of different races, classes, ethnicities, nationalities, and sexualities, depending upon local needs and social, political, cultural, and economic contexts. I am not implying that there is one path to achieve that fulfillment. On the contrary, I am simply saying that the questions and issues raised by *both* approaches must be asked and examined simultaneously by policy-makers, revolutionary leaders, governments, non-governmental organizations, and activists in order to attempt to construct what emancipation, social justice, and human fulfillment *may* look like. The extent to which the revolutionary state parties (FRELIMO, FSLN) and national-level women's organizations (OMM, AMNLAE) in Mozambique and Nicaragua incorporated a productivist and/or a reproductivist approach toward their theories of women's emancipation, as well as the policies pursued and enacted during the revolutionary periods, will be examined in Parts I and II, respectively.

2.4 Democratization and Civil Society

Definitions of Democracy

Many would argue that one of the most revolutionary projects attempted in our time has been the establishment and consolidation of democracy. Contemporary literature in political science champions the triumph of Western liberal democracy as the dominant political system around the globe. Recent work on globalization purports to explain not only that democracy is the only game in town, but that democracy and capitalism go hand in hand. What exactly democracy is, however, and what the connection is between women and democracy, are much more debatable. Most of the dominant literature on democracy (Schumpeter, 1942; Huntington, 1990; Przeworski, 1991; Ruschemeyer,

Stephens, and Stephens, 1992) has been willing to ignore gender qualifications for voting, defining universal suffrage as [male] suffrage or democracy as 'one man, one vote,' revealing the gendered nature of the very concept of 'democracy.' The first struggle for feminism, then, has been simply to include women in the minimal standards of liberal democratic citizenship by guaranteeing that universal suffrage is *truly* universal.

Many debates have taken place in the literature over the meaning of democracy: indirect or representative versus direct, elite versus popular, electoral participation versus communicative action, procedural versus substantive. Generally, the most accepted definition of democracy within the discipline of political science has been Joseph Schumpeter's (1942), which established the minimal characteristics of representative government. Democracy is understood to be a political system with free, fair, competitive, multiparty periodic elections characterized by universal suffrage, where elites compete for the people's votes and the rule of law guarantees basic political freedoms and civil rights.

Many scholars and activists agree that although these minimal standards may be necessary for establishing democratic *government*, they are not sufficient for establishing democracy as a political system in its fullest sense. Proponents of a more substantive definition of democracy are concerned not just with setting up a democratic *process* but with ensuring democratic *outcomes*, particularly in terms of social and economic justice. Many theorists and practitioners around the world have argued that a meaningful definition of democracy as the exercise of political rights cannot exist without a connected notion of economic rights. The social democracies of Western Europe have been more concerned than the United States with establishing an economic safety net through various welfare state models based on granting economic rights to workers specifically or citizens universally. The revolutions in the Second and Third Worlds, including Mozambique and Nicaragua, have sought to establish "People's Republics",

which have included various models of state-run socialisms, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist nationalisms and mixed economies.

Katherine Hoyt (1997) provides an example of a more expanded theoretical understanding of democracy in her analysis of revolutionary Nicaragua. I will use her model in my study. According to Hoyt, the Sandinistas attempted to link political and economic aspects of democracy by identifying three essential aspects of their democratic political system: 1. political, or representative, democracy - which establishes a republican form of government based on periodic elections and universal suffrage; 2. participatory or mass democracy - which incorporates citizen participation through mass organizations in civil society; 3. economic democracy - which attempts to establish a more equitable distribution of wealth and more democratic control of the people over the resources and economic decision-making of the nation. Today, in both Nicaragua and Mozambique, many people argue that while there is greater *political* democracy given the decreasing role of the state and the party and the increasing role of autonomous organizations in civil society, there is less *economic* democracy because of the decreasing commitment of the state to an equitable distribution of wealth and the increasing privatization of the market. Democracy seen only as representative government would not produce such a nuanced understanding of the political and economic forces which shape people's everyday lives. The limitations and achievements of democratization in the post-revolutionary periods in Mozambique and Nicaragua will be examined in Chapter 7.

Democracy and Feminism

Global feminisms have brought a lot to the discussion of democracy. Not only have feminists focused on the more substantive dimensions of democracy as social justice, but they have sought the full participation of women, people of color, the poor, and other marginalized groups in the struggles to achieve democratization around the world, and they have shaped what that vision of democracy should look like. Moreover,

by challenging the dichotomies between the "public and the private" and insisting that "the personal is political," feminists have begun to demand the democratization of not just the state and the market but of civil society and the family as well. 'Democracy in the Country, the Home, and the Bed' became a slogan of the campaign to criminalize domestic violence in the Nicaraguan women's movement. By looking at democracy through a feminist lens, democracy becomes not just a political system or a form of government, but a way of life that transforms the very functioning of power in all spheres of everyday life.

Women have been active participants in struggles for democracy around the world, from the suffrage movements in the nineteenth century, to the anti-colonial wars in Africa and the anti-authoritarian struggles in Latin America in the twentieth century, to the fall of the Soviet Union in recent decades. While women have fought around the world to guarantee the basic political and civil rights associated with liberal capitalist democracy in the public sphere of the state, they have also fought for economic, social, and cultural rights in society, the market, and the family, and they have done so through an ever-increasing role in autonomous organizations in civil society. Feminist theory and women's movements around the world have expanded not only the *sphere* to which democracy should apply but also the fundamental understanding of what democracy should *constitute* in everyday life.

Some feminist theorists have challenged the public/private divide which reserves democracy for the public sphere alone, keeping intact various inequalities which exist in the private sphere. Carole Pateman (1988) argues that the separation of the public and the private, endemic to liberal Enlightenment values, prevents the achievement of democracy for women because the mere extension of liberal values to women in the public sphere does not address the unequal power relations between women and men in the private sphere of the family. Making a similar argument based on class rather than gender

inequality, Ellen Meiksins Wood (1995) argues that the separation between *public* politics and *private* economics, endemic to liberal capitalist democracy, allows capitalism to privatize political power. For Meiksins Wood, the existence of an unequal capitalist private power manifested through private ownership prevents the possibility of an equal democratic public power.

It seems to me that private power, whether based on gender, class, race, national or sexual status, circumscribes the parameters of public democracy. For example, some feminist theorists have argued that the sexual division of labor around the world and women's unequal roles within the patriarchal family have prevented the development of democracy for women. According to Carole Pateman (1988), who has examined the marriage contract, the slave contract, and the wage labor contract to uncover the sexual contract of women's subordination which underlies all social contract theories, "A patriarchal family with the despotic husband at its head is no basis for democratic citizenship; but nor, on its own, is an egalitarian family" (217). For Pateman, "democratic ideals and politics have to be put into practice in the kitchen, the nursery and the bedroom....a democratic theory and practice that is not at the same time feminist merely serves to maintain a fundamental form of domination and so makes a mockery of the ideals and values that democracy is held to embody" (222-223). Participation in a variety of institutions and spheres, then, is necessary for women and men to become fully functioning participants in a democratic polity.

As women's participation in the public sphere has expanded, however, the result for women globally has become the double burden of labor. As women's participation in the public sphere of politics and paid, 'productive' labor in the market has increased, men's participation in the unpaid labor of the private sphere of household and family has not increased proportionately. Women are still expected to perform the unpaid 'reproductive' labor of food preparation, child-rearing, cleaning, and subsistence

agriculture in most cultures and societies. Moreover, Jane Jaquette (1994) has argued that for women involved in movements around the world, their democratic political participation actually produces "a triple burden of housework, income generation, and community organizing, and they may also pay the price of male resentment and even domestic abuse" (226). My findings about the experiences of women in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua support Jaquette's argument about the triple burden of women, who will never be able to participate equally in democracy as long as they carry undue burdens in the family, household, and market.

Civil Society: A Critical Examination

Contemporary discussions of democracy and democratization go hand in hand with analyses of the importance of civil society. Mass organizations of the revolutionary state in Mozambique and Nicaragua have given way to autonomous organizations in civil society. Women's movements have become among the most influential of contemporary movements in civil society, and as a result, women's relationships to civil society and the state are very relevant to this study.

The concept of 'civil society' has undergone numerous transformations in the history of political thought.² Today, the dominant literature on state/civil society relations identifies the state as the realm of coercion and civil society as the realm of freedom.³ The conventional wisdom of much of the recent literature is that 'civil society' represents

²It is important to note how dramatically the meaning of the term 'civil society' has changed from the 17th century to the present: (1) use by the Social Contract theorists as the equivalent of the state and political society and juxtaposed to the state of nature; (2) use by Hegel as a pre-political sphere, understood to be the realm of the particular as opposed to the State, the realm of the universal; (3) use by Marx as the realm of economic relations between the 'private' family and the 'public' state; (4) use by Gramsci to refer to the complex of ideological/cultural relations and spiritual/intellectual life where the hegemony of dominant groups is exercised. Yet, civil society for Gramsci was also the place where a new kind of struggle could take place against capitalism in the sphere of everyday life: "The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare" (*Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 235). For the purpose of this dissertation, I will focus on the contemporary use of the term within the discourse of democratization.

³Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato. *Civil Society and Political Theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

everything good about democracy, namely, pluralism and organizations of, for and by the people. 'Civil society' is understood to be the realm of freedom, autonomy and voluntary associations which exists 'outside the state.' As Ellen Meiksins Wood (1995) argues in Democracy Against Capitalism, civil society has become "an all-purpose catchword for the Left, encompassing a wide range of emancipatory aspirations" (238). For Wood, the danger of the concept lies in the fact that "the totalizing logic and the coercive power of capitalism become invisible when the whole social system of capitalism is reduced to one set of institutions and relations among many others, on a conceptual par with households or voluntary associations" (245). The work of Robert Putnam (1993) epitomizes the danger to which Wood refers. He makes no distinction between the types of organizations in civil society, the degree of their politicization, or the extent of the power which define them, equating the existence of bowling leagues with the presence of democracy.

For Larry Diamond (1999), civil society and democracy are inherently interconnected. Democracy requires political institutionalization through political parties and state structures. Vital for these purposes is "a vigorous and autonomous civil society" (4). He defines civil society as:

the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from 'society' in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests and ideas, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable. Voluntary collective action within the public sphere takes place in competitive ideological markets; civil society, thus, implies notions of partialness, pluralism, and competition (4).

After describing the voluntary, autonomous, pluralist sphere of civil society, Diamond goes on to tell us what kind of organizations he has determined do not count in civil society:

Organizations that seek to monopolize a sphere of collective life (in the sense of denying the legitimacy of competing groups) or to envelop totally the lives of their members are, thus, not part of civil

society. Civil society also excludes the private dimensions of individual and family life, the inward-looking activities of parochial groups, the profit-making enterprise of individual business firms, and political efforts to take control of the state. Actors in civil society recognize the principles of state authority and the rule of law, and need the protection of these in reality to prosper and be secure (4).

Clearly, there are problems with his definition. First of all, FRELIMO, the FSLN or any other Marxist-Leninist-nationalist-anti-colonial or anti-dictatorial politically organized group attempting to seek state power gets left out of civil society. *Who decides* who is *in* and who is *out* of civil society? There seems to be a contradiction between Diamond's notion that organizations within civil society do not seek to win formal control over the state, and his assertion that movements for democratic transition spring from civil society. How can both be true, unless you deny that the Sandinistas were a part of the democratic transition process in Nicaragua, or FRELIMO in Mozambique? Irving Leonard Markovitz (1998) also takes issue with the elitist, unempirical stance taken by the champions of civil society: "Skeptics have doubted that violent explosions by illiterate, unemployed lumpens can add to the construction of democracy, or even that these disorganized have-nots are part of civil society" (25).

Diamond's definition also excludes the possibility of non-democratic elements existing within civil society. When civil society is reduced to only 'democratic' organizations, a scholar/researcher turns a blind eye to all of the anti-democratic movements that exist around the world that need to 'count' somewhere. Moreover, when you define democracy as springing from civil society and you define civil society as democratic organizations, your definitions create a self-fulfilling truism for your research.

The theories of Larry Diamond, progressing from the work of Samuel Huntington, do not seem to fit the empirical reality of democratic transitions. They assume one path toward democratization: a peaceful, neo-liberal capitalist path. As Markovitz (1998) points out, "They are part of the generation that sees the possibility and reality of only one political system and one economic system." This seems to be in direct contradiction to the

values they claim to support: pluralism and diversity. Ironically, Huntington and Diamond preach *pluralism* from a position of *monism*: many organizations can exist, but they all have to share the same worldview - that of neo-liberal, democratic capitalism. In effect, pluralism within hegemonic liberal capitalist democracy is monism.

Irving Leonard Markovitz (1999) is one of the few scholars today who has a comprehensive critique of the concept of civil society. In his article, "Civil Society, Pluralism, Goldilocks and Other Fairy Tales in Africa," Markovitz identifies two competing approaches to the understanding of 'civil society': (1) establishment approaches toward civil society, which assume capitalism and neo-liberal structural reforms; and (2) radical approaches, which assume a utopian vision and mass participation from below. He argues that the dominant literature on civil society today (Huntington, Diamond) presupposes capitalism and liberal democracy. For Markovitz, "Civil society, like procedural democracy itself, provides cheap and effective mechanisms and solutions for the problems of societal conflict" (1). As many people I interviewed in Nicaragua also expressed, today, 'civil society' is filling the gaps left by what used to be done by the Sandinista state (see Chapter 7).

The process of democratization has too often been reduced to the coming to life of civil society, precluding a more nuanced analysis of the evolving relationship between civil society and the state. Mahmood Mamdani (1995) identifies an anti-state romanticization of civil society which ignores the fact that movements within civil society harbor contradictory possibilities. Diamond's very definition of civil society as only democratic organizations ignores the possibility that people can organize autonomously and voluntarily in ways that can 'harm' democracy. Moreover, such champions of civil society reduce the necessary role of the state in achieving democratic consolidation and social justice. As the neoliberal state does less and less to secure the welfare of its citizens, organizations in civil society try to plug the holes of a sinking ship.

The achievements and limitations of 'civil society' in the postrevolutionary periods in Mozambique and Nicaragua, and the particular experiences of autonomous women's organizations, will be examined in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, respectively. Basically, I have found that when women's organizations had a hostile state to confront, as in post-Sandinista Nicaragua, they have been more effective than when the organizations of civil society work in close connection with a 'friendly' state, as in FRELIMO governed Mozambique.

2.5 A Question of Autonomy: The Gendered Nature of National Liberation Movements

The problem of incorporating a gendered analysis of and a feminist solution to women's oppression into revolutionary national liberation movements is clearly not unique to Mozambique and Nicaragua. In The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective (Basu, 1995), articles on South Africa, Namibia, Chile, and Brazil all reveal a similar dynamic with regard to women's liberation struggles. The research demonstrates that women's movements and women's interests are being subsumed by and deemed secondary to national liberation, democratization, and other leftist struggles of social change. It seems that whatever the driving force of change was seen to be in the political and economic systems of these countries – whether it was modernization, development, economic growth, democratization, national liberation or the transition to socialism - the common idea fostered was that "overall social change would also bring about equality for women" (Frohmann and Valdes, 279). Since this has not proven to be the case, a preoccupation with the need for *autonomy* for women's organizations and women's movements has emerged in the literature (Jaquette, 1994; Frohmann and Valdes, 1995; Soares, et al., 1995).

Anne McClintock (1995) has explored the gendered nature of colonial and post-colonial nationalisms, arguing that all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender: "...nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of

gender difference. No nation in the world gives men and women the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state....the representation of male national power depends on the prior construction of gender difference" (p.353). Thus, according to McClintock, nationalism is a gendered discourse from its inception and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power. McClintock also describes how women's full participation in nationalist liberation movements was often granted, "but their emancipation was still figured as the handmaiden of national revolution... Only recently has women's empowerment been recognized in its own right as distinct from the national, democratic and socialist revolution" (382).

I examine the extent to which the national liberation movements of Mozambique and Nicaragua were gendered from their inception using three of McClintock's research methods for examining and documenting the gendered nature of nationalism (see page 357) : (1) Investigating the gendered formation of the theories, concepts, visions and policies of sanctioned male theorists and revolutionary leaders; (2) Bringing into historical visibility women's active cultural and political participation in emancipatory revolutionary movements; (3) Bringing nationalist revolutionary institutions into critical relation with other social structures and institutions, including autonomous women's organizations.

In answering the question of why women are invited into national revolutions, McClintock uses Frantz Fanon's analysis of the role of women in the Algerian revolution for national liberation: "...women learn their militancy only at men's invitation. Theirs is a *designated agency* - an agency by invitation only....The ferocity of the war was such, the urgency so great, that sheer structural necessity dictated the move....In this way, the possibility of a distinctive feminist agency is never broached" (366). I intend to explore the nature of feminist agency within the revolutionary struggles of Mozambique and Nicaragua.

2.6 Feminist Agency and Women's Organizing: Practical Gender *Needs* and Strategic Gender *Interests*

What constitutes 'feminist agency'? Feminist agency presupposes some notion of *women's autonomy* to discern *women's interests*. How do women's class interests, racial interests, and gender interests differ? Do 'interests' explain the origin, nature, and type of women's organizing in 'Third World' national liberation movements? To what extent do women need autonomous spaces (in terms of theory and practice) to discern their own interests? In Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics, Sonia Alvarez (1990) establishes one of the most accepted understandings of women's organizing in the developing world by distinguishing between two kinds of organizing: feminist and feminine. According to Alvarez, "both movement participants and social scientists in Latin America commonly distinguish between 'feminine' and 'feminist' groups and demands" (10). She cites Paul Singer's distinction between the two: "The struggles against the rising cost of living or for schools, day care centers, etc. as well as specific measures to protect women who work interest women closely and it is possible then to consider them feminine demands. But they are not feminist to the extent that they do not question the way in which women are inserted into the social context"(10). For Alvarez, feminist organizing is organizing which takes place around *strategic gender interests* and feminine organizing is organizing which takes place around *practical gender interests*.

Alvarez's distinctions are based upon the work of Maxine Molyneux. In her analysis of women in Nicaragua, Molyneux (1984) introduces what has become one of the standard distinctions accepted by feminist scholars theorizing third world women's movements: *practical gender interests* and *strategic gender interests* (232-233). First, Molyneux makes an important distinction between "women's interests" and "gender interests." The concept of "women's interests" is problematic because of its essentialist assumptions. "Women" is not a unitary category. It is impossible to say that all women have the same interests. This is because gender is only one determinant of women's

interests. It is precisely because women come in all races, classes nationalities and sexualities that there is no set of essential interests for women. Yet because women share common experiences due to their gender within patriarchal societies, they do share *certain* interests. These interests are better named "gender interests." Gender interests, as defined by Molyneux, "are those that women (or men, for that matter) may develop by virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes"(232). Even a woman's gender interests, however, are shaped by her racial, class, sexual, national, and cultural identities. As Sonia Alvarez (1990) states:

Thus, a woman is not Brazilian and Black and working-class and female. She is a Brazilian working-class Black woman. Class and race specific gender attributes determine one's social positioning as a woman. Class and race, therefore, must be viewed as integral components of one's gendered identity—not additional or adjunctive characteristics—which crucially shape women's practical and strategic gender interests (26).

This is why I will argue in section 2.7 that an *intersectional* approach toward understanding women's interests offers more than either a class-based or a gender-based approach. But first, we must examine Molyneux's approach to theorizing women's interests.

Practical Gender Interests as defined by Molyneux are based upon immediate perceived needs. They are usually class-based and "concrete," and pertain to the daily welfare of the household and the position of women in the gendered division of labor (233). *Strategic Gender Interests*, on the other hand, are explicitly designed to overcome women's subordination, and include the abolition of the sexual division of labor, the alleviation of the domestic burdens of childcare and labor, the establishment of political equality, the protection of reproductive rights, and the elimination of violence against women (233). I find this dichotomy to be both *theoretically unsound* and *empirically*

untrue. How much more immediate and concrete can women's reproductive decision-making be of when, whether or how many children to have, or women's experience of domestic violence? Molyneux's dichotomy creates a false distinction, based, I would argue, on several other unspoken but assumed dualisms as diagrammed below:

Practical Gender Interests	◇	Strategic Gender Interests
Production	◇	Reproduction
Materiality	◇	Ideology
Economics	◇	Sex/Violence/Culture
Base	◇	Superstructure
Class	◇	Gender
Feminine Organizing	◇	Feminist Organizing (Alvarez)

Moreover, the categories on the left side of the diagram (practical gender interests, production, economics, materiality, class, base) are associated together, while those on the right-side (strategic gender interests, reproduction, sex/violence/culture, ideology, gender, superstructure) are associated together, and in collective opposition to those on the left.

The problem with her dichotomy, perpetuated in the work of Alvarez and others, is that it contains a false distinction based on categories that should be seen as interconnected as I have tried to show in the diagram above: production versus reproduction, base versus superstructure, economics versus sex/culture, and class versus gender. By categorizing gender interests as 'practical' or 'strategic,' Molyneux poses the problem in terms of a false balancing act, an either-or zero-sum game situation which blurs the intricate connections between the constructed categories. She also blurs the *material* reality of women's oppression in the socio-cultural, sexual and 'private' realms of reproduction.

Certainly the sexual division of labor, the burden of childcare and domestic labor, the absence of reproductive rights, and the threat of violence affect the practical 'daily welfare' of women in the household. How much more *practical* can being alive be, and having bodily integrity, the individual freedom of self-determination over one's own body (i.e., freedom from rape, battery, forced motherhood, and freedom to control one's sexual and reproductive choices)? These are also *material necessities*, which affect women's everyday practical needs. The difference is that they occur in the *political, socio-cultural sphere*, which is considered subordinate and somehow *less material* than needs emerging from the economic sphere, both of which empirically affect one another.

A woman's "material" well-being and her "productive" capacities in the "public" sphere are directly related to her "reproductive activities" in her "private" home, and an "ideological" feminist campaign of reproductive rights. Molyneux's distinction between practical and strategic gender interests privileges the economic realm of material necessity, ignoring the materiality of other forms of oppression as well as the links between ideological and material hegemony. As Maureen Mackintosh (1981) agrees, "the attempt to understand ideologies of gender differentiation suggests we may have to widen our concepts of the 'material' beyond economic processes to include the area of sexuality. The relations of sexuality...are surely as material as production relations" (Mackintosh, 10). What Molyneux lacks is an analysis which reveals the interconnections between the ideological and the material level of subordination. As Elson and Pearson state:

The process of the subordination of women is not only an ideological process, taking place in the realm of attitudes and values. It is not just a matter of people ascribing lesser value to women's gender roles; of simply failing to see the contribution that women make; or of believing that it is only right and proper for

women to accept a second place to men. Though ideology plays a role, we would argue that the subordination of women as a gender cannot be understood simply as a matter of 'patriarchal attitudes'. Rather, it is a material process which goes on not just in our heads but in our practices (Elson and Pearson, 25).

Molyneux's model of practical versus strategic gender interests only exacerbates the existing constructed dualisms of production/reproduction, materiality/ideology and socialism/feminism which I hope to dismantle and reconstruct through an analysis of women's revolutionary struggles and post-revolutionary organizing in Mozambique and Nicaragua.

Jeff Haynes (1997) also adopts the approach of Molyneux and Alvarez in differentiating among women's empowerment groups in the Third World: "Feminist groups pursue what are known as 'strategic' objectives, while feminine groups seek so-called 'practical' goals"(129). Despite his use of the analytical categorization, Haynes identifies problems with it: "It is important to note, however, that such categories are more for analytical convenience than anything else; in practice there is much blurring between categories"(129). Marianne Marchand (1995) suggests that the two types of groups should not be dichotomized, but rather understood along a continuum where the middle represents concerns that are both practical and strategic. Haynes notes that the benefit of concentrating on the concerns that are both practical and strategic is that it prevents the association of the 'practical' with the private sphere and the 'strategic' with the public sphere (130). I share the concerns of Haynes (1997) and Marchand (1995), and further critique the association of the practical with the productive and the material, and the strategic with the reproductive and the ideological.

The constructed dichotomies are also *vertically reinforcing* (in other words, production, economics, materiality and class are associated with the 'practical', while reproduction, sex/violence/culture, ideology, and gender are associated with the 'strategic'). Therefore, a concern with the practical gender interests of the economic materiality of the 'productive' sphere of labor constitutes *feminine* organizing, whereas a

concern with the strategic gender interests of the ideological realm of culture in the reproductive sphere of home and family constitutes *feminist* organizing. Again, not only do I find these distinctions theoretically problematic, but I also find them to be untrue empirically. **What we need to do is look at the *intersections* of these categories.** Moreover, my analysis will show that the *process* of women's organizing *itself* brings to the surface the intersections of these areas in women's everyday lives. As a result, feminist agency emerges from women's organizing experiences *precisely because* it brings to the surface the intersections of the productive and reproductive spheres of their lives.

The fourth Latin American feminist *encuentro* held in Taxco, Mexico in 1987 revealed the divisiveness of Molyneux's distinctions:

The mostly South American feminists who had organized and attended the earlier *encuentros* responded to the growing participation of women from the *movimientos de mujeres* and from Central America by asking whether the latter were really feminists. They asked whether problems of urban services, health programs and the communal kitchens (*practical* gender interests) should not be left to the *movimientos de mujeres* while the feminists focused on strategic gender issues such as abortion, domestic violence and sexual and reproductive freedom (Jaquette, 6).

The response to this question was a claim based precisely upon attempting to bridge the arbitrary and counter-productive gap between Molyneux's notion of practical and strategic gender interests and between Alvarez's feminine and feminist organizing. The *movimientos de mujeres* claimed that they were developing a new kind of feminist practice based on politicizing the issues of survival and everyday life (Jaquette, 6). Why can't women's organizing around women's daily survival issues be an example of *feminist agency*? It is this type of thinking which leads to the accusation that feminism is "bourgeois" and thus easily dismissed because it lacks a class-based material analysis. This dissertation explores the extent to which a *gendered* politicization of everyday life has occurred in Mozambique and Nicaragua and discusses how feminist agency emerged

through women's organizing experiences with the political parties and women's organizations in each context around the intersections of both productive (practical) and reproductive (strategic) spheres of life.

Moreover, according to Molyneux's framework, there exists a linear progression in the development of feminist consciousness from realizing one's "practical interests" in the productive sphere to fighting for one's *truly feminist* "strategic interests" in the reproductive sphere. In fact, Molyneux states that it is the "politicization of practical interests" which leads to the pursuit of strategic interests (234). This is just as problematic as the assertion that in order to liberate women one simply has to reconstruct the base-level economic sphere, and the superstructural ideological sphere will surely follow. As Amy Lind (1992) agrees:

Implicit in this approach is the assumption that women's 'basic needs' are different from their 'strategic needs' and that a 'practical' or 'survival strategy' cannot simultaneously be a political strategy that challenges the social order.... it is too often assumed that most poor women are only concerned with their daily survival and therefore... are not really challenging the sexual division of labor. ...the division between 'practical gender interests' and 'strategic gender interests' misrepresents the struggles of poor women who do, in fact, question or attempt to change the social (gender) order (137, 145).

Alicia Frohmann and Teresa Valdes (1995) perpetuate this same distinction when they argue that women in Chile were first "driven to organize by the economic crisis," yet once outside of the isolation of their home, family and workplace, they learned "to recognize and articulate their own oppression as a point of departure for political action" (281). The implication is that economics (practical interests) drives women to organize, through which they come to understand their feminist (strategic) consciousness. *Why can't women's organizing around economic issues be feminist?* Limited, First World Western definitions of feminist agency need to be challenged in the *theory* the way they are being challenged in *practice* by Third World women. The problem seems to me to be with the self-fulfilling prophecy of imposing an elite, Western model of feminism on third world

women and saying it does not fit, rather than creating a model of feminism that *does* fit the local, contextualized and historical struggles of women in the developing world.

In sum, Maxine Molyneux's (1984) distinction between practical and strategic gender interests is one of the most often cited conceptual frameworks to understand women and development in the third world. Her distinction, however, is a misleading one, for it places material and ideological interests in opposition to one another. In this dissertation, I will critique Molyneux's distinction between 'practical' and 'strategic' gender interests on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Molyneux's distinction blurs the material reality of women's oppression in the socio-cultural, sexual, private realm of reproduction by reducing the *material* to the *economic*. She privileges the *economic* realm of material necessity, ignoring the materiality of other forms of oppression as well as the links between ideological and material oppression. What Molyneux lacks is an analysis which reveals the interconnections between the ideological and the material level of subordination.

One important alteration I propose to her distinctions in order to reveal the intricate connections between the material and the ideological spheres of life is to rename them: practical gender *needs* and strategic gender *interests*. Interests are inherently strategic, needs are inherently practical, but both are intrinsically linked. How much more *practical* can a decision be about when, whether or how many children to have? How much more *practical* is the right to eat over the right to be free from violence? As Ana Criquillon put it, "a woman can starve to death or die by domestic violence. Either way, the outcome is the same: she's dead" (Interview, 1/20/00). Practical needs should not be prioritized over strategic interests, nor should the practical be reduced to the productive and the strategic equated with the reproductive. Moreover, I will argue that feminist agency is born out of the process of women's organizing *precisely because* women's organizing brings to the surface women's discovery of their own practical gender needs

and strategic gender interests in both the productive and the reproductive spheres of life. Molyneux's claim that the politicization of women's 'practical interests' creates the consciousness for women's 'strategic interests' inherently places a hierarchical, developmentalist logic on a process that occurs in a complementary, dialectical and cyclical way. I will also assert that a better way to theorize, research, and understand women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests globally is to adopt a *standpoint of intersectionality*.

2.7 A Standpoint of Intersectionality: A Better Way to Theorize Third World Women's Movements

The term 'intersectionality' was first used by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her article, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," in which she attempts to develop a Black feminist criticism of the single-axis framework in anti-discrimination law. Crenshaw argues that dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think along a single categorical axis (i.e., race or gender) which erases the experiences of Black women, who experience racial and gender oppression simultaneously. In a subsequent article on intersectionality, identity politics and violence against women of color, Crenshaw describes her usage of the term as primarily focusing on the intersection between race and gender, but welcomes others to expand that methodology to include multiple identity categories:

I consider intersectionality a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory. In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race and gender are essentially separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable. While the primary intersections that I explore here are between race and gender, the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age and color (378).

I want to expand Crenshaw's notion on an international dimension to include issues of race, gender, class, nationality and post-coloniality and suggest that intersectionality be examined as a variant of standpoint theory. One of the founders of feminist standpoint theory, Nancy Hartsock (1983), tells us that when material reality structures groups in fundamentally opposing ways, "the vision of each will represent an inversion of the other, and in systems of domination the vision available to the rulers will be both partial and perverse" (232). If the vision of the oppressor is partial, is not the vision of the oppressed also partial? Or is the vision of the oppressed somehow universal?

Charles Mills (1997) refers to standpoint theory in The Racial Contract, and sums it up as follows: "The term 'standpoint theory' is now routinely used to signify the notion that in understanding the workings of a system of oppression, a perspective from the bottom up is more likely to be accurate than one from the top down" (109). Mills states that he is arguing for a kind of "racial" version of standpoint theory. Georg Lukacs (1971) argued for a kind of "class standpoint" by asserting that the proletariat, being the identical subject-object of history, is able to see reality in its totality, and is therefore the class most capable of historical universal liberatory transformation. Nancy Hartsock essentially agrees, perhaps not about race or the proletariat *per se* but about the standpoint of 'the oppressed': "As an engaged vision, the understanding of the oppressed, the adoption of a standpoint exposes the real relations among human beings as inhuman, points beyond the present, and carries a historically liberatory role" (Hartsock, p.232).

If this view is correct, it would follow that the best way to understand the relationship *between* global systems of racial, sexual and class domination is to theorize

and conduct research from a *standpoint of intersectionality*, perhaps specifically from the perspective of poor women of color in the Third World, who experience everyday the intersectionality of racism, sexism and classism on a global scale. I believe that the voices and experiences of women in the developing world can best help us understand the intersectionality of race, gender, class, nation, colonial and imperialist-based oppressions *precisely because* of their location at these intersections. It is important to state, as Kimberle Crenshaw did, that “intersectionality is not being offered as some new, totalizing theory of identity” (358). Rather, adopting a *standpoint of intersectionality* is simply one of many standpoints one could adopt in attempting to theorize, analyze, understand and change subordinate realities. Moreover, there are *many different intersectionalities* one could choose. I am simply saying that adopting a standpoint of intersectionality will illuminate more than adopting a framework from the perspective of any one standpoint. By analyzing the theories and practices of two political, economic and social revolutions in Africa and Latin America from the perspectives of women in each developing context, I hope to be better able to theorize the relationship between multiple identities, with the purpose of fighting interlocking systems of oppression in everyday life.

2.8 Conclusion

My analysis of women’s organizing in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua addresses four key theoretical debates: 1) Marxist and Feminist understandings of the roots of women’s oppression in global relations of production and reproduction; 2) The importance of political and economic aspects of democratization and the role of civil society within struggles for democratic

consolidation; 3) Autonomy struggles for women's organizations and women's movements located within other movements for social change; 4) The conceptualization and expression of women's interests and the development of feminist agency within third world revolutionary struggles.

My study makes the following interventions into these debates: (1) The adoption of a male, European model of Marxist-Leninism was inadequate for understanding the oppression of women in the developing contexts of Mozambique and Nicaragua. Women's oppression in the reproductive sphere of subsistence agriculture, family farming, relations of equality in the family, domestic violence, and distribution of domestic labor and childrearing was not addressed by either revolution; (2) The theories and practices of Marxism-Leninism adopted during the revolutionary periods prevented the achievement of ideological and organizational autonomy for the national-level women's organizations in each country. Autonomy struggles have become important to differing degrees in each country and will continue to do so as the contemporary women's movements develop their own identities in relation to the post-revolutionary governments; (3) While political democracy has increased in both countries, economic democracy has decreased in the post-revolutionary periods, as democracy has come to be equated with multi-party elections, a declining welfare state and neoliberal structural adjustment economic reforms. Autonomous organizing in civil society has emerged as a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratic consolidation. Moreover, civil society can produce *harmful* effects as international donor interests dominate grassroots concerns and organizations try to substitute for the services of the state; (4) The division of women's interests into practical and strategic interests is both theoretically unsound

and empirically untrue. Women's organizing in Mozambique and Nicaragua reveals the intersections of women's productive and reproductive lives. As a result, feminist agency is constructed through women's organizing around both *practical gender needs* and *strategic gender interests* in the productive and reproductive spheres of life, in both autonomous organizations and in mixed organizations with men. However, women's feminist agency appears to have the fullest development if women have an autonomous space to cultivate a gendered analysis of their own oppression at some point during their organizing experience. Moreover, although women's organizing is taking different forms in both countries, the feminisms that are emerging in both Mozambique and Nicaragua are attempting to bridge the counter-productive gap between economics and culture and production and reproduction.

PART I: THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS OF MOZAMBIQUE AND NICARAGUA

This section will examine the nature of the relationship between the national-level women's organization and the revolutionary state party in power in each country, the OMM and FRELIMO in Mozambique and AMNLAE and the FSLN in Nicaragua. Chapter 3 will examine the birth and history of the nation-level women's organizations, as well as the theories of women's emancipation espoused and the organizational practices pursued by FRELIMO and the Sandinistas. The chapter argues that the theories and practices of the revolutionary periods led to a lack of ideological and organizational autonomy for the OMM and AMNLAE. Production was theorized at the expense of reproduction, and women did not have the opportunity to elect their own leaders or set their own policy agendas.

Despite the prevention of ideological and organizational autonomy for the women's organizations during the revolutionary periods, autonomy struggles did emerge, to differing degrees, in Mozambique and Nicaragua. While both women's organizations faced similar issues of organizational identity and power struggles with the party, these issues played themselves out differently in each country due to: (1) the nature of the organizing strategies adopted; and (2) the nature of the party politics. In Nicaragua, women began pushing from below during the mid 1980s to create alternative organizing spaces outside of AMNLAE, resulting in the women's secretariats of the revolutionary mass associations, and thus, *more* channels for women to influence policy. Moreover, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in the post-revolutionary period encouraged the autonomy of AMNLAE, and many other women's organizations that were emerging, from what had become the opposition party. In Mozambique, the OMM was the only place for women to organize throughout the revolutionary period, and the electoral victory of FRELIMO in the post-revolutionary period was conducive to the organization's continued affiliation with the ruling party.

In the very early stages of conducting historical research from secondary sources on the revolutions in Mozambique and Nicaragua, I decided that I wanted to travel to both countries to talk to women who had been involved in the revolutionary struggles directly about what *was* and *was not* accomplished for women within the emancipatory frameworks male leaders created in each context. As a result, I learned a great deal about the process of women's organizing and the strategies adopted both during and after the revolutionary periods. The story I am telling is a story of feminist agency: a transformation from mobilization to participation to organization. As such, I have relied heavily on personal interview data because I want the stories, struggles, feelings and concerns of women to be paramount. Women's voices have too often been silenced in accounts of political and revolutionary change.

CHAPTER THREE

A Lack of Ideological and Organizational Autonomy for the OMM and AMNLAE

“There is a political axiom: without autonomy there is no political protagonism. You cannot be a political actor if you do not have your own thinking. So if you are subordinated to somebody's thinking or vision and on top of that organizationally you cannot take decisions, what sort of strength can you have? And this was not the women who ideologically could stand up because they were part of the same ideology and framework and frame of mind. You needed someone who was outside that frame who could really change AMNLAE from within, someone who would rebel. That would have been impossible because...,since they were appointed by the party, the party decided.”

Sofia Montenegro, Nicaraguan Feminist Theorist and Activist, Interview, 1/25/00

3.1 Introduction

Sofia Montenegro, feminist theorist and activist within the Comité Nacional Feminista, and formerly with the FSLN, AMNLAE, and the Sandinista Newspaper, *Barricada*, highlights the issues that I examine in this chapter: ideological and organizational autonomy. In order to assess the degree of autonomy the women's organizations of Mozambique and Nicaragua had in relation to their revolutionary parties, it is essential to analyze both dimensions of autonomy: autonomy of thought and autonomy of action, that is, the ideological space to think critically and propose alternative policy recommendations, and the decision-making structures to implement such proposals.

The evidence in this chapter reveals that the *framing* of the revolutionary movements in Mozambique and Nicaragua led to a lack of *ideological* and *organizational* autonomy for the national level women's organizations in each country, the OMM and AMNLAE respectively. The theories of 'women's emancipation' espoused and the practices of democratic centralism adopted were framed by Marxist-Leninist ideology, which impeded the articulation of a *gendered or feminist* analysis of women's oppression, particularly in the spheres of home, family and reproductive labor.

As discussed in Chapter 1, *ideological autonomy* refers to the ability of women in the women's organizations of the OMM and AMNLAE to theorize, understand, and analyze the oppression of women from a gendered or feminist perspective, and, as a result, to shape and conceptualize women's emancipation accordingly—of, for, and by women. *Organizational autonomy*, on the other hand, refers to the ability of women in the women's organizations of the OMM and AMNLAE to act, make decisions, elect leaders, issue statements and shape policies on behalf of women given their analyses of the causes of women's oppression and thus the solutions for women's emancipation.

Despite different origins, both the OMM and AMNLAE experienced a lack of ideological and organizational autonomy throughout the 1980s. While the women's organizations in each country were very active and participatory, they lacked both the ideological autonomy to theorize women's oppression and the organizational autonomy to make their own decisions. As a result, a *gendered* analysis of women's oppression was absent from the theories and practices of the revolutionary struggle, particularly in understanding the economic, cultural and personal intersections of the spheres of production and reproduction. The theories of women's emancipation were flawed, and the organizing practices did not allow women the autonomy to develop a *gendered* or *feminist* analysis of their own oppression. For the most part, the OMM, created by FRELIMO in 1973, and AMNLAE, controlled by the FSLN since 1979, were constrained by the hierarchical party structure and state-driven top down leadership model of their revolutionary parties.

In effect, women were invited into the revolutionary process to achieve the socialist-nationalist goals of the revolutionary leaders and to change and modernize *women*, not to change the process or the revolutionary vision itself. Both FRELIMO and the FSLN adopted a limited 'productivist' Marxist-Leninist theoretical understanding of women's emancipation: integrate women into the fields of military defense and economic production, and thus achieve women's emancipation. As a result, women's emancipation

in the 'reproductive' sphere of life, including subsistence agriculture/family farming, reproductive rights, and socio-cultural equality for women and men, was not addressed by either revolution. In fact, the distinction between productive and non-productive labor was upheld in both revolutions in ways that perpetuated gendered political economies and the superexploitation of women.

This chapter provides a brief history of the origin and subsequent development of the OMM and AMNLAE, examining both the theories and the practices adopted by the two women's organizations in relation to the state parties in each country, FRELIMO and the FSLN respectively. Organizations are made up of leaders and members, neither of which is a monolithic group. Because leaders and members of any given organization affect the policies, approaches, discourse and actions of the organization, there is always some methodological difficulty in measuring organizational behavior. Nevertheless, organizations do act as unified entities. Consequently, we must attempt to measure as many components of organizational behavior as possible in order to explain organizational decisions. The women and men that I interviewed include both leaders and members of the women's organizations and parties under study, some of whom remain active in the organizations today, and some who have left the organizations and/or the parties to pursue their own autonomous organizing.¹ Most of the respondents represent an elite within their countries because they are urban, educated and live in or near the major cities.

3.2 The Birth of the OMM

The birth of the OMM was rooted in two previous organizations: *Libertação de Feminino de Mozambique* (LIFEMO) and the *Destacamento Feminino* (Women's Detachment). In 1966, during the clandestine war for liberation, FRELIMO created a Women's League, LIFEMO, which was based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. According to Carlos Cardoso, the Women's League was effectively "a leaders' wives' club" (Interview,

¹ See Appendix 1 for a complete list of interviewees.

7/9/99). The second organization for women created by the FRELIMO Central Committee was the Destacamento Feminino. The Women's Detachment was a military organization used to mobilize women to join the liberation struggle. In 1966, the FRELIMO Central Committee decided that "women should take a more active role in the struggle for national liberation, at all levels" (Women's Section: The Mozambique Liberation Front. Dar es Salaam, 1970) and that "...the emancipation of women is central to the liberation struggle" (OMM Informative Bulletin, 2). The political and military training of women began as an "'experiment' to discover just what contribution women could make to the revolution - how they would use their initiative, whether they were, in fact, capable of fulfilling certain tasks" (Women's Section: The Mozambique Liberation Front. Dar es Salaam, 1970). The experiment proved highly successful, and the Women's Detachment was created in 1967.

Paulina Mateus, current Secretary-General of the OMM, was a part of this original 'experimental' group of women. She has been involved in the revolutionary movement since she was very young, helping her father distribute letters inviting people to join the FRELIMO movement: "When colonialists noticed, my father was jailed. I stopped my studies due to a lack of money to continue, and began working with friends of my father. In 1964, when the struggle started, my father was killed. Before he died, he said, 'If I die, continue to work with my daughter...the first born, the only girl'" (Interview, 7/5/99). Mateus went on to become a part of the first group of women who had military training:

On December 12, 1964, after my father died, I was requested to work at the Central Base because no one could read or write. In 1967 our first visitor was Felipe Magaia², from the Department of Defense, wanting to know how we were doing our activities. In November, 1966, there was a meeting at the Central Committee of FRELIMO that said our base should have political and military training. In March 1967, myself and 27 other girls between the ages of 17 and 20 began political and military training (Interview, 7/5/99).

² Felipe Magaia was the first Defense Minister for FRELIMO.

In 1969, the FRELIMO Central Committee decided that the Mozambican Women's League (LIFEMO) should be completely fused with the Women's Detachment to create a Women's Section of FRELIMO. According to Paulina Mateus, support stopped for LIFEMO, and it collapsed. FRELIMO subsequently put its efforts into the Women's Detachment, which had objectives all over Mozambique. Josina Machel, wife of Samora Machel, first President of Mozambique after independence, was chosen to be the chief of the Detachment, coordinating all of the small military groups of women around the country. According to Mateus, the birth of the OMM was connected to the death of Josina Machel: "When she died, groups met, and decided to create an organization doing something else. Not just liberation fighting but something else" (Interview, 7/5/99). In 1972, the Central Committee of FRELIMO decided to establish the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) "as the arm of FRELIMO in charge of mobilizing and uniting all women so that they will become involved in the revolutionary process" (OMM Informative Bulletin, 3). The First Conference to establish the OMM occurred in 1973 in Tanzania. Delegations from several women's detachments were sent to the conference.

There are many different explanations of the creation of the Organização das Mulheres Moçambicanas (OMM), but one thing is indisputable: it was created by FRELIMO. According to Secretary-General Paulina Mateus, "One of the objectives was to make sure all of the women participating in the struggle were in the organization and participating in liberation, seeking equality with the men and fighting against the exploitation of women" (Interview, 7/5/99). Former Secretary-General of the OMM Salome Moiana stated in 1981 that because of the fact that in traditional society women are not "trained to participate in the life of the community, there was a need for an organization to politicize women and involve them in the struggle" (Women's International Resource Exchange, 31). Moiana states that the main objectives of the OMM were "to mobilize all Mozambican women regardless of race, position or place of

birth", to support FRELIMO, and to create an awareness among Mozambican women of women's struggles in other countries (ibid., 31). Despite the apparent commitment to the mobilization of women, both through the Women's Detachment and the OMM, the question of mobilization for what purpose remains. Stephanie Urdang (1985) points out that the importance of mobilization, while emphasized throughout the revolutionary struggle, was curiously absent from the strategy proposed for the emancipation of women:

Discussion of the need to mobilize women politically centers rather on mobilization to join the general tasks of the current phase of the revolution. But political mobilization expressly to fight for their rights as women, and against the attitudes and customs that perpetuate women's subordination within both the home and the larger society, is treated for the most part as secondary (364).

The difference between mobilization *as women* and mobilization as *FRELIMO revolutionaries* is a critical one, given the fact that the agenda of each group may or may not be the same. According to Leith Mullings (1976), the purpose for the creation of the OMM was the need to integrate women from all parts of the country in order to spread the revolutionary gains from the liberated areas in the north to the cities in the south (259). Since FRELIMO had declared that a multiracial Mozambique was its goal, "reeducation of large numbers of Portuguese women will be necessary" (Mullings, 1976, 259). Another explanation is offered by Urdang (1989), who cites the age gap between women as the reason for the founding of the OMM (96). Although the Women's Detachment appealed to younger women, particularly women without children, older women did not have an organization they could see as theirs. "It was the acknowledgment of this gap" that led to the founding of the OMM in 1973 (Urdang, 1989, 96). In the Resolutions from the Second Conference of the OMM held in November, 1976, racial prejudices, age, and "veteranism," the need to assert superiority because one has been in the revolutionary struggle for a long time, were all cited as factors causing divisions between women and men, and among women (Women's International Resource

Exchange, 27). In breaking down these divisions, FRELIMO and the OMM encouraged women to identify in their common struggle for socialism, not in their common struggle as women.

The most important criticism of the founding structure and operating mechanism of the OMM (which may explain why the focus of the group has been more about mobilizing women as socialists rather than as women or even as both) is that it was created by the FRELIMO leadership, and as such, remains incorporated into the FRELIMO structure. Former OMM Secretary-General Salome Moiana stated herself that "the OMM did not arise as an autonomous initiative of women. It was, rather, *an expression of FRELIMO's will to liberate women*" [emphasis mine], (Women's International Resource Exchange, 31). The fact that the organization was created *by men for women*, at the very least, raises questions about the organization's autonomy, legitimacy and ability to represent the interests of Mozambican women. The OMM accepted the analysis that the goal for which FRELIMO was fighting was the "liberation of all the people from the exploitation which is also the cause of the oppression of women" (ibid., 310). This, of course, was class exploitation. While I do not doubt the sincerity of the OMM or even much of FRELIMO's leadership, my conceptual approach, discussed in chapter 2, leads me to question the ability of a male-led, class-based analysis to fully recognize, understand or fight to eliminate, in all spheres of life, the power dynamic involved in gender-based oppression.

3.3 The History of the OMM

Since its creation at the First Conference of the OMM in Tanzania in 1973, which established the rules of the organization, the institutional history of the OMM can be traced through its national conferences. During the 8th Session of the FRELIMO Central Committee, held in February, 1976, the FRELIMO leadership decided that the OMM should hold its Second National Conference, from November 10-17, 1976. It is important to note that this conference outlined structures at various administrative levels, "which

function according to the principles of democratic centralism" (OMM Informative Bulletin, 9). Democratic Centralism is both a theory and a practice which shaped women's ability to create a discourse, an analysis and an agenda regarding the causes of women's oppression, thereby constraining their ability to determine their own solutions. In February, 1977, the Third Congress of FRELIMO was held, at which the decision was made to transform FRELIMO into a Marxist Leninist Vanguard Party, run by the approach of democratic centralism.

The Second Conference of the OMM had as its theme, New Rules for New Life. The document *Resolutions from the Second Conference of the Organization of Mozambican Women* contains information on the general state of women in the areas of society, family, economy and culture. The topics selected by the FRELIMO leadership as areas for the OMM to analyze and combat are quite revealing and include the following: Illiteracy; Obscurantism and Superstition; Tribalism, Regionalism and Racism; Rumour, Intrigue and Slander; Superiority and Inferiority Complexes; Single Mothers; Divorced Women; The Idle Woman; Abortion; Urban Social Problems; Liberalism; Adultery; Prostitution; Divorce; Alcoholism; Abandoned Children. The issues FRELIMO selected for the OMM represent an intersection of what the party often referred to as the evils of African traditions, Portuguese colonization and liberal bourgeois democracy. Women's feminist or gendered concerns were not the motivating force of FRELIMO or the OMM. According to Signe Arnfred, Danish Sociologist who was in Mozambique working with the OMM from 1980-1984, "The OMM was restructured during the Second Conference - before I came onto the scene. At the first conference, it seemed to be organized from the bottom up, by women themselves, who were more in touch with what the people actually wanted. The problem was when people didn't toe the correct political line. Deolinda Guezimane, the first Secretary General of the OMM was ungracefully dismissed. She was replaced by Salome Moiane, a party girl" (Interview, 11/17/00).

The Third National Conference, held in 1980, reveals the effects of such restructuring. This was the first OMM conference held after FRELIMO declared itself a Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party. The most interesting thing to note is the stark difference between the *Resolutions of the Second National Conference* and the document of the Third National Conference of the OMM in March of 1980. Whereas the Second National Conference Resolutions refer to issues dealing with women as determined by the party, the document of the Third National Conference of the OMM says absolutely **nothing** about women! It contains an historical overview of FRELIMO, a geography and encyclopedic sketch of Mozambique, and a list of the fundamental principles of FRELIMO in multiple spheres of life.

After the OMM Conference in 1980, where women's concerns seemed conspicuously absent, the FRELIMO party asked the OMM to establish a committee to prepare a conference on the problems of grassroots women in Mozambique (Arnfred Interview, 11/17/00). As a result, Signe Arnfred and Mozambican scholars Isabel Casimiro and Ana La Forte began interviewing women from all over the country in an attempt to create a body of knowledge about the problems women face in different parts of Mozambique. They received direct instructions from the party to carry out research to determine what were the problems that kept women from 'growing up' (Interview, 11/17/00). These interviews with grassroots women constituted the foundation of the Fourth Conference of the OMM, deemed the "Extraordinary Conference," held in 1984. The main issues raised were: polygamy, initiation rites, relations between parents and children and prostitution (Interview, 11/17/00). According to Signe Arnfred, "On the whole, in the OMM the line was very much in my view given from the top down. It was nice to hear someone from the higher levels of the party asking, talking about and learning from grassroots women" (Interview, 11/17/00).

In 1990, things started to change. Mozambique began undergoing another phase in its path toward political democratization: from a one-party participatory socialist state to

a multi-party liberal capitalist democracy. Needless to say, this transition had quite an impact on the OMM. The separation of party, state and government created a new space in 'civil society' for autonomous NGOs to develop. Where would the OMM fit in to this new picture? The Fifth Conference of the OMM in 1990 addressed issues such as the new Constitution, new political parties, and new organizations such as Forum Mulher, MULEIDE (Women and Law and Development) and MBEU (Association for the Promotion of Women's Economic and Socio-Cultural Development). According to Paulina Mateus, the First Congress of the OMM "grown up" was in 1996, and they are planning their second. The recent history of the OMM between 1990 and 2000 is a very interesting one centered around the emergence of autonomy struggles. This story will be told in Chapter 4. However, this outcome cannot be told without first understanding the *lack* of autonomy which existed both theoretically and practically for the OMM in relation to FRELIMO during the revolutionary years from 1973-1990.

3.4 The Theories of Women's Emancipation of FRELIMO and the OMM: A Lack of Ideological Autonomy

As we begin to explore the history of the women's organization in Mozambique and the commitment of the revolutionary party to the emancipation of women, it is important to examine the body of ideas that shaped the party's theoretical approach toward women's oppression, and the extent to which the women's organizations had the *ideological autonomy* to theorize their own program for women's emancipation. 'The Woman Question' has occupied a central role in the theories and practices of socialism in a way that it has not in liberal democratic discourse, where the commitment toward individual rights has been seen as the path to fight for the rights of any particular identity category, such as women and racial minorities. As Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp and Marilyn B. Young (1989) state in Promissory Notes: Women in The Transition to Socialism, in

Marxist-informed governments “both the promise and the frustration” of women’s emancipation are of “particular interest” (1). Why has there been a different discourse surrounding the need for ‘women’s emancipation’ within socialist revolutionary movements, and has it made any difference? I begin to address this question by analyzing the theoretical approach toward women’s emancipation as conveyed in the discourse, theories, documentation, and speeches of FRELIMO and the OMM in order to assess the framing of the women’s organization.

The revolutionary analyses adopted by the FRELIMO and Sandinista parties were framed by Marxist-Leninist understandings of the causes and thus the solutions of women’s oppression. As a result, the theories and practices of the OMM and AMNLAE were also framed by Marxist-Leninist analyses of ‘the Woman Question’, which focus primarily on a ‘productivist’ model of integrating women into the revolutionary cause via ‘productive labor’ without an analysis of (1) the gendered division of labor and women’s primary participation in ‘reproductive labor’; (2) the intersections between women’s practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in the interconnected spheres of production and reproduction; and (3) women’s input as to the substance of the overall revolutionary vision for society. Basically, although the discourse of ‘women’s emancipation’ was seen as critical to the articulation of the revolution, the achievement of the “socialist revolution” - and the mobilization of women in defense and production that was required to accomplish it - was seen as synonymous with the liberation of women. There was no alternative or autonomous discussion of what women’s liberation might entail. I will analyze the theories of women’s emancipation that were adopted during the revolutionary periods in two ways: (1) analysis of relevant documents and speeches of the

parties and women's organizations; and (2) discursive statements from leaders and members about the party and organizational positions on the emancipation of women.

Marxist Production v. Feminist Reproduction

One of the most often cited theoretical approaches to the 'Woman Question' in Mozambique is the speech President Samora Machel made at the opening of the Second Conference of the OMM. Machel's speech highlights the fact that FRELIMO followed an orthodox socialist line on women's emancipation: "They didn't like 'feminist' - the only use of the word in a Machel speech was in a bad way" (Interview with Signe Arnfred, 11/17/00). It is interesting to note that in his opening address to the Second Conference of the OMM, designed to breathe new life into the organization, Samora Machel criticized its leadership for "adopting and pushing values that were present under colonialism" (Urdang, 1989, 97-98). He also criticized younger members of the OMM for their misconception that men were their enemies. Machel clearly saw the struggle for the liberation of women as part of, subsumed by, and secondary to the struggle against class exploitation.

Machel articulates for FRELIMO the orthodox Marxist position that class exploitation originated when human beings began to produce more than they could consume, laying the material foundations for the emergence of a class which would appropriate the fruits of the majority's labor (Urdang, 1985, 351). Machel goes on to describe the special nature of the oppression of women: "To possess women is to possess workers, unpaid workers, workers whose entire power can be appropriated without resistance by the husband who is lord and master" (ibid., 351). What Machel fails to analyze is *how and why* the labor power of women can be appropriated "without resistance" by men. He assumes women will be possessed from the start and that their

labor will be unpaid. How did men *become* the lord and master? Machel assumes an unequal power relation existing between men and women without ever explaining how it came into being, or attempting to dismantle it. Only a gendered, socialist-*feminist* analysis of power relations between women and men can begin to grapple with such questions.

Urdang (1989) also notes that while Machel was able to criticize the "false consciousness" developing in the OMM, he was not able to see that the same criticism was applicable to him and the FRELIMO leadership:

Noticeably absent from his criticism was any recognition that as a mass organization of the party, OMM has largely been guided by the party and its goals articulated in speeches such as these by top members of the party, all male....OMM has never been conceived of as an autonomous women's movement. It has always followed and been expected to follow the lead of FRELIMO (98).

Thus, the interests of Mozambican women as women, as well as oppressed peasants and exploited colonists, were never really a part of FRELIMO's ideology, for they were never seen as an independent end in and of themselves, only as a means to an end. The fact that the OMM was never an autonomous women's organization has impeded the organization's ability to articulate a 'feminist' analysis of the oppression of women separate from the interests of socialism.

The OMM documents that establish the most detailed theoretical framework for understanding the organization's construction of the emancipation of women are the *OMM Informative Bulletin* and the *Resolutions from the Second Conference: New Rules for New Life*. As described earlier, the topics that were selected in the Second Conference by the party leadership include such areas as Tribalism, Superiority and Inferiority Complexes; Single Mothers; Divorced Women; The Idle Woman; Liberalism; and Adultery. Reading through the document reveals an often *anti-feminist* approach, in which women are understood as participating in the creation of, and thus responsible for,

the societal problems identified. I will analyze these documents in detail in order to elucidate the theoretical framework of the 'woman question' that guided the organization.

The OMM approach to the emancipation of women was a *productivist* approach from the beginning:

To involve women in the process of National Reconstruction is not an easy task....the OMM has established the following priorities:
1. to involve women in *socially productive*, collective labor by encouraging them to enter communal villages, join cooperatives and participate as wage workers in national Reconstruction....Involving women in *socially useful production* is central to the OMM strategy [emphasis mine] (*OMM Informative Bulletin*, 10).

Clearly, the question that arises is what constitutes 'socially useful production' from the point of view of the OMM, and/or the FRELIMO party? First of all, in Mozambique 96.96% of women are engaged in subsistence agriculture in the form of family farming. Not only did women **not** need to be integrated into 'socially useful production' because they were already doing it, but giving women more agricultural labor was **not** the path toward their liberation. The theories of women's emancipation taken from a European Marxist model ignored the material reality of women's lives in the developing world, and thus provided an inadequate solution for women's oppression. Merle Bowen (2000) elaborates in The State Against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique, arguing that FRELIMO's agrarian strategies were for the most part anti-peasant, focusing on a top-down, large-scale, state farm model of production, rather than asking the peasants what worked for them: historically, a bottom-up, small-scale family farming model. In a country where 80% of agricultural labor is performed by women, anti-peasant means anti-woman. Women were not consulted for their ideas regarding socially useful productive models, nor was a 'reproductivist' approach ever considered.

Involving women in socially useful production was seen as the central OMM solution for women's oppression. Yet, when it came to analyzing the central *problems* for

women, the material constraints of productive and reproductive labor were not the focus; rather, the cultural impediments to women's participation in the revolutionary process tended to get the most attention:

The principal obstacle that prevents women from fully participating in the revolutionary process is the continued resilience of *traditional and colonial practices which reinforce women's sense of inferiority* and maintain them in a subordinate position. These include initiation rites, child marriages, brideprice, polygamy, superstition and obscurantism, prostitution, alcoholism and bourgeois liberalism and sexual corruption....Moreover, *women who are involved in socially productive activities are in the vanguard of the struggle*; their newly found confidence in their work capacity and their intelligence compels them to fight actively against anything that hinders the development of their creative initiative [emphasis mine] (*OMM Informative Bulletin*, 14-15).

Despite the fact that women's gendered participation in paid and unpaid labor is not analyzed as part of the **problem** of women's oppression, participation in socially productive activities is seen as the **solution**. As a result, cultural problems are assumed to have economic solutions.

Polly Gastor agrees, "'Women into Production' was the OMM Watchword. There was very little impact on the family. The OMM women were in literacy classes, they did their stuff. A lot of them had difficulty with their husbands because of it. The traditional view was of women as commodities" (Interview, 7/13/99). It is interesting to note that while an analysis of women's reproductive labor in the family was not discussed, the role of woman as 'educator' within the family was, and this role was connected to production: "Woman has a fundamental role as educator of the new generations. She must engage in production and move from merely carrying out duties to planning and directing them, thus liberating her creative initiative..." (Resolutions, 4). Women's success as educators of the family was connected to their engagement in production, seen as the liberator of women's creative initiative.

The Second Conference Resolutions of the OMM also focused on women's participation in production to combat the problems suffered by abandoned wives and divorced women, making the following recommendations: "1) Encourage woman to win her *economic independence*. This is the *basis for her affirmation as a useful individual*, capable of fulfillment within society; 2) Seek to integrate the divorced woman into *collective life and production* in the Communal Village, Cooperative or other unit of production; 3) Make known to the divorced woman with children her legal rights relative to the father's participation in the upkeep of the children") [emphasis mine] (Resolutions, 18). Clearly, economic independence is seen as the most important path toward women's emancipation. The importance of women's economic independence would not be challenged by liberal feminists, Marxist feminists, socialists or capitalists, but women's emancipation in the cultural, social, political and familial spheres of life is ignored by this economistic approach. In addition, the fact remains that the discourse itself only values women's participation in the 'productive' marketplace at the expense of women's participation in the 'reproductive' sphere of home and family. In fact, in this analysis it is women's place in production alone that makes her useful as an individual.

This helps to explain how the OMM characterizes the idle woman:

The idle woman is not involved in collective production. She is a phenomenon characteristic of the city. She is completely dependent upon her husband and generally does not get involved, except through him. She is an individualist with narrow horizons. She is insecure, conservative and an agent for rumours and intrigue. She finds change very difficult to accept. Because of this, she is an excellent victim of reaction. Distrusting, she feels jealous of women who work outside the home (*Resolutions*, 18-19).

The 'idle woman' in the OMM Resolutions is reminiscent of the 'feminine mystique' (Betty Freidan, 1963) of the housewife of liberal feminism: dependent upon her husband, individualized, conservative, jealous, reactionary, non-working and, most importantly, non-productive. Clearly, subsequent feminist analyses of the undervalued reproductive

labor of women in the domestic sphere challenge this perspective. In addition, the discourse of women and development and third world feminisms adds a new perspective to the slogan “every woman is a working woman.” In a developing country like Mozambique, where 81% of the labor force is involved in agricultural labor, with 96.56% of women involved in the agricultural sector, predominantly family farming, how many women are idle?

The concluding section of Part I of the *Resolutions from the Second Conference of the OMM* highlights the fact that the OMM accepted FRELIMO's 'political line' on the emancipation of women, and that this emancipation was best understood through women's relation to production:

Many of the social problems analyzed in this part of the document are the consequences of the old mentality. They are the product of social values born out of relationship to exploitation as much in feudal society as in capitalist-colonial society. They will tend to disappear with the *materialization of FRELIMO's political line on the emancipation of women. Woman, integrated into production, the constructor of the material and ideological basis for Socialism, will accelerate the establishment of new social relations. No longer will she be the victim of retrograde and reactionary ideas. The new generations will be able to grow up free of material and moral miseries. The Struggle Continues!* [emphasis mine] (21-22).

The OMM's own documents repeatedly refer to the adoption of FRELIMO's political line on the emancipation of women: “*Women are certain, however, that guided by the correct political line of their vanguard party, FRELIMO, and organized in the OMM, the emancipation of women will become a reality in a socialist Mozambique*” [emphasis mine] (14-15). Clearly, the OMM lacked the ideological autonomy to determine *its own* line on the cause of women's oppression or the means to achieve its demise.

Discursive Rhetoric v. Substantive Commitment

Did the political line of FRELIMO on ‘the woman question’ represent a rhetorical or a substantive commitment toward women's emancipation? According to Manuel

Tomé, Secretary General of the FRELIMO party, "women have always been in our political agenda" (Interview, 7/29/99). Paulina Mateus, Secretary-General of the OMM, describes the kind of priority FRELIMO gave to women's oppression from the beginning:

One of the priorities of FRELIMO was to see women participate in the political, economic and social aspects of life and of building the country...giving priority to women's oppression. For a long time, FRELIMO saw women in Mozambique were suffering. One of their goals was the liberation of women. Women suffered double exploitation: from the colonial regime and in the home because of the husband. Women were silenced by the husband and the regime. FRELIMO saw that it would be difficult to liberate the country and not women: it would be leaving half of the country behind. FRELIMO wanted to give them a voice, a place to talk, freedom (Interview, 7/5/99).

While everyone I interviewed discussed the rhetorical place 'women's emancipation' held in the revolutionary discourse of FRELIMO, some people questioned the centrality of and motivation for women's mobilization. Célia Diniz raises the issue of whether FRELIMO had a substantive or pragmatic commitment to women's emancipation: "FRELIMO had a great input in calling for women's participation. I don't know if it was because of profound belief or because it was the way to get them into power"(Interview, 7/1/99).

Founding member of FRELIMO and current member of Parliament Sérgio Viera admits that both pragmatic necessity and commitment to emancipation were factors in the mobilization of women: "The struggle and success of the struggle depended on the involvement of all of us, men and women. We thought or were convinced that the process of the emancipation of women was there, and that unless women were involved, they would always be second class" (Interview, 7/15/99). Clearly, then, from the beginning, women were seen as central to the success of the revolution. But were women able to contribute to the form, shape, and vision of that revolution? Polly Gastor, now at the Information Center at Eduardo Mondlane University and a resident in Mozambique since the late 1970s, found it difficult to distinguish FRELIMO's views about gender from the party's general revolutionary approach:

It is difficult to compartmentalize questions as gender questions. The whole FRELIMO ethos was about struggle, sacrifice, morality, Protestant ethics. Men and women made huge personal sacrifices. Personal agenda sacrifices were constantly demanded during the revolutionary struggle. This ethos was still maintained for some time.... In general, after independence, FRELIMO's strategy was one of social engineering and optimism. If they could get girls into school, children of workers and peasants, then the idea was that girls would grow up ready to take on modern society and take their place in it (Interview, 7/13/99).

But for Gastor, the question still remains, "Were women actually being accepted on equal terms? There were good women militants, who, when married, relapsed into housewives" (Interview, 7/13/99).

The theoretical approach toward women's emancipation that was adopted by FRELIMO, and through democratic centralist means by the OMM, seems to reflect the dogmatic Marxist-Leninist line on the 'woman question': the integration of women into production will emancipate women. The added workload on women who were already engaged in reproductive labor was not considered, nor was the gendered division of labor between 'men's work' and 'women's work' questioned. Most people I interviewed agreed that the distinction between productive and reproductive labor was not challenged by the Marxist-Leninist analysis of FRELIMO. Instead, women's identity was understood as a class identity and not as a gendered one: "Our identity resides in our condition of being exploited and oppressed in the common fight for emancipation. It is a class identity" (Resolutions, 10). A gendered analysis of women's oppression in the spheres of production and reproduction was not a part of the theoretical discourse of women's emancipation; rather, women's interests were assumed to be synonymous with women's *class* interests. The OMM lacked the ideological autonomy to conceive of women's interests any other way. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the extent to which women's interests were and were not incorporated into the revolutionary agendas of FRELIMO and the FSLN, and discuss the gendered nature of production and reproduction. First, the nature

of the practical relationship between the women's organization and the party must be examined to determine the degree of organizational autonomy achieved by the OMM.

3.5 The Relationship Between FRELIMO and the OMM: A Lack of Organizational Autonomy

The relationship between the state party organization and the national women's organization in any revolutionary context reveals a lot about the approach toward women's emancipation that will be adopted and the degree of autonomy women will have in determining that approach. So far, we have been discussing the extent to which the OMM had the ideological autonomy to form its own theoretical understanding of women's oppression. To what extent did the OMM have the *organizational autonomy* within the decision-making structure to set its own agenda and engage in its own practices to achieve women's emancipation?

Until the New Constitution was introduced in 1990, the OMM, founded in 1973 by FRELIMO, was the only women's organization in Mozambique. "Its main tasks had been to mobilize and organize all the country's women in the fight for national liberation, for the emancipation of the working classes, and for women's liberation. After national independence, the OMM continued to carry out various activities in favor of women's emancipation. Despite having had an important role in mobilizing women in the first years of independence it limited itself almost exclusively to being the Party's 'right hand' for integrating women into the national tasks considered to be priorities" (*The Situation of Women in Mozambique*, Forum Mulher Report for NGO Forum, 1994). Paulina Mateus, current Secretary-General of the OMM, agrees: "At that time, there was only one party: FRELIMO. There were no other women's organizations. All of the women belonged to the OMM. We were always working inspired with the political line of FRELIMO" (Interview, 7/5/99).

National party officials, as well as current and former members of the OMM agree about the unidirectional relationship between the party and the women's organization.³ According to Alcido Nguenya, Member of Parliament, Permanent Commission of Parliament, and member of the Political Commission of FRELIMO, "The relationship between the OMM and FRELIMO is very interesting. The OMM is not a member of FRELIMO, but rather is the hand or the helper of FRELIMO, which goes to the OMM when it wants something about women. FRELIMO needs the OMM....The OMM is an instrument of FRELIMO. *FRELIMO used the OMM to do its policy on women*" ([emphasis mine] Interview, 7/21/99). Carla Braga, former member of the OMM and currently working on the Land Campaign at Eduardo Mondlane University, left the OMM because the organization was not feminist enough for her: "I really see the OMM as just a way of FRELIMO to put out their ideas, as a way of using women in power. For instance, the city was dirty, so the OMM and the mass organizations were recruited to clean the city, do landscaping work and the vaccination campaign...This is the state's work! The OMM will take care of it!" (Interview, 7/15/99). Ana Ritha Sithole, FRELIMO Member of the Permanent Commission of Parliament, and member of the OMM, agrees that there was not a lot of autonomy or independence under FRELIMO. But she argues that "the OMM played a very important role in this society. Even though it's FRELIMO-oriented....Each party has its women's group" (Interview, 7/15/99). Thus, for Sithole, the OMM always was a women's organization of the party.

When asked about the relationship between FRELIMO and the OMM, Elisa Muianga and Celeste Bango of MULEIDE (Women, Law and Development

³ It is interesting to note that other than the secretary-generals of the OMM and FRELIMO, the people that articulated the existence of the greatest degree of autonomy for the OMM were from areas outside of the capital city: Machava, outside of Maputo, Beira, in the central region, and Nampula in the north. However, despite the statements made about the apparent autonomy of the OMM, *all* persons interviewed found it impossible when asked to come up with *any* examples of times when the OMM and FRELIMO disagreed on a given issue or policy stance.

Organization), described a pretty close relationship between the two, both in theory and in practice:

The OMM and FRELIMO. That's right. They are together. But the OMM can do whatever they want inside the ideal of FRELIMO. They cannot do things outside the ideal of FRELIMO. FRELIMO is a clever party. They keep an eye on global trends and what is happening to women around the world. If the OMM agrees, the OMM will help (Interview, 6/30/99).

Muianga and Bango then stated that the OMM and FRELIMO always agree. Ana Fernandes hesitated when asked about the relationship between the OMM and FRELIMO: "I think its OK to talk about it now" (Interview, 6/30/99). She proceeded to describe the authoritarian tendencies within FRELIMO: "There was pressure to join FRELIMO. To be Anti-FRELIMO was very bad. Everyone received direction from FRELIMO"(Interview, 6/30/99). Eulália Temba of WLSAMAZ (Women and Law in Southern Africa – Mozambique) agrees that the OMM never had the space or the freedom to develop their own analysis of women's oppression like the new NGOs have: "Men decided the political line of the OMM, which was the same as FRELIMO ideology...you must follow all ideas, all ideology...Now, members have the responsibility to incorporate new points of view. The NGOs deal with feminism and gender" (Interview, 7/13/99). As Temba reminds us, "The OMM was created by men! Don't forget this!"(Interview, 7/13/99). Edda Collier concurs that the OMM "from the beginning was like the Women's Caucus of FRELIMO" (Interview, 7/30/99).

Despite the important gains FRELIMO made for women articulated by Teresa Cruz e Silva, Director of the Center for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University, she also agrees that the agenda of the OMM was the agenda of the FRELIMO party: "Like most organizations, the OMM came under the umbrella of FRELIMO, and in my opinion, the OMM was a particular case of an organization under the umbrella of FRELIMO" (Interview, 7/1/99). Signe Arnfred, the Danish Sociologist who worked with the OMM, agrees that the organizational identity of the OMM was determined by

FRELIMO: "All the time I was there, from 1980-1984, they didn't do anything that was not confirmed by the party. They never took initiatives, there was never disagreement. The Party sent initiatives down to the OMM. On the whole, in the OMM the line was very much in my view given from the top down. The OMM was taking too much direction for my liking" (Interview, 11/17/99). When it comes to assessing the degree of autonomy of the OMM, Arnfred states,

They never tried. They never tried their own issue, their own autonomy. Maybe if they had tried...The Second Conference shows that they felt threatened....it wasn't by leadership of nice party girls, but was a grassroots movement. The preparation was grassroots. The Executive Committee and the President of the party made sure women couldn't get a chance to talk. Maybe if the women's organization tried...The party control device was through the women leaders. Leaders are always good party girls (Interview, 11/17/99).

This connection between OMM leadership and party positions within FRELIMO was described in numerous ways during my interviews. When I asked Ana Ritha Sithole, FRELIMO Member of Parliament and OMM member, about the relationship between the OMM and FRELIMO, she responded as follows: "Sometimes we feel FRELIMO uses us for mobilization for elections and that we are not a part of the big decisions. There is a tense relationship. However, most of the OMM leaders have FRELIMO responsibilities. If not, they will not rise--they will not become OMM leaders!" (Interview, 7/15/99).

Apparently, not only is party support important for becoming an OMM leader, but membership in the OMM is an important path for becoming a candidate for party positions. One of the most important roles of the OMM today is in submitting names of women to the party for elected positions. Generossa Cossa was elected to the Maputo City Council working in the areas of Gender, Youth, Social Assistance, and Civic

Education: "I was elected as an OMM member. I am still an active member of OMM. It is a really strong organization. If you go to a meeting, you'll feel that! People fight to get seats, to get elected" (Interview, 7/13/99). The OMM seems to be the path toward electoral success for women not just on the local but also on the national level. Cossa told me that the Secretary of the OMM of Maputo City had 600 names on the table of women who want to be members of the National Assembly: "The OMM is one of the ways to get into Parliament" (Interview, 7/13/99).

In conclusion, since its inception, the OMM was an organization of the FRELIMO party, significantly constrained by a top-down leadership model in terms of agenda-setting, flow of information, and ideological parameters. When asked whether the OMM lacked the organizational autonomy to cultivate its own feminist analysis of women's oppression, Janet Mondlane, widow of the founder of FRELIMO Eduardo Mondlane, responded as follows: "I have a sense that is true, but I am not sure it is linked with FRELIMO. Women still have a long way to go to analyze our problems....We need to analyze the very traditions we have been brought up within. The fact is FRELIMO did create the OMM and the Destacamento Feminino" (Interview, 7/29/99). However, Mondlane also stated quite matter of factly that FRELIMO was "a socialist male-dominated political party" (Interview, 7/29/99).

3.6 The Birth of AMNLAE

AMNLAE was born out of AMPRONAC (Association of Women Confronting the National Problem), the first national women's organization in Nicaragua, created in September, 1977, to fight against the Somoza dictatorship. AMPRONAC's first assembly brought together sixty women who denounced the atrocities being committed by the

Somoza regime during the long years of martial law (Rosset and Vandermeer, 1983, 323). Thus, the main purpose of the organization was to organize and mobilize women in opposition to the abuses of the dictatorship. AMPRONAC's initial goals included the protection of human rights, the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the mobilization and participation of women in issues of national concern. According to Dora Zeledón, National Coordinator of AMNLAE and FSLN member of the National Assembly, AMPRONAC was the first national women's organization: "It was the biggest, most massive organization of Sandinistas, plus religious women, plus middle class women plus peasants, all coming together to struggle for political prisoners" (Interview, 1/28/00).

Different sources reveal different degrees of influence of the FSLN in the creation of AMPRONAC. Katherine Isbester (2001) argues that many accounts of AMPRONAC's history have left out the role of the FSLN in creating AMPRONAC, providing the image that AMPRONAC began as an autonomous movement of women. Isbester cites a Nicaraguan source stating that Sandinista commander Jaime Wheelock contacted Lea Guido and Gloria Carrión, two women leaders whose affiliation with the FSLN was well hidden, asking them to form a mass-based women's group organized around women's problems (31). However, Thelma Espinoza, Vice Coordinator of AMNLAE, in an interview with me, cited the fact that AMPRONAC had its birthday in 1977, "before the FSLN victory," as evidence for AMPRONAC's autonomous origin. Moreover, Gilma Yadira Tinoco, Director of the Comisión Interuniversitaria de Estudios de Género (Interuniversity Commission of Gender Studies), stressed the significance of the autonomous creation of AMPRONAC: "The organization had its origin before the

revolution against Somoza, as AMPRONAC. Later on, it became an organization supporting revolutionary combatants. Its origins were political: to denounce the crimes committed by Somoza. It was created by women, not by the party. By mothers and family relatives" (Interview, 1/17/00).

Despite the discrepancy over the origin of AMPRONAC, perhaps attributable to the fact that it took place during the period of the clandestine war against Somoza, *all sources* agree that AMPRONAC was able to achieve a degree of autonomy that its offshoot organization, AMNLAE, explicitly established as a Sandinista organization, was unable to achieve. As AMPRONAC began to focus its analysis on the particular oppression women suffered under the Somoza regime, it expanded its agenda to include explicit women's demands. In March, 1978, AMPRONAC celebrated Nicaraguan Women's Week by outlining its new set of demands including the following: freedom from repression; freedom of association; freedom for political prisoners; justice for those guilty of crimes and barbarities; maintenance of the cost of living; repeal of all laws which discriminate against women; equal pay for equal work; elimination of the commercialization of women (Deighton et al., 1983, 42).

Two political strands existed within AMPRONAC. One faction argued that it was possible to reform the government, while the other felt that it was necessary to fight for a complete transformation of society. In the spring of 1978, a national vote among the 3,000 members resolved the issue, and AMPRONAC declared itself a Sandinista organization (Deighton, 1983, 42). The women's organization decided to join the United People's Movement, the broad coalition of opposition groups (which included the FSLN) formed to oust Somoza. According to Auxiliadora Mesa, lawyer, professor at UCA, and

member of the Centro de Mujer y Familia (Center of Women and Family), "Once the FSLN assumed power, thanks to the support of the people, AMPRONAC became an expression of the party" (Interview, 1/24/00). Thelma Espinoza, Vice-Coordinator of AMNLAE, concurs, "In 1979, with the Sandinista victory, their role changed...they become a part of the Sandinista Party" (Interview, 1/6/00).

After the Sandinista Victory, AMPRONAC changed its name to AMNLAE, The Association of Nicaraguan Women 'Luisa Amanda Espinosa.' The newly identified organization was named after the first woman believed to have been killed in the war against Somoza. Maxine Molyneux (1984) asserts that AMPRONAC was transformed into AMNLAE in order to accomplish the tasks identified by the FSLN as the most important goals of revolutionary consolidation and reconstruction: economic development, increased political activity, and national defense (147). According to Tomás Borge's 1982 speech to AMNLAE in León, "The central task of AMNLAE should be the integration of all women into the revolution, without distinction. It should be a broad and democratic movement that mobilizes women from the various social sectors, so as to provide a channel for their political, social, economic, and cultural demands and to integrate them as a supporting force in the tasks of the Sandinista People's Revolution" (25). Once again, as was the case in Mozambique, the goal of mobilizing women into the revolutionary project does not address the issues of: (1) mobilization toward what end; and (2) if the purpose of the mobilization of women is simply to help achieve the goals of the revolution, to what extent do women help inform, shape, and influence the goals of the revolutionary project itself?

Despite AMNLAE's origin out of a semi-autonomous anti-dictatorial women's group, the organization suffered the same fate at the hands of the FSLN as the OMM experienced with FRELIMO: a lack of ideological and organizational autonomy. María Lidia Mejía, a founder of AMNLAE and coordinator of AMNLAE in the department of Granada, addresses the pragmatic necessity that guided the FSLN's use of women's mobilization: "Because the FSLN said we must integrate women into the struggle for production - to feed us during the war - they gave us things to do. They never asked us what we needed" (Interview, 1/28/00). AMNLAE, just like the OMM, effectively became the Women's Section of the FSLN. It was designed to function within the parameters defined by the party and assumed to share the same national goals. The analysis of the FSLN located women's emancipation within the broader strategy of the revolution. This means, effectively, that "policies for advancing the cause of women's emancipation would be pursued as long as they contributed to, or did not detract from, the realization of other broader goals" (Molyneux, 47). From its inception, AMNLAE took its position and its analysis from the FSLN:

AMNLAE is first and foremost a Sandinista organization. This political commitment shapes its development and strategy. The key to women's liberation, AMNLAE argues, lies not so much in meeting women's immediate demands as in ensuring the success of the entire revolutionary process (Deighton, 1983, 44).

According to the original founders of AMNLAE, the interests of women and the interests of the revolution were one and the same. From its very beginnings, AMNLAE and the FSLN framed a class-based movement for socialism and a gender-based movement for feminism in terms of an either-or choice. This false antagonism between fighting for one's rights as a worker and fighting for one's rights as a woman shaped the entire framework in which the Nicaraguan women's movement developed. At the First

National Meeting of Women Leaders sponsored by the FSLN, Mónica Baltodano, long time FSLN activist and military fighter and current member of the FSLN National Assembly, clearly stated that in cases where the interests of women may differ from the interests of the revolution, the class struggle reigns supreme over the struggle against machismo:

We have said that women must wage a constant struggle against discrimination. However, we know that in our society the class struggle is not abolished, and *therefore the fundamental base of our ideological struggle is the real and objective existence of a class struggle. Our main struggle is as revolutionary women at the side of the workers, not as women against attitudes of machismo* [emphasis mine] (Deighton, 44).

Inherent in Baltodano's argument is that only class-based oppression is real and objective. She also assumes women's struggles are purely ideological, denying the reality of ideological struggles and the objectivity of women's oppression. The intricate connections between struggling as women workers, a 'practical' gender interest, and struggling against machismo, a 'strategic' gender interest, are not acknowledged, nor are the connections between ideological and material levels of oppression. The agenda is conceived of as either-or from its inception.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the nature of the relationship between AMNLAE and the FSLN in an attempt to understand to what extent AMNLAE cultivated the ideological and organizational autonomy to incorporate a gendered analysis of women's oppression into the theories and practices of the revolution. After a brief examination of the history of AMNLAE as an organization, I will explore the 'productivist' theories of women's emancipation adopted by the FSLN, and by direction,

AMNLAE, and the 'verticalist' organizing practices of the FSLN in relation to AMNLAE.

3.7 The History of AMNLAE

Despite the greater hope for the autonomy of AMNLAE as compared with the OMM (given its semi-autonomous origins in AMPRONAC), both organizations effectively became the women's section of their revolutionary party, mobilizing women for the cause of the revolution without women having the space to shape the theory and practice of that revolution. According to Ana Criquillon (1993), long time feminist activist in Nicaragua, "AMNLAE's principle objective was the integration of women into all the tasks, activities, organizations and goals of the revolutionary process, in the belief that this was the best strategy to achieve the emancipation of women" (212). LaRamee and Polakoff (1997) argue that "AMNLAE always had an ambiguous and contradictory role vis-à-vis the revolutionary state. Even though the state and the party both had a formal commitment to women's emancipation and participatory democracy, AMNLAE was still an organization created by and for the party and not by and for women" (182). The two main problems AMNLAE faced as a mass organization were: (1) the concern that one organization could adequately address the needs and interests of the diversity of Nicaraguan women; (2) the fact that AMNLAE was ultimately responsible to the party.

According to Norma Chinchilla (1983), as early as October, 1981, there were concerns regarding AMNLAE's goals, membership identity, and relationship with the FSLN: "Sandinista feminists took the position that AMNLAE's lack of dynamism was due to its timid defense of women's specific demands, its failure to articulate an explicit critique of sexism, and its passive dependency on the FSLN hierarchy for its strategy and

program" (Chinchilla, 179). As a result, at the First National Assembly of AMNLAE in 1982, a change was proposed regarding the organization's identity and strategy: AMNLAE would move from being a direct membership organization and become a "political-ideological social movement" (Chinchilla, 180).

In 1983 the FSLN called upon AMNLAE to direct its energies single-mindedly to the defense efforts. Soon after the Sandinista victory, the question of the military draft was raised. The role of women in the military draft is perhaps the only issue the FSLN and AMNLAE publicly disagreed with in the history of their relationship. AMNLAE insisted that in order to maintain women's equality with men, particularly given women's strong military involvement in the revolution, they had to be a part of the draft. The FSLN strongly disagreed, passing a law calling for the active service of males only age 17 to 22. Defense Minister Humberto Ortega released a statement that women have "objective limitations," despite the fact that women were one-third of the revolutionary army, and in 1984 were 20% of the army and 50% of the militia (Erlick, 150). With the establishment of the male-only military draft and the discouragement of women from continuing their direct military participation in the army, the symbol of motherhood took on a new political meaning in Nicaragua. Contra propaganda began arguing that the Revolution was taking sons away from their mothers (Collinson, 142). To counteract this, AMNLAE was assigned the task of providing support for mothers of mobilized sons, primarily through the creation of "Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs" (Collinson, 142). This organization was created to provide support for mothers whose sons had been killed by

Somoza's National Guard in the war or by the counterrevolutionary forces and to mobilize mothers in the revolutionary war effort.⁴

During the mid-80s, debates ensued within AMNLAE as to how to deal with 'the woman question' within the context of the revolution. In 1985, AMNLAE held its Second National Assembly, adopting a new approach similar to the OMM's Extraordinary Conference of 1984. Grassroots meetings were held around the country to discuss the role and future direction of the organization: 40,000 women met in 600 base assemblies to discuss issues and concerns to be taken to the Assembly by the 1,000 delegates (Chinchilla, 182). The main issues raised in these grassroots meetings span the categories of so-called practical and strategic gender interests: sexuality, workplace discrimination, and domestic violence. Interestingly, after these topics were raised in the Assembly, Bayardo Arce of the FSLN National Directorate gave a speech that questioned the very need for a women's organization in the Sandinista revolution. These grassroots meetings showed that "specific problems in women's 'personal lives' hampered both their involvement in production and their participation in the political process" (Collinson, 143). Raising children single-handedly, deciding how many children to have, and surviving domestic violence were finally beginning to be recognized in Nicaragua as

⁴ The role of motherhood in the Nicaraguan revolution has been discussed by many. See most recently, Lorraine Bayard de Volo (2000), Motherhood and Martyrs: Gender Identity Politics in Nicaragua, 1979-1999. It is critical to remember that attempts to mobilize women as mothers are not necessarily intended to mobilize women as women. In fact, the Sandinista appropriation of the symbol of motherhood politicized *motherhood* without politicizing *women as mothers* or as *women*. As Patricia Chuchryk (1990) states, "This contradiction between politicizing motherhood by glorifying it and not politicizing women outside their role as mothers surfaced many times and in many ways throughout the Nicaraguan revolution. It is probably the key to understanding some of the constraints that limited the ability of the Sandinistas to advance in the area of women's rights and women's emancipation" (146). Women were only encouraged by the FSLN's motherhood campaign to organize around the political issues of motherhood, home, and family within the parameters of traditionally accepted roles for women and mothers.

material realities which, despite occurring in the “private reproductive sphere,” have a vital impact on the “public productive sphere” which a purely class-based analysis will not see.

In response to these meetings, AMNLAE drafted a New Agenda which contained issues dealing with power relations between men and women, including sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape, and the choice of when and whether to have children. In addition, new spaces for women’s organizing began to emerge outside of AMNLAE, particularly the Women’s Secretariat of the ATC, the Rural Workers Association (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo) and CONAPRO, the Confederation of Professional Organizations (Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones de Profesionales) which began to challenge AMNLAE’s leadership monopoly over the Nicaraguan women’s movement (Chinchilla, 184). Helen Collinson (1990) points out that the thunder of AMNLAE’s “new agenda” had been stolen by the Women’s Secretariat of the ATC, which was already talking about women’s specific problems and their connection to production and the revolutionary project (144).⁵

While the Women’s Secretariat of the ATC was focusing on women’s specific concerns, AMNLAE was devoting less and less of its time to mobilizing women as women, and as a result, to developing an analysis of women’s oppression. Helen Collinson (1990) refers to this as the great ambiguity in AMNLAE’s role as a women’s organization:

⁵ See Chapter 4 for an extensive discussion of the Women’s Secretariats and the autonomy struggles that emerged within AMNLAE.

It faced problems that other mass organizations did not face. For the most part the other organizations organized people according to their geographical position: the CST organized workers in factories, the ATC organized agricultural workers, the CDS worked in neighborhoods and markets. Yet for AMNLAE it was not so easy. Their constituency was all women... They were to organize women as AMNLAE and encourage women to integrate themselves into other organizations. At the same time they were also charged with the responsibility of formulating and advancing women's interests (Collinson, 141).

It is precisely this divided role that prevented AMNLAE from developing into an autonomous entity in its own right. AMNLAE never had the time or space to develop an analysis of women's oppression, let alone an analysis to link women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in the productive and reproductive spheres to the Sandinista struggle. The great ambiguity of AMNLAE, caused by its relationship with the FSLN, played a major part in its failure to develop an autonomous analysis of women's oppression. The FSLN directives always received priority.

3.8 The Theories of Women's Emancipation of the FSLN and AMNLAE: A Lack of Ideological Autonomy

Before examining the historical relationship of AMNLAE and the FSLN in greater detail, it is important to understand the theoretical context in which that relationship took place. This section will examine the theoretical framing of women's oppression and emancipation adopted by AMNLAE and the FSLN, highlighting the distinctions made between Marxist notions of production and feminist notions of reproduction. As was the case in Mozambique, the theoretical approaches to 'women's emancipation' adopted by the parties and the women's organizations in Nicaragua were framed by Marxist-Leninist understandings of the causes and thus the solutions of women's oppression, impeding the emergence of a gendered analysis. The practical needs of the revolution in the productive sphere were incorporated into the revolutionary agenda at the expense of women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in the reproductive sphere.

Marxist Production v. Feminist Reproduction

The 1969 Sandinista Program stated that, "The Sandinista people's revolution will abolish the odious discrimination that women have been subjected to...it will establish economic, political, and cultural equality between woman and man" (Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution 3). How was this commitment to women's equality understood and to what extent was it genuine? The speech delivered by Tomás Borge in León, Nicaragua on September 29, 1982 was the first speech given specifically on the status of women by a government leader after the overthrow of Somoza on July 19, 1979. The theory and practice of democratic centralism was as clearly at work in Nicaragua as it was in Mozambique. In the transcript of the speech, there are numerous citations of "AMNLAE women responded with 'National Directorate, we await your order!'" As Doris Tijerino states, the "vanguard of the FSLN" gives out directives to all of its organizations, including AMNLAE (Deighton, 44).

Borge's speech clearly gives a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the origin and history of women's oppression which is both class reductionist and materially economistic. First, he states definitively that 'the woman question' is simply a part of the larger revolutionary analysis of society: "The woman question is *nothing more* than an aspect of social reality in its totality. The definitive answer to the liberation of women *can emerge only* with the total resolution of the class contradictions, of the social diseases that originate in a society like ours..." [emphasis mine] (11). Not only is women's emancipation equated with a class revolution, but women's oppression is reduced to economic dependency: "Woman was the first enslaved human being on earth. Even before the state of slavery existed, women were slaves. As you know, *dependence and social oppression is based on the economic dependency of the oppressed* with respect to the oppressor. Woman was economically dependent on man even before class exploitation arose" [emphasis mine](12). Borge's analysis presents several problems. First of all, like Samora Machel, he never explains exactly how women came to be the

slaves of men. Secondly, the only form of dependence that he acknowledges is economic dependence. All forms of dependence and social oppression (physical, psychological, sexual, cultural, personal, and ideological) are reduced to economic dependency. As Mónica Zalaquett of the Center for the Prevention of Violence states: “the classical Marxist understanding of women's discrimination seen as economic discrimination is very limited because through history discrimination has multiple manifestations and acquires different dimensions - political, economic, psychological. The problem should be attacked through different dimensions” (Interview, 1/17/00).

Even when Borge correctly analyzes the burden of reproductive labor which women as a gender class share, as well as the superexploitation of women's unpaid domestic labor, he ignores the gendered relationship which lies at the base of the oppression and acknowledges only the economic base:

Independently of the fact that women, in this stage, continue to bear the main responsibility for reproduction and the care of children, the burden of housework and discrimination still relentlessly weighs down upon them....Of course, behind this objective reality there is an economic base....This explains why many times women are still compelled to do work that pays no wages, that is not taken account of anywhere, that is not credited toward social security. Independently of the fact that women often receive the help of men, the truth is that the customs and level of development of our society impose this superexertion on women. And it is in this sense that women are not only exploited--they're superexploited. They are exploited in their workplaces, if they work. They are exploited by lower wages and exploited in the home. That is, they are triply exploited (15-16).

Despite the fact that Borge seems to have a nuanced analysis of the root cause of the triple exploitation of women in both the 'productive' and 'reproductive' spheres of labor, he perpetuates the traditional Marxist distinction between productive and non-productive labor which contributes to gendered political economies that undervalue women's work:

Women workers constitute 40.5% of the workforce in the country. This means that 183,448 women work outside the home. At first glance, this seems like a very high proportion and could bring us to the conclusion that women's participation in production is very significant. Yet, if we analyze the type of work women carry out, we see that a high percentage of these women are really under-employed, and that another large layer is employed in *domestic service-work that is not productive and that will have to be regulated and limited in the future* [emphasis mine] (18).

Borge, along with most orthodox Marxists, discounts all domestic service work as non-productive. This raises at least three troubling questions: (1) what constitutes 'productivity'; (2) how can capital-saving reproductive labor performed for free which otherwise would have to be paid for in the market not be considered 'productive'; and (3) why is the goal of 'productivity' equated with women's emancipation?

The problem with Marxist theories of women's emancipation is that they rely on three fundamental fallacies: (1) women's oppression will automatically be achieved when class contradictions are resolved; (2) women's emancipation will be achieved through women's engagement in 'productive labor'; (3) class interests trump gender interests in any revolutionary struggle for emancipation. Each of these fallacies was raised during my interviews.

Sofia Montenegro, prominent feminist theorist and activist, and former member of the FSLN and AMNLAE, explains the 'automatic' assumptions of women's emancipation which guided Sandinista socialism:

For society in general it was the idea of bringing about a sort of endogenous adaptation of socialism, with the willingness that it should be an open society with a mixed economy, bringing about changes, which obviously were linked with the economic and social changes, but linked with the productive sphere...the traditional leftist idea that if you change the correlation of forces economically and the hegemony of classes then the emancipation of women will come by itself automatically (Interview, 1/25/00).

Ana Criquillon also critiques the productivist bias of the FSLN Marxist-Leninist approach, that women's engagement in production would lead to women's emancipation:

The assumption was that women going to work would resolve all of their problems. Little by little, the FSLN evolved, so that by the middle of the decade, they realized work by itself would not solve the problem....The analysis was limited, but they did not come up with a new one. On the other hand, it wasn't a priority (Interview, 1/20/00).

Vilma Castillo Aramburu, Executive Director of Puntos de Encuentro, describes how the focus on resolving the contradiction among classes blurred the material reality of power relations based on gender oppression: "In general, most of the time the Sandinistas focused more on the Marxist analysis of classes and taking Marxism and adopting it to women. They thought by resolving economic problems, they could solve women's problems....Nor did they have an analysis of power relations or power within workspaces" (Interview, 1/20/00).

Gilma Yadira Tinoco, Director of the Comisión Interuniversitaria de Estudios de Género, gives support to the argument that the FSLN and, by direction, AMNLAE, adopted a Classical Marxist understanding of the relationship between class and gender oppression:

AMNLAE developed historically as it had to develop as the other mass organizations did. Its main purpose was to defend the goals of the revolution. The particular interests of the organization were put into a secondary level following Classical Marxist theory. Classical Marxism concluded that the subordination of women has its origin in the class struggle. The fight for class equality will achieve equality for women. That conception was not just handed by the male leadership but the women leadership at that time. By the end of the 1980s this conception had less support...(Interview, 1/17/00).

According to Tinoco, the perception today is that class and gender struggles are not contradictory, but, in fact, intersectional: "In previous years, however, a clash was constructed between the two positions: gender or class - you had to go toward one or the

other. Today, it is seen as not just possible to merge the two but necessary!” (Interview, 1/17/00).

The assumed dichotomy between class and gender oppression buttressed another dichotomous relationship: emancipation in the public sphere of production versus emancipation in the private sphere of reproduction. Argentina Olivas of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa asserts that neither AMNLAE nor the FSLN had a feminist analysis of women’s oppression in the private spheres of life:

I think they didn't have it. They saw women's participation more as women developing the self in the public sphere. Women's groups created at this time - we realized we were oppressed by Sandinista men and men on the left - we received bad treatment, rape, etc. So, women started organizing themselves. They were demonized, satanized. One of our colleagues, a lesbian militant of the FSLN... they caused her to leave the party (Interview, 1/31/00).

Olivas commented that working with men in organizations in the public sphere was a good experience because the men and the women worked together. There was also more freedom for women to go to meetings, to share in community participation. “But internally, in the house, it was women only” (Interview, 1/31/00). Sonia Agurto, researcher with FIDEG, describes her realization of the missing analysis of the Sandinistas: “I was not understanding why some women were leaving the party. But as I started joining women's organizations/movements, I realized the Sandinistas had an analysis of class, and not gender. Many women were expelled from the party for defending women's rights” (Interview, 1/10/00). Agurto goes on to identify the women of AMNLAE as women who were militarily involved in the revolution, who often wanted to “get rid of other women, women who are lesbians, bringing ideas of European feminists” (Interview, 1/10/00).

The leadership of the FSLN ended up adopting a productivist, and therefore, reductionist, view of the revolution and the problem of social transformation. As a result,

both the FSLN and AMNLAE ignored women's practical gender needs in the reproductive sphere of life:

There was a lot of resistance because...the feminist position was seen as a bourgeois position....on the other hand, the shortages, the handling of the food crisis....everything that means the reproduction of domestic life was becoming quite complicated, and it was women who had to handle this crisis. On the one hand to have to handle the crisis of the emotional losses due to the amount of dead people that were around, and it was their sons, their husbands, their children, and on the other hand to have to keep on going in the rear guard, economically, socially, but at the same time they have to handle their own life, in their own barrios and their own house, and it was too fucking much. And the emphasis at that moment in the war that was the party line: that the women that mattered were the women that were older, the mothers of the ones that were fighting. The younger women who had small children and therefore not subject to the draft were thinking of some other things. Milk, for example (Interview, 1/25/00).

Conflicting interests between different sectors of society, including mothers of young children and older mothers who had lost sons in the war, began to emerge during the worst parts of the Contra War in the mid 80s. This heightened the productivist/reproductivist divide and highlighted new issues that would need to be dealt with: milk to feed young children, contraception to prevent the birth of new young children:

For example, the necessity to control reproduction for women, because older women did not have this problem; they were already grandmothers. But the women who were in their reproductive life cycle, they were fertile, they had all kinds of complications of health, and they demanded this attention. And that's how the discussion of reproductive rights and the necessity of dealing with health problems like abortion and contraception began....because I mean that was the problem. If you got pregnant or you wanted to avoid a pregnancy there was no way you could prevent it. So, it began with some women asking that in the basic grocery quota that you got, the state should put some pills every month, like oil, rice, beans and pills (Montenegro Interview, 1/25/00).

This example of including birth control pills in the monthly rations from the state reveals just how differently a monthly basket of 'necessities' would look if it were being

constructed by men or by women, with a *productivist* view in mind or a *reproductivist* framework.⁶

While the traditional Marxist approach to the emancipation of women focused on women's integration into production, Montenegro argues that "reality began to show that you could not advance the changes without making a program that dealt with the reproductive sphere, and this became clear for the women, many of the Sandinista women who were feminist, and by the pressure of reality itself"(Interview, 1/25/00). Ivonne Siu, Sandinista feminist formerly in charge of international relations for AMNLAE and the AMNLAE Legal Office (OLM), argues that the struggle for women's rights is connected to revolutionary transformation through productive and reproductive social relations:

The struggle for our demands and rights is revolutionary in itself. The struggle against a system of domination and the struggle of women are complementary struggles; they are part of the same struggle to transform social injustice and to achieve freedom and equality through transforming unjust relationships of production and reproduction in society (Quoted in Criquillon, 221).

Ana María Pizarro, Director of SI MUJER and formerly with the FSLN Ministry of Health, sums up well how the economic emphasis of theorizing women's emancipation as women's integration into production is based on a class understanding of women's oppression as opposed to a gendered understanding:

I think the Sandinistas, as all revolutions of the 1970s, never got to incorporate as an element of women's oppression the gender oppression. For them, women suffered oppression because they were poor, not because they were women.... They didn't consider the specifics of women, with the exception of poor women versus non-poor women. Talk about women was about unemployed women. There was not a recognition of women's specific needs. For example, reproductive rights - control of women's bodies was not taken up in the revolution. In the 1970s, control of women's bodies, birth control, and reproductive rights were rejected by the Latin American left as examples of Yankee Imperialism and issues of Latin American sovereignty. They

⁶ See my discussion, Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

never understood these issues as citizens' rights (Interview, 1/21/00).⁷

In conclusion, many women I interviewed asserted that it was precisely *because* AMNLAE did not have autonomy from the FSLN that the organization did not have a program which fought for both the practical gender needs and the strategic gender interests of Nicaraguan women in the productive and the reproductive spheres of life. As Ana María Pizarro summarizes, "AMNLAE was just a [voice]box, repeating the guidelines of the Sandinistas....They don't promote any ideas that go against the National Directorate" (Interview, 1/21/00). As a result, the theories of women's emancipation adopted by the FSLN framed the ideological limitations of AMNLAE. A productivist, economic, class-based analysis of women's oppression seemed to be the only viable option. What does the Sandinista leadership have to say about the party's commitment to women's emancipation?

Discursive Rhetoric v. Substantive Commitment

Victor Hugo Tinoco, member of the FSLN since 1973, member of the National Directorate of the FSLN from 1994 to the present and current member of the National Assembly, has worked in different political and military positions, from the struggle against Somoza in the 1970s to diplomatic responsibilities in the 1980s. Tinoco asserts that "by the triumph of the revolution, the FSLN was looking to shape a fairer society with decreasing poverty and decreasing class differences" (Interview, 1/26/00). He also has "a sense that at that time, the topic of women's rights was not as strong" but that the struggle for a fair society included women (Interview, 1/26/00). And yet, Tinoco admits very clearly the secondary status of women's gendered concerns:

In the 1980s, the topic of *women's issues* was *hidden*, dissolved, because, again, there were *national challenges* which made other

⁷Pizarro goes on to argue how a reproductive model is actually essential to the model of the Nicaraguan revolution, unspoken but inherent in the pro-natalist policies and politicization of motherhood: "In this country, the rural economy needed laborers to take over agriculture. The revolutionary model is pro-life. Women's bodies become a state issue...." (Interview, 1/21/00).

goals secondary. In the 1980s, it was defense of the revolution, an effort to build a new social and economic order. Those were the most important objectives. Women's issues were hidden despite a very important role in society. This was the same as in the struggle against Somoza. In the military, women were often better combatants than men! Also, during the 80s and the defense of the revolution, women got involved in production. *The gender goal was dissolved* [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/26/00).

Tinoco's statement highlights exactly the points missing from the historic analysis of the FSLN. There were 'women's issues' and then there were 'national challenges'. Women's issues were not *conceptualized* as a national challenge. Moreover, if 'women's issues' were seen as 'secondary' to the goal of building a new social and economic order, how would women and their issues become an *integral part* of that new social and economic order? Yet he points out that women got involved in production. Was that a part of the new Sandinista social and economic order? Toward what end? In the same breath, he tells us that 'the gender goal was dissolved.' So, apparently, getting women into production was not a 'gender goal' for the Sandinistas but another kind of goal. Was it an 'economic goal' to help meet a 'national challenge'? Perhaps women's sense of themselves was increased by their participation in the productive sphere of labor, but this was not the goal of the production policy, only a byproduct. And that leads us to another question: What exactly is the 'gender goal' for Mr. Tinoco? Did the Sandinistas have any 'gender goals'?

Jaime Wheelock, a founding member of the FSLN, National Directorate member for twenty years and former Minister of Agriculture, insists that the Sandinistas had as one of their main goals "to develop assured thinking toward women's emancipation" (Interview, 1/24/00). "It's not that we didn't try. We couldn't, *even when we charged our own women to do it*" [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/24/00). In his assessment of how well the FSLN incorporated a gendered analysis of women's oppression in terms of theory and practice, Wheelock seems to identify two main limitations: (1) the priority of war, perpetuated by the United States; and (2) the cultural assumptions of Nicaraguan women and men:

The first obstacle was to fight the dictatorship, the second was to confront the war directed by the U.S. Having just 200,000 combatants...for example, a girl, during the revolution, would be a student, coffee collector, and a soldier. Women's agenda became shaped as we were winning the war.... In 1987, we issued The Proclamation. We thought about women....UNAG and the FSLN created cooperatives to identify beneficiaries of land ownership including the army, at one moment as a recruiter for the army. It is possible that the women's organization suffered a lot at that time. The organization lost its importance - 1983-1986. During that period of crisis, it wasn't a priority in the time of war. Many of the women's organizations were supporting the war, collecting coffee, occupying different affairs, not their own (Interview, 1/24/00).

Wheelock's insistence that the FSLN thought about women is evidenced by the Proclamation of 1987, issued after the crisis period of 1983-1986 in which, by his own admission, AMNLAE had suffered and lost its importance. The motivation for and impact of the Proclamation will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, suffice it to say here that, by 1987, the Proclamation was too little too late.

Although the most entrenched members of the FSLN argued that the party did have an analysis of women's oppression, other former Sandinistas argued that there was no special commitment to women as a particular group in society; rather, that there was a genuine commitment to equality for all. According to Ana Criquillon, long-time feminist activist with the ATC and the FSLN and now on the Board of Directors of Puntos de Encuentro, "The Sandinista revolution pretended to achieve the same rights for men and women. It wasn't a specific goal for women. Equality was the main goal for all Nicaraguans" (Interview, 1/20/00). However, for Vilma Nuñez de Escorcía, Director of CENIDH, the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights, Former Vice-President of the Nicaraguan Supreme Court, and militant member of the FSLN, even the commitment to

equality remained more in the realm of theory than practice: “The historical program of the FSLN proclaimed the equal participation of women. Documents were created regarding the equal political participation of women. However, the practice was different” (Interview, 2/2/00).

For many, the theoretical commitment to equality could not compete with the practical embeddedness of machismo culture. According to María Rosa Renzi, UNDP Gender Representative, “It is true that the revolution recognized equality for everybody, and women became active in areas traditionally not for them” (Interview, 1/21/00). Renzi however goes on to argue that the revolution also taught Nicaraguans that there is not enough willingness to fight gender oppression because of its cultural embeddedness in society, from the top level leaders to the lowest grassroots level:

It was machista - reproductive and sexual health were not targets. There were not changes in this area. The revolution was [doubletalk]: there were speeches about women's participation, but there wasn't input about women's strategic interests....Women had different salaries and the worst positions. Women were almost never in positions of decision-making or managing (Interview, 1/21/00).

Mónica Zalaquett, director of the Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia and self-identified Sandinista, agrees that many women participated in the revolution and had opportunities that they never had before. However, gender relations and family transformation were not the focus of the Sandinista analysis of women's oppression:

I think the Sandinistas wanted to incorporate women into all of their plans for transformation. But the problem of women was not a very important issue - they cared about the social relations of production, not the social relations of gender. Conscious feminists were stigmatized and rejected. There were women's organizations - AMNLAE. But with the war, the transformation of the family was not important, and when the family is not transformed, society does not change

(Zalaquett Interview, 1/17/00).

Zalaquett agrees that for the Sandinistas, the solution was about getting more women into production. Although the creation of childcare centers did accompany this goal for *productivist* ends, the transformation of machismo in the reproductive area was not promoted.

3.9 The Relationship Between AMNLAE and the FSLN: A Lack of Organizational Autonomy

While the divide between theory and practice exists within any revolutionary movement, the degree to which people are willing to talk about it varies greatly. Many of the individuals I interviewed in Nicaragua were much more willing to be critical of the FSLN leadership than in Mozambique, given the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas as opposed to the electoral victory and continuing governing power of FRELIMO. Obviously, losing power and becoming the opposition party versus remaining the party in power shapes the context in which people feel they can be critical. This explains why in many ways this is a unique and interesting time to gather the histories of activist women in Nicaragua and their experiences with the FSLN in the 1980s, a time when criticism was squelched.

The main criticisms that emerged from my interviews with activist women in Nicaragua, many of whom have left the party and AMNLAE and have started their own autonomous NGOs in 'civil society' today, have led me to make the following assertions about autonomy: (1) the 'verticalism' of the FSLN party led to a decision-making structure in which decisions were directed from the top-down, through the direct oversight of National Directorate members Tomás Borge and Bayardo Arce over

AMNLAE, preventing real autonomy for the organization; (2) the lack of a critical questioning and revolutionary understanding of gendered and cultural power relationships in the FSLN led to the patriarchal exercise of power both within the party structure and within the reproductive spheres of the home and family, thus revealing a stark contrast between revolutionary theory and patriarchal practice. I will discuss each conclusion in turn below.

‘Verticalism’ in the FSLN

During most of the 1980s, AMNLAE’s leadership and agenda-setting were determined by the party. All Secretaries-General of AMNLAE were appointed by the National Directorate of the FSLN until after the 1990 electoral loss, and all budgets were managed by the party. María Lidia Mejía, AMNLAE Coordinator of the Department of Granada, explains how little autonomy the organization had, describing the direct oversight the FSLN National Directorate had over the mass organizations:

Yes, we lacked autonomy. It was ridiculous at that time. To have a women’s organization addressed by a man. Borge assisted their work. Within the FSLN Directorate, each one of the members had to deal with one of the organizations: the ATC, the CST, the Youth Organization, AMNLAE. Borge told us, ‘You do this.’ They tell the women what to do...In some tasks they assigned, we wanted to say yes, but we did not want to continue to be used” (Interview, 1/28/00).

Sandra Ramos López, former member of the FSLN, AMNLAE and the CST, agrees: “AMNLAE never was independent from the party. Its structure was from the party. Men, Bayardo Arce, was always overseeing and watching. In reality, the National Directorate of the FSLN was managing society” (Interview, 1/10/2000). According to Ana María Pizarro, Director of SI MUJER and formerly with the Ministry of Health under the FSLN from 1984-1989, “We had to leave AMNLAE. AMNLAE was and practically is the

organization of the FSLN. Obviously, any leader of AMNLAE would never go against the National Directorate” (Interview, 1/21/00). Vilma Castillo Aramburu, Executive Director of Puntos de Encuentro, agrees that the party limited AMNLAE’s autonomy: “They had relative autonomy - limited, as long as they did not confront the leaders of the party. The goals, the party defined for AMNLAE, always within the space of the FSLN” (Interview, 1/20/00). According to Argentina Olivas, of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, “AMNLAE was the arm of the party. Guidelines were given to them by men” (Interview, 1/31/00).

Liliana Salinas, Coordinator of the Centro de Mujeres, ISNIN, expresses that it was precisely AMNLAE’s lack of autonomy that explains why she herself was never a member of the Sandinista women’s organization:

I grew up being a member of different organizations of the FSLN. I was a volunteer member of the popular health campaigns, collecting coffee beans, and the education crusade. But a member of AMNLAE - never! When I knew of different abuses that affected poor people, I began to take part in activities to help people. AMNLAE is not an organization to help women. It is an organization to help the party. The expression ‘to help women’ was translated as saying ‘yes’ all the time to the party, even if it affected women....behind AMNLAE, being in charge, were the men of the party. Bayardo Arce - many women didn’t know he was behind AMNLAE. But the people taking orders from him knew it. Many women leaders at that time denied it (Interview, 1/13/00).

Today, Dora Zeledón, current National Coordinator of AMNLAE, confirms that “Tomás Borge and Bayardo Arce partly directed the mass organizations. That’s a reality” (Interview, 1/28/00). She also commented that AMNLAE made ‘mistakes’, including its ‘vertical orientation,’ after 1991, and therefore caused many women to leave the organization (Interview, 1/28/00).

In addition to a standard top down decision-making model, disagreement was handled in a way very well described by the notion of 'verticalism.' One interviewee expressed her experience with the way internal dissension was dealt with:

There were groups of women inside pushing for more autonomy. The women calling for more autonomy were demoted. The women who say, "Yes, Sir" can stay and the women who say, "No, Sir" can walk. Due to ideological divisions - I was one of the women who was kicked out of the assembly. I was a danger. I was on the National Assembly of AMNLAE, Managua for 5 years. They ejected me from AMNLAE for one year (Interview).

Another interviewee explained fears regarding how disagreement would be dealt with and the possible sanctions that might ensue: "The problem is that sometimes you say things. If you take another position, they can reduce funds to sanction you. In some cases, a woman was a single mother. You had to agree with the party and say yes. Otherwise you would lose your job" (Interview). In describing the relationship between the women's organization and the party, Sandy Suarez García also said that when there were differences, sanctions were issued: "party women sanctioned AMNLAE...when sanctions started, people were disqualified from the party. To the disqualified person, they would take out your authority, exclude you" (Interview, 1/21/00). It appears as if the FSLN's commitment to verticalism and quieting dissension within the party had an impact on the decreasing commitment of some AMNLAE members to the party and the increasing push for greater autonomy that will be the topic of Chapter 4.

Perhaps the best example of the FSLN's verticalist relationship with AMNLAE occurred in 1988. By the end of the decade, AMNLAE leaders had decided to pursue major structural changes to achieve the democratization of the organization. Throughout the 1980s, the leadership of AMNLAE had been appointed by the National Directorate of

the FSLN, which also selected members to have direct oversight over the women's organization (Tomás Borge and Bayardo Arce). In 1989, AMNLAE initiated a democratic process to elect a new national assembly and executive committee, with several openly identified feminist leaders from key sectoral organizations within the women's movements as candidates. Bayardo Arce, member of the FSLN National Directorate in charge of AMNLAE, asked the women's organization to wait until after the upcoming national election for the sake of keeping unity to ensure the Sandinista victory.

In May of that year, the FSLN proceeded to freeze AMNLAE's internal election process and remove its national leadership. The FSLN appointed Doris Tijerino as the head of AMNLAE during the time of the election, a well known Sandinista militant and the first woman Chief of Police. Several of the feminist activists I interviewed said that it was no coincidence that the former Chief of Police was put in charge of the women's organization at the time. When the Sandinistas lost the election of 1990, feminists and women members of AMNLAE found themselves tired of waiting, and asking themselves, what are we waiting for?

A Political Culture of Patriarchal Power?

Now that the FSLN is out of power and AMNLAE has asserted its autonomy, there is a real space to be critical. The story of Zoilamérica Narvaez, the step-daughter of former President of Nicaragua and still head of the FSLN, Daniel Ortega, epitomizes the emergence of an immanent critique and the recognition of revolutionary contradiction in the country. In 1998, Narvaez, a member of the Sandinista Youth organization since she was thirteen years old and a member of the party since she was twenty-one, publicly accused her step-father of years of sexual abuse beginning when she was nine years old. It

was the most highly publicized case of family sexual abuse in Nicaraguan history, bringing to the forefront of feminist debates the degree to which patriarchal power was challenged within the Sandinista revolutionary framework: “I am a kind of living memory of the story of the limitations of the revolution” (Narvaez Interview, 1/14/00).

One of the main emergent critiques of the Sandinistas is that they never adopted a revolutionary understanding of *power relationships* outside the realm of class and imperialism. They never examined or attempted to transform the process of power-sharing. From the sexual level to the cultural level there was an “exercising of power without limits, an abuse of power. Gender manifestations are one part of the abuse of power. The political culture of the revolution was a culture of war” (Narvaez Interview, 1/14/00). Narvaez examines the nature of the political culture of the FSLN:

The political culture is a culture of silence: clandestine, out of the law, a culture of secrets, a culture of rumors, behind closed doors. This kind of political culture, because of the war, was concentrated. It makes the separation between the public and the private worse. There is also a culture of fear and subordination. There are always issues of power and the reproduction of the cultures of fear and silence. The revolution demanded a lot of personal life sacrifices, including leaving a child alone for months for the revolution. There is still a lot of fear (Interview, 1/14/00).

Narvaez blames the militarization of Nicaraguan society for the culture of violence that permeates various aspects of human interaction, citing the FSLN as the perpetrator of such values after the revolution. Narvaez’s analysis links violence against women with violent political relations and violent styles of communication, and she concludes that the ways people were, and are, treated are both sexist and violent: “The distribution of roles is very sexist....not just in terms of policy-making, but ideology- sustaining, perpetuated machismo, patriarchy. In public offices, how many women leaders are there? They are all

in services, not administration. There had never been a woman member of the National Directorate until after Dora María Telles⁸ resigned” (Interview, 1/14/00). It seems evident that power relations between men and women, in terms of public political leadership in the state and private political power in the family, were not challenged by the FSLN.

Marcia Ramírez, sister of former Vice-President and founder of the Sandinista Reform Movement (MRS) Sergio Ramírez, asserts that the sphere that was most left untouched by the Sandinistas was the sphere of *cultural power relations* between men and women in the family:

In the 1980s if you would have asked me that [re: women's emancipation], I would have said, 'Yes.' Those were our dreams. We had faith that the Sandinistas were working for women's rights. They said it, but I think now, looking back, it was a lie. I don't think they left us enough spaces. Many women with the capacity didn't get where they deserved. Not in the revolution, but in terms of cultural positions. It is the idea that the man almost by nature is superior to the woman, in terms of family, work...He is the one to determine what is to be done, he has the power...(Interview, 1/19/00).

Many people I interviewed described a clear contrast between the way male Sandinista leaders treated their wives and children privately, and the kind of feminist speeches they gave publicly. Ramírez continues:

Top leaders abused their wives, abandoned their kids, sexually harassed their subordinates. I think deep changes were not made about the relations between men and women. I feel the revolution was a space to be aware of our rights, but there was not a focus on gender. This caused many women to divorce, separate... (Interview, 1/19/00).

⁸ Two prominent Sandinista militants, Dora María Telles and Sergio Ramírez, former Sandinista Vice President under Daniel Ortega, broke off from the FSLN and formed the MRS party, the Sandinista Renovation Movement in 1994. The MRS represents a faction from within the FSLN that publically expressed discontent over the party's unwillingness to pursue internal democratization after much demand in that direction.

Sofía Montenegro also spoke about the contradictions of Sandinista leaders engaging in gender violence: “These same men who stood up and talked about the revolution and democracy and then committed violence with their wife or their children and all these sorts of inconsistencies create what we call: *dissonancia cognitiva*” (Interview, 1/25/00). When asked just how many ‘revolutionary’ Sandinista men engaged in private gender violence, she responded:

The majority of them. At all levels. And therefore we began to say that we have to combat machismo. So by 1987, with the rewriting of the Constitution, I think it was the opportunity we took to promote the debate of equal rights for women, which entered finally as a principle of the Constitution. And it forced, we forced, the Front to make a Proclamation of Principles [*La Proclama*] by the party, to compromise itself to fight against patriarchalism, both patriarchal structures and machista attitudes. Politically, and the private ones (Interview, 1/25/00).

The Proclamation to which Montenegro refers is the Proclamation of 1987, passed by the FSLN after internal pressure from women within AMNLAE and the party. This Proclamation was the first directly stated public commitment of the FSLN to fight attitudes of machismo and to recognize women’s unequal contribution to reproductive labor in the family. The impact of the Proclamation, which turned out to be more rhetorical than substantive, proved to be too little too late.

It wasn’t only women who complained of the machismo of male FSLN leaders. Javier Matus Lazo, Director of CENADE, Center of Action and Support of Rural Development (Centro de Acción y Apoyo al Desarrollo Rural), described the topic of women’s emancipation within the revolution for him as a very difficult one because of the divide between revolutionary theory and patriarchal practice:

There were speeches on women’s liberation, equality of conditions, but there was never a complete analysis....There were sexual abuse attitudes by great leaders, commanders that were talking

about this great equality. The problem is that it was not addressed correctly....I was one of the people more affected because you think that leaders practice what they say, but then you realize in reality, you get disappointed (Interview, 1/19/00).

I would like to close this final section of the chapter with a few brief examples of activist women in Nicaragua and their practical experiences with the political culture of patriarchal power of the FSLN.

Helen Dixon of Grupo Venancia in Matagalpa discussed how for her the key issues became how to transform power relations, particularly the vertical power structures that accompanied the FSLN party structure, exacerbated by the war and the struggle for survival (Interview, 1/31/00). With the Contra War, things were more hierarchical and the political culture was not questioned. Dixon described how she came to realize that “feminism represented a criticism of political culture, which eventually starts to question how leadership gets chosen. When nine men on the National Directorate are appointing the women leaders of AMNLAE, suddenly you start to question how nine men can choose women's leadership” (Interview, 1/31/00).

Vilma Núñez de Escorcía, Director of CENIDH, the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (Centro Nicaraguense de Derechos Humanos), Former Vice-President of the Nicaraguan Supreme Court, and militant member of the FSLN, is no stranger to the patriarchal culture of power of the FSLN. She chose to run for the position of presidential candidate for the party against Daniel Ortega in the 1996 elections simply for the purpose of fostering democratic competition! When Núñez was the senior Vice-President of the Nicaraguan Supreme Court in 1988, just as the position of the Presidency of the Supreme Court became vacant, she was transferred to the Governmental Commission on Human

Rights. According to Nuñez, the move from the Supreme Court to the Human Rights Commission was an “undeserved punishment,” a decision that came down from the “machistas” on the National Directorate of the FSLN, securing the impossibility of her promotion to the presidency (Interview, 2/2/00). However, Nuñez turned this punishment into an opportunity. Her work with the Human Rights Commission, including having to defend one of her Contra co-torturers, helped her to do the work she is doing today at CENIDH: “Our organization is the one with the greatest credibility for our work” (Interview, 2/2/00).

María Lourdes Bolaños, founder of the oldest alternative feminist health clinic Centro de Mujeres IXCHEN and current FSLN Member of Parliament, has also had her disagreements with the party. She was removed from the Nicaraguan Supreme Court, and Comandante Tomás Borge “gave” her to AMNLAE in 1983, wherein she created the Legal Office of AMNLAE. After Bolaños started writing articles on domestic violence, intrafamilial violence, domestic work and abortion, she received a reprimand from AMNLAE: “They called me from AMNLAE and told me I could not...I had to stop talking because I was dividing women in the FSLN. They wanted to take away my militant membership” (Interview, 2/2/00).

Ritha Fletes Zamora, faithful member of the FSLN National Assembly and AMNLAE, also describes how difficult it was as a woman participating within the party: “Obviously, it was not easy to achieve a university education and participate in the party as a woman; it was more difficult. Even though it was a young revolution with young people, we have to remember the education was machista. But, at least it gave people the spaces.... revolutionary men...gave nothing for free...” (Interview, 1/10/00).

When asked how many members of the National Directorate engaged in behaviors consistent with machismo, one female FSLN member interviewed replied, “Machismo? Todos. All of them! The behavior of the leaders of the National Directorate never recognized women's merit - not only in political life but also in personal lives. They treated women like objects. Doing a revolution doesn't stop you from being machista” (Interview).

3.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, both the OMM and AMNLAE were constrained by the top-down leadership model and decision-making structures of the ruling revolutionary state parties, FRELIMO and the FSLN, respectively. While both parties expressed a rhetorical commitment to women's emancipation, the substantive understanding of that emancipation was seen as included in, secondary to, and subsumed by the achievement of the socialist revolution. Women's emancipation was predominantly defined through women's increased participation in 'productive' labor in the public sphere of the market and, militarily, in defense of the revolution. While these may be necessary conditions for the liberation of women, and do challenge certain gender-role stereotypes about the inherent incapacity of women⁹, they are not sufficient. The intersections of women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in the productive and reproductive spheres of life were for the most part left unexamined, as were gendered material and cultural power relations in the family. As a result, women in the parties and the women's organizations, specifically identified in Nicaragua, struggled with verticalism and patriarchal political cultures within the theory and practice of the revolutionary society.

⁹ See my discussion, Chapter 6.

Both women's organizations, then, struggled within a class-based framework to mobilize women for the revolution. While feminist practices did emerge, neither the OMM nor AMNLAE achieved a sufficient degree of ideological or organizational autonomy from the state party to develop a feminist analysis of women's oppression in all spheres of everyday life – the state, the market, civil society and the family. How they chose to organize and what they were able to achieve are the subjects of the rest of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Autonomy Struggles Emerge: Comparing Women's Organizing Strategies in Mozambique and Nicaragua

"I think nobody can say women are what they are because of an institution....Do not think our institutions are the creators. They facilitate. Women are not cows. You cannot put signs on us. We are active members of history."

Sandra Ramos López, Coordinator of the Movimiento de Mujeres Trabajadoras y Desempleadas- María Elena Cuadra, Former member of FSLN, AMNLAE, CST, Interview, 1/10/00

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the struggles that emerged for autonomy in each country, both *between* the women's organizations and the parties and *within* the women's organizations themselves. Women in Mozambique and Nicaragua adopted different organizing strategies, which had an impact on the degree of autonomy that they achieved during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods. In Nicaragua, autonomy struggles began in the 1980s, much earlier than in Mozambique, as women pushed from below to create women's secretariats within the pre-existing workers unions and associations outside the structure of the main women's organization (AMNLAE). These alternative organizations helped integrate women into the revolutionary *process*, thus creating additional spaces for a *gendered* analysis of women's oppression to emerge. In Mozambique, autonomy struggles did not even emerge until the 1990s, sparked by the country's transition from a single to a multi-party state. The OMM was *the only* women's organization throughout the revolutionary period, thus providing less of an opportunity for women's gendered interests to emerge.

In the post-revolutionary period in Nicaragua, AMNLAE has become an autonomous organization in the women's movement. In Mozambique, after a brief period of autonomy, the OMM decided to return to FRELIMO and remain a women's organization of the party. Why has this been the case? Not only did women's autonomy struggles begin much earlier in Nicaragua, accounting for the stronger foundation of autonomous women's organizations, but the *electoral defeat* of the Sandinistas in 1990 created an environment conducive for women's *autonomous* organizing, in contrast to the *electoral victory* of FRELIMO in 1994. Three factors have affected the OMM and AMNLAE's organizational abilities to establish autonomy: (1) organizational identity issues; (2) power struggles with the party; and (3) internal women's struggles.

Electoral Politics and Social Movement Organizational Autonomy

One of the factors that emerged as an important one in my research for this chapter that I had not intended to examine was the impact of electoral politics on the autonomy decision-making of the women's organizations under study. The timing and degree to which the women's organizations in Mozambique and Nicaragua sought autonomy has been influenced by the status of the ruling political party. In Mozambique, where FRELIMO remains the ruling party, the OMM remains a party organization, whereas in Nicaragua, where the FSLN has become the opposition party, AMNLAE has sought autonomy. Karen Kampwirth (1998) discusses the important role of autonomy for social movements and social movement organizations, which often find it "necessary to seek autonomy from the parties" (275). She is particularly interested in the importance of social movement autonomy as it relates to electoral politics: "The role of social movement autonomy in electoral politics (and, by implication, in democratization) is

contradictory.... But autonomy is not an unmitigated good. Despite the inherent disadvantages, there are many advantages to affiliation with a political party....At the height of the autonomy struggle, the advantage of autonomy probably outweighed the costs of the resources; after the initial autonomy struggle, the costs of those lost resources became more apparent" (276).

Kampwirth's analysis has interesting ramifications for party organizations like the OMM and AMNLAE within a transition from a revolutionary to a multi-party state. Autonomy struggles for women's organizations affiliated with the revolutionary party have evolved differently in Mozambique and Nicaragua. My research develops Kampwirth's analysis by showing that the degree to which social movement organizational autonomy will outweigh party affiliation is based upon two factors: (1) the degree of power of the political party: is it the ruling party in power or the defeated opposition party; and (2) the degree to which alternative space(s) existed for autonomous organizing.

In Nicaragua, the struggle for autonomy clearly reached a height that outweighed the costs of the lost resources of affiliation with the FSLN. This could have two possible causes: (1) women within AMNLAE began pushing for autonomy much earlier, in the mid 1980s, so there was a space for an autonomous women's movement to grow and flourish; (2) the FSLN lost the elections of 1990 1996, and 2001, thus making party affiliation less advantageous.

In Mozambique, on the other hand, where the OMM has decided to return to the party after a period of autonomy, the opposite has been true: (1) the OMM was the *only* space for women's organizing until after the multi-party system was adopted in the early

1990s, thus creating no alternative spaces for women's organizing until much more recently; (2) FRELIMO remains the party in power, having won the elections of 1994 and 1999. Thus, the same factors are at play in each context: party power and organizing spaces. These two factors may serve as good predictors of a social movement's search for autonomy from a political party, particularly in a transition from a single to a multi-party state.

A Question of Identity: What Kind of Women's Organization Are We?

Another aspect of an organization's decision to seek autonomy from a political party is based on the nature of the identity of the organization: what kind of women's organization are we? Sonia Alvarez (1990) provides perhaps the most cited distinction in the literature between two kinds of organizing: *feminine organizing*, which asserts rights on the basis of traditional roles for women, and *feminist organizing*, which seeks to challenge and transform traditional gender roles and gender power relations for women and men. In her article entitled, "Feminism, Antifeminism and Electoral Politics in Postwar Nicaragua and El Salvador," Karen Kampwirth (1998) expands upon Alvarez's notion of feminine and feminist organizing strategies by adding a third: antifeminist organizing.¹

I would like to offer three new categories of women's organizing that have emerged from my research. I believe there is a tension between being a women's organization, a political organization of women, and an explicitly feminist organization. Let me briefly define what I mean by each of these terms. A *women's organization* is an organization of, for, and by women which attempts to fight for the issues unique to

¹ See my discussion, Chapter 2, Section 2.6.

women as a particular group. These issues are varied and affected by the other identities of women. Consequently, there are many different kinds of women's organizations: i.e., peasant women, union women, professional women, entrepreneurial women, each group fighting for the needs and concerns of the women who constitute that group's constituency. A *political organization of women* is an organization with a particular political identity, often affiliated with a pre-existent political organization, often a political party, whose membership base is constituted by women. A *feminist organization* is an organization with a structural, institutional and personal analysis of the oppression of women as a gender class, which fights the oppression of women as such, often incorporating the race, class, sexual, national, ethnic and cultural oppressions women also suffer. These types of organizations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, tensions often arise when organizations address such overlapping identities internally. This chapter will explore the organizational identity issues, power struggles with the party, and internal women's struggles that characterized the movements toward autonomy in both the OMM and AMNLAE.

4.2 To Leave or Not To Leave: The Autonomy Struggle of the OMM in the 1990s

Why did the OMM vote to leave the structure of FRELIMO and become an autonomous organization, and why did they decide to return to the party? While my interviews revealed varied and sometimes contradictory answers to these questions, the three primary reasons which emerged for the post-revolutionary organizational behavior of the OMM are: (1) organizational identity struggles; (2) power struggles with the party; and (3) financial necessity.

Organizational Identity Struggles

The OMM began as a political organization of women, created by the FRELIMO party to mobilize women during the revolution. During the revolutionary period, the OMM remained a political organization of FRELIMO women. After the transition to a multi-party state, the OMM attempted to become a women's organization, only to return to the party in recognition of the fact that their true identity was a FRELIMO organization of women. AMNLAE began as a women's organization, AMPRONAC, framed by but nonetheless outside the official structure of the FSLN. After the Sandinista victory, AMNLAE became a political organization of women mobilized for the FSLN. As autonomy struggles emerged within AMNLAE during the 1980s, AMNLAE struggled between being an organization of party women, and an autonomous women's organization. After the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, AMNLAE solidified its identity as an autonomous women's organization. While neither organization has yet to become an explicitly *feminist* organization, the mobilization of women to unite in the public sphere to affect political change is a process which in and of itself changes women, and so therefore represents a type of feminist practice unless explicitly anti-feminist. I assert that feminist agency emerges from women's organizing precisely because it reveals the interconnections in women's lives between production and reproduction, materiality and culture, practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. Women's organizing in the public sphere challenges the public/private dichotomy of gender relations, and therefore is inherently feminist in nature.

Organizational Identity Struggles in the OMM

The OMM began to become an NGO separating off from FRELIMO during the 1992-1994 transition to democracy, after the Peace Agreement with RENAMO but before the first election. Mozambique was becoming a multi-party democracy, and the OMM had a decision to make. Now that there would be a separation between state, party and government, and there would be two dominant political parties vying for the power to govern, should the organization remain affiliated with the party or become an independent NGO? In effect, should the OMM remain a *party organization of women* attached to FRELIMO, or become a *women's organization* in civil society?

The evidence seems to reveal that Mozambican women in the OMM had difficulty coping with the changes of the multi-party state because such changes questioned the very identity of the organization. Since its inception, the OMM was an organization of FRELIMO women, not a women's organization. As Sam Barnes of ONUMOZ and long-time resident scholar of Mozambique, attests: "The OMM could no longer assume the functions of literacy, vaccination, and helping small businesses that they could do in a one-party state. Now, there is a separation between the party, the government, and the state. There is an emerging civil society. This is causing the changing role of the OMM" (Interview, 7/2/99).

Both Manuel Tomé, the Secretary General of FRELIMO, and Paulina Mateus, the Secretary General of the OMM, described the transition from a single to a multi-party state as a confusing one for Mozambicans in general and for the mass organizations in particular. They both attributed the decision to leave the party as an identity crisis precipitated by the democratic transition. In addition, both leaders attributed the decision

to return as an organizational reassessment required for future success. Tomé describes the democratic transition as follows: “In 1990, we changed our Constitution. We introduced a multi-party system. This was a deep change: very quick, very deep. There were big confusions...we think we have tried to prepare ourselves. We have a tradition - what the chief says is always true or right...People did not want a multi-party system” (Interview, 7/29/99). After describing the general difficulties with the democratic transition, Tome discusses the organizational identity issues it raised for the OMM given its relationship with FRELIMO:

In a multi-party system, why have a women's organization linked with the party? We said, OK...You are Free...maybe we need to let the OMM be a separate organization...It could involve more women...expand its objectives. But the organization and ourselves, we felt we were losing directions. Unless they act as a trade union, it was not possible to join every political ideology....But there were discussions. And we said, ‘You are Free’ to the OMM (Interview, 7/29/99).

The language “You are free” was used repeatedly in my interviews with male leaders of FRELIMO. This is most revealing of the hierarchical, unidirectional nature of the relationship between the party and the women’s organization. If the party is telling the organization they are free to go, *how free were they to begin with?*

According to Paulina Mateus, current Secretary-General of the OMM, the organization was in a transitional situation, with many of the members feeling as if they had to adjust to the new structure. She describes the behavior of the organization most clearly in terms of an organizational identity struggle:

When we introduced the multi-party system, there were many discussions: will all women be FRELIMO? Or not? We decided we should give women options to choose political parties. So, for those women who choose other political parties, how can we have the OMM with FRELIMO? But the OMM was inspired with the

political line of the FRELIMO party. We were thinking of the women: to make people free so people could choose. But OMM is FRELIMO. These were the issues (Interview, 4/5/99).

The issues raised for the OMM within the transition to a multi-party state in Mozambique reveal a fundamental challenge for feminism in theory and in practice: is feminism a movement of and for all women regardless of party affiliation and political ideology, or is feminism inherently linked with a leftist political agenda? Obede Baloi, a member of the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, explains further the tension that emerged for the OMM between being a women's organization and a political organization of women:

The OMM is bigger than FRELIMO. The OMM is working for women, not FRELIMO. The leadership is FRELIMO, clearly, but the work is for women. The most important work is for the general idea of human rights. Women are human and have to be treated as equals. There is great work to be done that is being done by the OMM....literacy projects, small business creation, health, violence against women and children. I don't see how those problems can be party problems....You have people from RENAMO² saying the OMM is FRELIMO. There is some tension between 'we are for all' and 'we are a party group'. There is still much to be done in women's organizations to handle women's political activity (Interview, 7/23/99).

Baloi really gets at the heart of the problem for women's organizations like the OMM. Will it be non-partisan or will it align itself with the party which members feel will best represent their issues? For many Mozambican women, imagining FRELIMO women and RENAMO women working side by side on 'women's issues' seemed like an impossible coalition, despite the apparent non-partisanship of many women's issues as listed by

² RENAMO is the counterinsurgency force created by the South African apartheid government to destabilize FRELIMO. During the peace process of the early 1990s, RENAMO made a transition from a military force to the oppositional political party in Mozambique.

Baloi. Generossa Cossa of Eduardo Mondlane University describes this conflict in clear political terms:

The OMM is under control on our side to get FRELIMO elected. They need FRELIMO. They couldn't be out of FRELIMO. It wasn't correct to leave FRELIMO. Other parties will have their youth and women leagues, too. The OMM and FRELIMO need each other. Leaving the party was producing something new - they wanted to be an organization for all women. But they realized they can't be an organization for all women. You can't have Dhlakama's wife³ at the OMM!(Interview 7/14/99).

Gertrudes Victorino, a freedom-fighter in the anti-colonial revolution and member of the OMM since its origin, concurs with this analysis, and therefore, helps explain why the members of the OMM decided to return to the party:

The OMM always defined itself as a member of FRELIMO until 1990. Only in 1990, because there were many other organizations... Only like that [autonomous] could they integrate in other kinds of women from other parties, groups, etc....In 1996, at the First Congress of the new OMM, women at the base of the OMM went back to FRELIMO, the fathers of the organization, our brothers...We didn't feel comfortable out of FRELIMO (Interview, 7/14/99).

The language of father-daughter was used by both men and women during my interviews to describe the relationship between FRELIMO and the OMM, explaining the origin of the organization, the relationship between the two, and the reason for their continued affiliation. Maria Olivia Alvero, Provincial Secretary of the OMM in Nampula, describes the motivation to return to FRELIMO as coming back to where the organization belongs:

We made our decisions with emotion. Everything was changing... NGO's only could help...not parties. But once we were separated from FRELIMO, we became liberal...nobody to go and tell it to.... We were created by FRELIMO, we are back where we belong... women started doing whatever they wanted...We wanted FRELIMO as a partner...to discuss strategies, which way to go, ideas, not as an authority but as a partner. During the time [apart], we almost died.

³ Afonso Dhlakama is the leader of RENAMO.

Now, resuscitation! Where will we tell our worries, our aims and do something about it? (Interview, 7/28/99).

While Alvero insists the relationship with FRELIMO is not based on authority but on a partnership, her comments reveal the need for a higher power for the OMM “to tell their worries to” for discourse and subsequent action.

According to Felipe Paunde, the Provincial Secretary of FRELIMO in Sofala Province, the OMM tried an experiment when they left FRELIMO: to live on their own, just to be themselves. He uses this as evidence for the fact that the OMM is independent and makes its own rules: “If they were dependent, they never would have left! Slaves never ask their owners if they can be set free. They are not slaves. Part of the party, yes, but no interference. They chose” (Interview, 7/26/99). However, Paunde's analysis of the OMM return reveals something quite different about the relationship between the women's organization and the party, at least from the party's perspective:

When they decided to come back, the OMM understood who was the one who opened the door for women. The OMM knows that only with FRELIMO can women be emancipated. Few parties give the importance to women that FRELIMO does. The OMM realized this, and they decided to come back. *For us, the children are back home.* The OMM saw that without FRELIMO they will not go as far and vice versa [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/26/99).

The analogy of the OMM with children returning home to their parents, FRELIMO, where they belong, reveals the nature of the top-down, authoritative relationship that continues to persist between the women's organization and the ruling political party. The emergence of a feminist or gendered analysis of women's oppression has been hampered within such a framework.

The transition to a multi-party system clearly created an identity crisis for the OMM. Should it be an organization for all women, or an organization of FRELIMO

women? The notion of 'belonging,' cited in various interviews, reveals that the decision of the OMM to venture out on its own or stay aligned with the party is intricately linked to the organization's sense of *belonging to the party*. It *was* and *is* their identity. When the OMM tried its hand at autonomy, the party quickly responded by creating its own Women's League. The distinction that emerged between the OMM and the new FRELIMO Women's League, or rather, that *did not* emerge, helped solidify for the leaders and members of the OMM exactly what kind of an organization they were. Paulina Mateus, Secretary-General of the OMM, explains the situation accordingly:

It was not a campaign to move out of FRELIMO. During the five years, the OMM started to lose members. When FRELIMO saw the OMM was out of the party, they created a Women's League of the party. So, most of the members left the OMM, and went to join the league....The first Congress of the new OMM was in 1996. They began losing credibility, losing members. They elected a Secretary General, and decided to go back to FRELIMO. The membership increased....(Interview, 7/5/99).

So, perhaps for very simple and practical reasons, the OMM returned to FRELIMO because: (1) the same women began attending both meetings; (2) many women began attending the Women's League of the Party meetings and *not* the OMM meetings. Ana Rita Sithole, FRELIMO Member of the Permanent Commission of Parliament, and member of the OMM, similarly describes the attempt of the OMM to become an NGO, open to every woman, regardless of party, religion or race: "My dear, it didn't work! Is it possible women left FRELIMO? But we are losing because of RENAMO...We found we were weakening FRELIMO in terms of mobilization. FRELIMO created a Women's League, and it was the same people who attended" (Interview, 7/15/99).

For Alcido Nguenya, Member of Parliament, Permanent Commission of Parliament, and member of the Political Commission of FRELIMO, the process that took

place during the transition from a single to a multi-party state revealed more to those involved about politics and democracy than just increasing the number of meetings to attend:

During the first phase of the transition to the multi-party system, the OMM thought it must separate from FRELIMO. But there was confusion....First, when the OMM left FRELIMO because of the multi-party system, they thought that if they had no ideology, they would not be linked to any party and they would have more possibilities, and get more women into the OMM, as the head umbrella of all of the women of Mozambique...[this] would destroy the basis of the OMM aligned with FRELIMO. Inside the party, they began trying to create a FRELIMO Women's Group, and they realized, the OMM is FRELIMO women! With the OJM it was the same thing. The multi-party system is now understood by everybody. Now, people understand what multipartyism is! People are either impartial or aligned with a party (Interview, 7/21/99).

It was important for Nguenya to state that it was the autonomous decision of the OMM to leave, and to return: "When they left the party and became independent, they chose what to do. The OMM decided at their conference. It was their decision. They have their own rules and statutes. Today, the OMM and FRELIMO decide things together. The OMM influences women in Parliament in the FRELIMO party (Interview, 7/21/99).

According to Sam Barnes, the OMM failed Mozambican women by being a party organization and not a women's organization:

I never understood why they went back. Perhaps their legitimacy was never accepted. All the same people in the provinces...a number of years in leadership...there tends not to be much new blood....The OMM, by being a party organization and not a women's organization, failed Mozambican women. It never had the substance. Nobody new could enter. It was a false declaration as an NGO. In a one-party state, there were all kinds of social issues related to women. The OMM was the first organization at the time - it was a novelty. But it never cultivated a feminist analysis (Interview, 7/2/99).

Maria Fernanda Farinha, never a member of the OMM, also feels that the OMM lost an opportunity when they returned to FRELIMO: "They had the opportunity to move away from FRELIMO. It was part of the general movement of society, a move toward social movements and away from politics and parties" (Interview, 7/8/99). However, as Carla Braga notes, who left the OMM because it was not feminist enough, "It's better like this - that's what they are, so why pretend to be something different?" (Interview, 7/15/00).

Party Power Struggles

There is a more disturbing analysis that has emerged from my research about the decision of the OMM to return to FRELIMO. According to Terezinha da Silva, long-time member of the OMM and current Director of the Faculty of the Social Sciences at UEM, the decision of the OMM to return to the party was not a 'democratic choice' of the members:

There was a coup d' etat. At the 7th National Congress of the OMM in 1997, they voted to come back. Nobody was guessing it would happen. The OMM never talked about returning....It was very well orchestrated. It was not discussed by the membership. It was a hot issue. The OMM Provincial leader didn't want to talk about it....[it was an] arrangement with FRELIMO. It was organized so well it wasn't discussed....They didn't discuss whether [the OMM] should, or should not go back. For FRELIMO, they thought strategies, for elections. For them, it was a way to gain power, having the OMM women together....It was a big loss for me...for many of us. We were very shocked (Interview, 7/23/99).

Two other women that I interviewed who work in an NGO also think that the decision was a political strategy between the leadership of the OMM and FRELIMO for the OMM to leave, have it not work out and then return to the party: "The OMM left the party to mobilize people for the elections as an independent organization, to register people to vote, and increase their credibility" (Interview, 7/21/99). A former member of the OMM

also expressed that she thought it was a FRELIMO party decision made in the context of the elections: “FRELIMO used the OMM the way they needed/wanted. The OMM as an autonomous organization could lose manpower and mobilization” (Interview, 7/15/99).

Obede Baloi, a member of the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, also gave support to a top-down interpretation of the OMM’s decision from inside the party:

I don't think they left and came back. What I heard is that the suggestion came from the leaders within FRELIMO in the early 1990s since the OMM was a very big organization working not only for members of the party but as a mass organization, so, it should not be seen as a department within FRELIMO but for the whole country in general....The OMM was very well rooted in the whole country. The problem came when the decision to identify as a non-partisan organization was not accepted by all. A new strategy emerged in FRELIMO to have these organizations clearly working for the party in time for the elections (Interview, 7/23/99).

My research findings did not establish definitively the extent to which overt or covert pressure was applied from leadership within the party over leadership within the OMM. However, given the history of the relationship between the party and the women’s organization, the similarity of the responses on almost all counts between the Secretaries-General of each, and the repeated references of the child returning to the parent where she belonged, I think it is fair to conclude that discussions did take place between FRELIMO and OMM leaderships that led to the OMM’s decision to give up its autonomy and return to the party.

Financial Necessity

According to Célia Diniz, Africa-America Institute (AAI) Country Representative in Mozambique, the story inside the OMM is a story of conflict: “They were not with FRELIMO, then with FRELIMO. It’s very simple: to have influence as a people’s

organization, they should detach in the new system” (Interview, 7/1/99). Diniz believes that they made the decision as an organization to return to the party for financial reasons. Rather than compete for funding within other autonomous NGOs, it would be more lucrative for the organization to receive funding from the party in power. FRELIMO did cut their financial support of the OMM when they left the party, but as a non-partisan NGO the OMM had access to new funders that would not have supported them financially as a party organization. For example, according to Ana Rita Sithole, UNDP gave money to the OMM only when they were a non-partisan organization. However, the leadership in the OMM found that being the only women's organization funded by the ruling party was much more lucrative than fighting to fundraise as one of many autonomous women's organizations in civil society (Interviews).

Edda Collier, the UN Gender Specialist in Mozambique, also stated that financial reasons led the OMM to return to the party: “The OMM found it unsustainable. They could not show the capacity to raise money” (Interview, 7/30/99). Gertrudes Victorino concurs with this analysis by pointing out that “When the OMM split from FRELIMO.... they lost some women as well as the financial backing of the party” (Interview, 7/14/99). Janet Mondlane also stated that when the OMM suffered from lack of funds, they decided to come back (Interview, 7/29/99).

In conclusion, throughout the revolutionary period, the OMM was the only organization for women in Mozambique. If you were a woman, you were in the OMM, which had, and still has, a presence in every province in the country. Autonomy struggles did not begin for the organization until *after* the transition from a single to a multi-party state. Due to organizational identity issues, influence from leaders of FRELIMO, and

organizational maintenance issues, the OMM decided in 1996 to resume its affiliation with the ruling party after a brief period of autonomy. It appears that the existence of only one organization for women, combined with the electoral victory of FRELIMO, created an environment conducive for the organization's continued affiliation with the party. Today, the OMM remains the most prominent women's organization in Mozambique. However, there has been an emergence of autonomous women's organizations in the country beginning in 1991. The growing contemporary women's movement will be examined in Chapter 8.

4.3 Women's Organizing Strategies in Nicaragua: The Birth of Women's Secretariats

During the revolutionary periods, the women in Mozambique and Nicaragua have tried different organizing strategies, at the very least, to mobilize women for the revolutionary struggle and, at the very best, to integrate women's interests into the agenda of their state revolutionary party organizations. While in Mozambique there was only one organization, the OMM, designed to provide a space for the mobilization of all women, in Nicaragua, in addition to AMNLAE, there were alternative spaces created by and for women to integrate their interests into other revolutionary mass organizations. Ana Criquillon argues that as early as 1983 there was an emergence of independent feminist initiatives in coordination with AMNLAE that led to the formation of a Women's Legal Office (OLM) and a research team within the Association of Rural Workers (Asociación Trabajadores del Campo, ATC) to examine the differential impact of agricultural labor on women and men. There were debates within AMNLAE during the 1980s about the extent to which women should organize separately in a women's organization like AMNLAE, although still a party organization, or should instead

integrate into pre-existing revolutionary organizations, such as the ATC (the Rural Workers Association), UNAG (the Cattleranchers Union) and the CST (the Sandinista Workers Union). The result was a decision to do *both*, and the Women's Secretariats were born.

Sofia Montenegro describes the birth of the Nicaraguan feminist movement through the lens of the strategy of the Women's Secretariats, based on organizing "where you are at":

The feminist movement was beginning to emerge within the wide and broad AMNLAE, and the Sandinista Women's Movement, because you must remember there was no autonomous organization at that time, we were all AMNLAE. But within AMNLAE the feminists were inserted, inside the party, inside AMNLAE or whatever organization we were.... We [the feminists] were not more than a dozen in 1979. I was one of the pioneers in that sense. We knew each other, because nobody dared in 1979 to say I am a feminist. But, anyway, we were on the inside, and so from the inside of the organizations we began to push these discussions within the party, within the unions, wherever we were....(Interview, 1/25/00).

Montenegro describes "the emerging sections" that feminists began to create "in every popular organization or mixed organization...the emergence of the secretariats among the campesinas, rural workers, ATC, professional, trade workers, unions, students, whatever, there was a women's secretariat that was beginning to fight in that section, in that sector of women" (Interview, 1/25/00). According to Angela Rosa Acevedo, member of the FSLN, AMNLAE and the Centro de Derechos Constitucionales (Center for Constitutional Rights):

The debate was centered between having a separate organization of women or having women participate openly where they were. Many people favored men and women working together, and AMNLAE disappearing. Why does it have to exist as an exclusive organization if women are participating in other organizations? AMNLAE defended the necessity of having different organizations

for women defending the different interests of women....This marks the start of the autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua (Interview, 1/11/00).

After the establishment of the women's secretariat of the ATC in 1984, women's secretariats subsequently emerged in all the mass organizations of workers: the CST (urban) and UNAG (country). The ATC is said to have had the strongest women's secretariat.

The decision to support both a separate women's organization within the party structure and women's secretariats within the 'mixed' mass organizations appears to have had the best outcome for women's autonomy. Multiple spaces and places for women to organize, and thus for women's interests to emerge, has led both to the emergence of a gendered analysis of women's oppression in Nicaragua and to the push for greater autonomy for women's organizations.

Three critical findings emerged from my research on the dual organizing strategies adopted by women in Nicaragua. First, the creation of the Women's Secretariats was not a leadership decision from above, as many other sources have suggested, but rather was a result of pressure from below - from women members at the grassroots level who felt more needed to be done for women that *wasn't* being done in AMNLAE. Second, the creation of the Women's Secretariats opened up more spaces for women to organize and, therefore, for women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in both the productive and reproductive spheres to emerge. And finally, despite making several advancements for women, neither AMNLAE nor the Women's Secretariats were sufficiently autonomous from the FSLN to develop a feminist analysis of women's oppression that deviated *significantly* from the party line. It was this fact that

led to the creation of an autonomous women's movement after the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990. The rest of this chapter will explore the different organizing strategies that emerged in Nicaragua and, as a result, the transition that AMNLAE underwent from being a party organization of women to becoming one of many autonomous women's organizations in the contemporary women's movement.

Origin of the Women's Secretariats

First, it is important to address conflicting reports over the origin of the women's secretariats. Were the secretariats a top-down 'policy' established by the leadership of AMNLAE, or were they a strategy of grassroots members of AMNLAE pushing from below to achieve greater integration of women and gender interests into the mass organizations? The authors of Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua, members of the Nicaraguan Solidarity Committee in London, argued that in the early 1980s, AMNLAE pursued a "new line," which was designed to encourage more women's membership in regional organizations, labor groups and unions, thus cutting into its own organization's membership recruitment of women mobilized as women:

The new AMNLAE line is that we should concentrate on promoting the involvement of women and their demands within the mass organizations. We are not interested particularly that there should be a separate group (of women), but that women should be involved at all levels, politically and socially, that women take on more responsibilities within their trade unions and that all women take prominent positions within our revolution (Deighton, 48).

My research has revealed that the Women's Secretariats were created not by AMNLAE as an organization, but by women within AMNLAE: "I think the role of AMNLAE can be valued in their effort to open space....How can we open the spaces for women? We have to value AMNLAE. They promoted the Secretariats of Women but

they did not create them. They were created by women inside the organization brought through the institution” (Interview, 1/10/00). Vilma Castillo Aramburu, Executive Director of Puntos de Encuentro, agrees:

I don't think it was an AMNLAE strategy, but rather was women's initiative within the mixed organizations. I can talk about my experience within CONAPRO, a professional, mixed organization. Women of that organization, we got together and created sections within the organization....AMNLAE wanted to frame them after they were created (Interview, 1/20/00).

According to Ana Criquillon, one of the founding members of the ATC from 1983-1990 and Director of the Board of the Women's Secretariat in 1986, AMNLAE was actually an *impediment* to the approach of multiple organizing strategies for women:

AMNLAE resisted during the whole decade other spaces for women's organizations. AMNLAE's position was that women had to be in AMNLAE. There was a conflict of strategy of organization and power because at the end, AMNLAE wanted to represent the interests of ALL women as the FSLN represented the interests of the population in general. That didn't allow for seeing the differences of race, ethnicity, age, and the diversity of the women's movement. So, the necessity to recognize specific leadership emerged from the spaces themselves (Interview, 1/20/00).

Criquillon asserts that it was precisely because AMNLAE was “under the eye of the FSLN, and was controlled by men” that the women’s secretariats of the other organizations provided more opportunities for dialogue, to focus on women's participation, women’s labor and work: “There was more openness to feminist analysis in these spaces than in AMNLAE” (Interview, 1/20/00).

Feminist trends began emerging within these organizations by the mid 1980s, as many individual women began self-identifying as feminists. However, rather than pressuring AMNLAE to define itself as feminist, these women chose to focus on the

commonalities they had with AMNLAE rather than the differences, in order to help promote the most progressive Sandinista policies possible:

It was part of our strategy - although not explicitly - to unite women within the Sandinista popular organizations and within AMNLAE, offering feminist analysis and proposing alternative solutions to the problems of the women in these organizations. This is how, without actually forming a feminist movement as such, it was possible for a feminist analysis to gain much greater legitimacy in the country (Criquillon, 217).

It appears that the women's secretariats were the first examples of women's demands for greater involvement in revolutionary decisions and, as such, represented pockets of autonomy within the mass organizations. Demands for greater autonomy continued throughout the 1980s, until the "lid blew off of the autonomous women's movement" in Nicaragua in the early 1990s (Interview).

Impact of the Women's Secretariats: The Intersection of Production and Reproduction and the Emergence of Women's Practical and Strategic Gender Interests

There is some disagreement over the impact of the Women's Secretariats, particularly in relation to AMNLAE. Deighton, et al. made a rather startling prediction in 1983: that the new AMNLAE policy of 'integrationism,' integrating AMNLAE as well as individual women into preexisting unions, governmental structures and labor organizations, would, if taken to its logical conclusion, "effectively dissolve AMNLAE's national structure" and "undermine the possibilities of women to take action for themselves" (Deighton, 49). This prediction has turned out to be false. Although AMNLAE as a national organization *has* been undermined and fractured, and women's abilities to take action for themselves within AMNLAE *were* greatly limited, this was true because of AMNLAE's location within and lack of autonomy from the FSLN party

structure. In many ways, the policy of integrationism fostered an *emergence* of women taking action for themselves in alternative spaces *outside* of AMNLAE, including challenging AMNLAE's monopoly over the Nicaraguan women's movement and fighting for greater organizational and ideological autonomy within AMNLAE. It is true: as more members of AMNLAE integrated into rural, urban and regional workers unions, the ability of women to participate as active members of a national level organization as women *was* greatly impeded. However, this did not prevent women from acting for themselves and entering their concerns into the public discourse; it only determined *where* women's interests would first emerge. An examination of the creation of the Women's Secretariat of the Rural Workers Association (ATC) reveals how integrating women into the *process* can dramatically alter the *vision*.

The ATC, the Rural Workers Association, was established in Nicaragua in 1978 as the main representative body of agricultural wage workers on cash crop farms, both state and private. The ATC union and the government/employer felt they had a common interest: cash crop production must continue to increase, and to that end, worker demands are important to production. Although 99% of the union leaders were men in 1983, 40% of the ATC membership was women (Collinson, 44). Thelma Espinoza, Vice-Coordinator of AMNLAE, places the founding of the ATC women's secretariat within the context of agricultural production needs. With men fighting, and the need to maintain agricultural production, women were needed to take care of the crops. Therefore, women's productivity, and the factors that impact women's productivity became important to the ATC for the first time.

The increase in women's ATC membership in the mid 1980's corresponded with a decline in the participation of women and the popularity of AMNLAE. Ironically, the move of women out of AMNLAE and into unions like the ATC didn't serve to circumvent the unique interests of women: it only served to determine where they would surface first. As a result of women's increased participation in the Rural Workers Association, it became known throughout the country for its feminist positions and its attempts to integrate gender-specific with class-based demands (Chuchryk, 150). The ATC didn't just change the lives of the women involved; the women changed the ATC:

By opening up a unique space for rural women to discuss their problems and assert their demands, the ATC has been a trail-blazer for the Nicaraguan women's movement. Its new and creative approaches to women's participation in the economy and in the Revolution have proved so successful that they are thought to have been a major force behind the FSLN's Proclama on women's emancipation in 1987. In the words of Ana Criquillon from the ATC Women's Secretariat, 'If we don't change the situation in the home, we will never be able to meet women's demands and we'll never raise production (Collinson, 49).

How did women change the ATC? In 1983, the ATC held a National Assembly of Rural Women Workers for the purpose of organizing a meeting of women working in agriculture. The members of the newly formed Women's Secretariat realized they knew little regarding rural women's working conditions. As a result, the 100 delegates in attendance decided to conduct a grassroots investigation which formed the basis of an official Agrarian Reform Report. Throughout the interview process, the delegates of the ATC realized that issues such as pregnancy, childcare, abortion, home and family, previously seen as outside the union's work, were actually an integral part of women's agricultural "productivity", long assumed to be low (Collinson, 45). As Collinson concludes, "these discussions made it clear to the union that the successful integration of

women into the rural workforce could not be accomplished without taking into consideration women's traditional responsibilities and their daily routine" (45).

In the mid 1980s, the Women's Secretariat of the ATC began to address issues of employment, salary, pre- and post- maternity leave, day care centers and protective work legislation for pregnant women. María Elena Sequeira Rivas, current Director of the Secretariat Nacional de la Mujer, ATC, explains how the rising need for day care emerged because of the interconnection between production and reproduction: "We had to determine how to increase production because the men were at war, so the production responsibility fell in the women's hands despite the fact that they also take care of the children. That's why the need for day care" (Interview, 1/27/00). Thus, the Women's Secretariat framed the concerns of women working in agriculture in terms of a necessary investment for future increased productivity and economic development.

The intersections between women's roles in 'public' production in the fields and 'private' reproduction in the home became the clearest when the issue of the agricultural 'work norm' was discussed: the amount of work every employee was expected to complete each day in order to receive the basic wage. The National Committee of the ATC - all men - accepted a proposal by women activists in the union to do a study focused on women in the agricultural sector (Criquillon, 217). The ATC women activists chose to analyze a subject "that did not seem at all feminist, that is, the productivity of the workers" (217). In order to assess women's attitudes toward the work norm, the Women's Secretariat organized a series of workshops and discussion groups at the local and regional levels, encouraging grass-roots participation. These discussion groups were a great success, and culminated in 1986 at the *Second National Assembly*, at which

hundreds of delegates reported on the results of the grassroots meetings. The study concluded that a "gender-based division of labor was a fundamental obstacle to the participation of women in production and the union" and that therefore women's gender interests had to be linked with their national, class and other interests" (Criquillon, 218).

When the members of the Women's Secretariat were asked if they wanted to have the same work norm as men in the agricultural cooperatives, they said yes. However, in order for women to 'produce' as much as men, they recognized the need for help in the reproductive sphere (child-rearing, subsistence agriculture, family farming) and demanded child care facilities to offset the dual labor burden. Ana Criquillon, one of the founding members of the ATC and Director of the Board of the Women's Secretariat in 1986, was an activist within the ATC when this issue arose: "Men and women demanded equal work norms in the ATC. This led to questioning work conditions, not just conditions of work but in reproductive and domestic work" (Interview, 1/21/00). This is interesting empirical evidence which reveals that integrating women into the process of social change can alter the vision. The gendered nature of the agricultural work/productivity norm addressed within the ATC is one of the best examples of women making the linkages between practical 'productive' needs and strategic 'reproductive' interests in Nicaragua.

All of the women agreed that they should accept the same work norm as men, particularly in recognition of the need to raise production. However, at the same time, these women emphasized "that this would be possible *only if women's domestic work was reduced* [emphasis mine]" (Collinson, 46). To this end, they passed resolutions which contained the following demands: childcare centers; paid maternity leave; paid sick days

to care for children; communal washing places; and mills to grind corn (Collinson, 46). Perhaps the most important resolution was one which demanded that the union put pressure on its male members to help with domestic tasks.

Within a year, it was evident that the ATC took the demands of the Women's Secretariat very seriously. In 1985, there were 30 creches (childcare facilities) in Nicaragua; by 1987, there were 500 (Collinson, 46). In 1983, 1% of the union posts were held by women. By 1988, women held 28% of all union posts (Collinson, 48). By 1987, it seemed that, however briefly, an attempt to connect "production" and "reproduction" and assert the inseparability of the two spheres of activity was made within the ATC. In 1988 at the *Fourth National Assembly*, the Women's Secretariat generated new demands, including issuing sanctions against sexual blackmail (similar to what is defined in the U.S. as sexual harassment) and earmarking 20% of all profits earned from export crops for social projects, including childcare, healthcare, and communal laundries. Supporting reproductive labor such as this was seen by the ATC as an investment for future increases in production and economic development.

Vilma Castillo Aramburu argues that despite their limitations, creating the secretariats of women was a good strategy at that point in the Nicaraguan women's movement. It allowed women to influence certain public policy areas within a range of topics approved by the FSLN - employment for women, women's training, women's leadership, and agrarian reform. Topics such as domestic violence and abortion also began to get some attention with women health programs. Maria Elena Sequeira Rivas, the current head of the Women's Secretariat of the ATC, describes how in her experience

the strategy of moving from a women's organization to a mixed organization actually helped to link the class struggle with the gender struggle:

To be in a movement exclusively of women means to work for specific interests. Maybe it allows us to be more aware in a systematic matter - to look for our own spaces, to find better ways to defend our rights. In the case of Nicaragua and Central America, there is a great level of machismo. There are two contradictions: struggling/fighting for gender rights and struggling/fighting for class spaces. With an exclusive women's movement, you almost always fight for gender only leaving behind the work of men. For me, the best struggle combines gender and class and uses mixed groups - victims and victimizers (Interview, 1/27/00).

I have concluded that the entrance of women into pre-existing organizations in Nicaragua did integrate a feminist vision into the practice of social change, but only after separate organizing space for women existed first so that a feminist analysis of women's oppression could be constructed theoretically. Women need a place and a space to organize autonomously before their practical gender needs and strategic gender interests will be successfully integrated into other organizations for social change. Pursuing multiple strategies and multiple spaces for women's organizing seems to have produced a better outcome for the emergence of feminist struggles in Nicaragua than in Mozambique. Organizing within separate women's organizations as well as within mixed organizations with men seems to produce the maximum outcome of both autonomy and unified change: not either/or, but both/and.

4.4 The Path Toward Autonomy for Women's Organizations in Nicaragua

Did AMNLAE simply leave the structure of the FSLN because the FSLN lost power? Would AMNLAE still be a party organization had the FSLN NOT lost power? Perhaps. Perhaps the loss of power was the catalyst the popular mass organizations, including AMNLAE, needed to pursue their autonomy. But the time was ripe. Women at

the base had been pushing for greater autonomy since much earlier, throughout the period of the 1980s. The seeds had been sown for the emergence of an autonomous women's movement with greater freedom and democracy to choose their own leaders, set their own agendas, create their own structures and pursue their own strategies to improve the lives of Nicaraguan women. Three factors emerged as essential in AMNLAE's transformation toward autonomy and the accompanying creation of an autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua: organizational identity struggles, electoral defeat and power struggles with the Sandinista party, and internal conflict within the leadership and membership of AMNLAE.

Organizational Identity Struggles

AMNLAE suffered the same organizational identity crisis as the OMM. Was it a political organization of women, a women's organization, or a feminist organization? AMNLAE's trajectory seems to have taken it from being a political organization of women, to a women's organization of the party, to an autonomous women's organization. In Nicaragua, the issue was less about whether AMNLAE would remain a party organization or become an autonomous organization, as was the issue in Mozambique. Rather, the issue was whether AMNLAE would remain the *main* women's organization, in any form, or whether women would choose to *leave* AMNLAE and pursue their own autonomous organizing outside of the party's historic women's organization. Eva María Sam Qui, Director of the Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN, and 10 year member of the Department of the Interior for the FSLN, describes the process by which feminist women left AMNLAE to pursue their own organizing:

In the 1980s the mass organizations were supposedly under the guidance of the FSLN....Many women left AMNLAE and

formed their own organizations/NGOs. I know at least 10 women from AMNLAE that now have their own NGOs. These women are the ones that keep the feminist ideology and didn't agree with being subordinated to the party.... AMNLAE was of the party.... AMNLAE was a mass organization of women, not a feminist organization (Interview, 1/17/00).

It is important to note that all of the women Sam Qui mentioned were additional examples of this phenomenon, beyond the fifteen examples that I came across in my interview process. The Centro de Mujeres IXCHEN and ISNIN are just two examples of alternative autonomous feminist health care centers that have been created in civil society after the loss of the Sandinista state. These and other NGOs will be explored in detail in Chapter 8.

According to Mónica Baltodano, an FSLN member of the National Assembly and long-time militant member of the party, “When AMNLAE was created...The movement was not just linked to women's discrimination. It was a women's association that dealt with national issues, not just women....After the revolution, the FSLN continued all organizations as a way to work with the people. AMNLAE was like an arm to the people” (Interview, 1/26/00). This seems to address the key issue of identity for AMNLAE: rather than being a women's organization, it was an organization of women that addressed national issues and linked the people with the party, through women. Baltodano agrees that “all things were subordinated to defense. AMNLAE lost its autonomy, limited its feminist profile and postponed [raising] gender flags” (Interview, 1/26/00). She corrects herself quickly by stating that gender was not just postponed, but rather was seen as something divisive, until there was the development of a critical mass (Baltodano Interview, 1/26/00).

Why did women leave AMNLAE? AMNLAE's organizational identity struggles were a result of: (1) a lack of autonomy from the party; (2) an unwillingness to deal with women's diversity; and, (3) an anti-democratic, disciplinarian internal leadership approach. Vilma Castillo Aramburu, Executive Director of Puntos de Encuentro, and no longer a member of the FSLN or AMNLAE, asserts that "AMNLAE was a Sandinista organization... There were feminist members of AMNLAE, but it was a party organization" (Interview, 1/20/00). Mónica Zalaquett, director of the Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia and self-identified Sandinista, agrees that AMNLAE was neither autonomous nor feminist (Interview, 1/17/00).

Reyna Isabel Rodríguez was an AMNLAE leader in Sandino City for two years. When asked why she left AMNLAE, Rodríguez explained, "They pressured me to leave - AMNLAE at the top national level - because my view was that AMNLAE had to change its strategy. They started defining you as selling out the nation...Maybe because I was a very young woman, interested in the integration of diversity" (Interview, 1/13/00). According to Rodríguez, it was in 1993 at a conference of 300 women that many women within the organization urged the regional director of AMNLAE to change its vision and strategy, asserting that AMNLAE could no longer be a part of the party. Rodríguez states that 60 women ultimately left AMNLAE "because we didn't agree. We decided to stay with our own people and we left. We left AMNLAE" (Interview, 1/13/00). For Rodríguez, it is true that AMNLAE had no autonomy. This is why she left. The kind of changes Rodríguez wanted for AMNLAE were fundamental: to be apart from the party, and to discuss a new strategy/mission: "I would like to see them working in a position more complete, with no more men on top, no longer used by the party" (Interview,

1/13/00). In 1995, Rodríguez was the first Sandinista who renounced the party in *El Nuevo Diario*: “I am the first one. I was a member of the Sandinista Assembly for the district with Ortega, Hugo, Tijerino. I was a recognized leader in Managua. We presented publicly, in *El Nuevo Diario*, 1995” (Interview, 1/13/00).

In addition to leaving AMNLAE because of a lack of autonomy, some women left AMNLAE because of the organization’s unwillingness to deal with issues of diversity and an excessive use of discipline to contain dissent. According to Criquillon, “It was precisely the strategy of women during the revolution to show that we were not going to achieve the main goal of the revolution if we were not going to achieve the goals of different groups” (Interview, 1/20/00). Auxiliadora Mesa, lawyer, professor at UCA, and member of the Centro de Mujer y Familia, explains some of the key criticisms that led to the dual exodus of (1) AMNLAE from the party and (2) women from AMNLAE:

Later, it is necessary to open the ideas to other women, not just the point of view of the FSLN....Many women abandoned AMNLAE because the leaders of AMNLAE did not accept or tolerate the criticisms of women. The principal criticism was of excessive discipline....One of the elements questioned and debated was that anything AMNLAE did had to be approved by the National Directorate (Interview, 1/24/00).

Sofia Montenegro attributes the occurrence of an organizational identity crisis within AMNLAE to the organization’s inability to handle the diversity of women’s voices that began to emerge:

Because AMNLAE had made a program that was *tabula rasa*, it was a homogenous line, without recognizing that there were differences because this is the problem they had to handle, you know, the different identities that constitute women....We were all Sandinista. We were all AMNLAE. So, they had problems with building with other concepts of identity. For example, there were ethnic identities and all other identities, for example the lesbian identity that was emerging, the difference of generational identity, too. So all this

diversity that had its own priorities was not taken into account. So the answer was to make a more pluralistic organization, a wider movement which could contain all the difference, the diversity of identities and also the differences. This is still a problem, you know...how do you link unity and diversity (Interview, 1/25/00).

Here, Montenegro hits on a key dilemma for feminist theorists and all critical theorists who want to effect change for marginalized and oppressed groups: how do you celebrate diversity without losing unity? Montenegro continues by laying out the fear of losing political force to accommodate political difference:

Because if you put on top of everything as a priority, diversity, you reify it, and what happens is a big dispensation. Everybody entrenches in their own little identity. You need unity on the other hand in order to have political strength and power. So this is the dilemma, you know, how do you make your cake and eat it!? And this was too much for AMNLAE. And these identities were emerging, and they realized it but they did not know how to cope with that. And, so there was a sort of truce and we say the possibility of the re-validating of AMNLAE... by making a recognition of all this diversity and all this identity and taking the different interests that women have in a political program (Interview, 1/25/00).

In an interesting cross-cultural comparison, Disney and Gelb (2000) found in their study of women's organizations in the U.S. that a willingness to recognize differences among women and discuss conflicts between women was a factor contributing to feminist organizational success:

This involves constant communication, discursive input, and renegotiation of power relations between decision-making entities as well as a commitment to diversity, focusing on the differences and commonalities among women. One key element of such communicative input is conflict; airing such conflict has been found to strengthen these movement organizations. Allowing conflict to arise and dealing with its resolution is another unique aspect of successful women's movement organizations (74).

It seems that AMNLAE's inability (or unwillingness) to deal with diversity and conflict has led to its organizational decline, despite the fact that it has been enormously successful in both mobilization outcomes as well as social movement and organizational spillover.

Electoral Defeat and Power Struggles with the Party

As stated earlier, AMNLAE faced an organizational identity crisis very similar to that faced by the OMM. The difference is that in Nicaragua, the issue was not only about how to make the transition into a multi-party state, but also about how to change into a *non-Sandinista* state. In 1990, unlike FRELIMO in 1994, the FSLN lost the presidential and lost the electoral majority in the Assembly. The history surrounding the events leading up to the elections is a very interesting one in helping to understand the path toward autonomy for AMNLAE and other women's organizations in Nicaragua.

As discussed in chapter 3, throughout the 1980s, the leadership of AMNLAE was not elected democratically by the constituency of the organization, but rather was appointed by the party leadership:

AMNLAE was run by people who were appointed by finger by designation by the party and obviously none of them were feminists. They were loyal in the first place, they were put there basically because of the loyalty and the confidence the male directorate had in these women, that is, they would never have dreamt of putting a real feminist, a committed feminist as the leader of AMNLAE. So within AMNLAE, there were fights between the most radical feminists and the traditional sort of feminism that the leadership of AMNLAE had (Interview).

According to Sofía Montenegro, although AMNLAE "had some positions that were feminist, it was the feminist movement within AMNLAE which began to create a consciousness in which the basis of women or the women's movement of AMNLAE

began to demand more rights and positions on women's situation...." (Interview, 1/25/00).

It was through this kind of pressure that the first party document on women's gender oppression was created - The Proclamation of 1987:

It was this climate or this atmosphere where women began to demand every member of the National Directorate, every 8th of March, every Assembly, to bring the issue forward, until they saw there was already a big discontent, which they decided to address as a compromise, and that was the [Proclamation], it had as a result, but it was out of pressure from outside, some of the feminists that were inside the party were pushing for that Proclamation until they finally issued the thing....But then it was too damn late, you know, because the elections came, they made a deal, I remember Bayardo Arce asking us for more patience, because we were demanding that changes be brought in AMNLAE. So there was a truce due to the Electoral Campaign (Interview, 1/25/00).

In addition to demands for substantive policy initiatives for women, there were calls for procedural changes in AMNLAE's decision-making structures. Demands were surfacing in AMNLAE for democratic elections of organizational leadership, as well as the creation of representational bodies with elected representatives of various women's constituencies: rural women, urban women. As a result, AMNLAE decided to pursue an organizational policy change announced on September 29, 1988 which both highlighted the differences between women, yet also fostered a sense of unity among women:

Under pressure from the women's secretariats of the mass organizations-who insisted that AMNLAE should be more democratic and that women who emerged as leaders in these sectors should play a greater leadership role in the organization-AMNLAE made the decision to reduce drastically the number of professional activists in the organization and instead to make women who were leaders in other organizations the principal promoters of the movement (222-223).

A great democratization of the organization was designed to accompany this change, when for the first time both the representatives to the Assembly and the national

leadership of AMNLAE would be elected directly by the membership base. This kind of broad-based participation caused a recognition among women of both their differences (urban workers, rural workers, teachers, peasants, youth, housewives) and their commonalities (Criquillon, 223).

When AMNLAE members approached the party, and Bayardo Arce in particular, the National Directorate member who oversaw the women's organization, they were told to be patient, preserve the unity of the FSLN, and wait until after the elections of 1989 to initiate any changes:

The logic of the party was 'Don't make waves, this is dangerous.' It was like opening God knows what, and it will disperse efforts, it will confuse people, or women, and, we need unity above everything. Don't talk about diversity because the whole world will explode! And, so they used all this political manipulation: the war was about to finish, we have gone through the whole decade with this, we will discuss all these changes, they made this political promise...after we won the elections (Montenegro Interview, 1/25/00).

In an interesting comparison, Ana Criquillon uses the same term to describe the FSLN's blockage of AMNLAE's democratic process as Terezinha da Silva used to describe FRELIMO's move to bring the OMM back to the party: *coup d'état*:

In May 1989, before the assembly and elections could happen, the FSLN carried out a coup d'état inside AMNLAE. Under the pretext that the priority of all Sandinistas was to prepare for the upcoming presidential and legislative elections and that now was not the time for internal debates, the FSLN froze AMNLAE's internal election process and removed its national leadership.... this decision was received as a direct order from the National Directorate of the FSLN (224).

The FSLN replaced the former leaders of AMNLAE with, among others Comandante Doris Tijerino, the chief of the Sandinista Police, and Comandante Mónica Baltodano, whose task it was to ensure the women's vote for the FSLN. This push for unity among

women before the 1990 elections actually had the effect of dividing AMNLAE from the work women were doing in the mass organizations in the various sectors, thus fragmenting the foundation of what would become the autonomous women's movement.

Sofia Montenegro explains that feminists within AMNLAE wanted these changes prior to the elections precisely *because* of the elections, “because by that moment AMNLAE was suffering a problem of credibility within the women's movement. It had lost prestige, it had lost initiative, it was paralyzed....” (Interview, 1/25/00). Despite the legitimacy issues of the organization, AMNLAE agreed yet again to support the party through the elections and subordinate its own agenda for democratic structural change for women. The political outcome of the 1990 elections reveals that perhaps neither the party nor AMNLAE were correct in their analysis that waiting for internal democratization would help get the party elected. The population voted to place a new party into power, and, in effect, to end the revolution. Many people I interviewed attributed the electoral defeat to fear of U.S. escalation in the Contra War. Nicaraguans did fear that as long as the FSLN was in power, the U.S. would continue the war. However, in addition to fear of external enemies, there was also internal discontent.

How did the electoral defeat impact AMNLAE? Montenegro explains the initial setback of the party loss, and the subsequent perseverance of the women's organization:

Well, you know the result. So what happened was, came the elections, the whole damn thing was lost, but stubborn as we were, and as we are, after the whole mess, we were not very quiet. We were the first social movement that decided to reorganize after the defeat. With power, or without it, we have to change this. So, we made a proposal to do it before, we have to do it anyway, so we went back, discussed it with AMNLAE....And that was the moment they decided to put in Doris Tijerino, during the period of the election, because she is a hard woman, loyal to the party, she still is, she's a hard-liner (Interview, 1/25/00).

Montenegro agrees that the Sandinista appointment of Doris Tijerino as coordinator of AMNLAE, directly from her position as Chief of Police, was very significant: “of all the leaders to use at this very critical moment of the elections and when everybody was demanding a change in leadership” (Interview, 1/25/00). After the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, many women continued to work diligently with their original plan to change the internal structure of AMNLAE within the new circumstances. Fifty feminists in Managua had a meeting with the leadership of AMNLAE to devise a plan to make a re-launching of the women's movement in the new situation, and presented it a month later at another meeting with the AMNLAE leadership. According to Montenegro,

Obviously, the leadership of AMNLAE, Doris Tijerino, Mónica Baltodano, and all of the hard-liners refused it, because it demanded elections, that the leadership should be chosen by election from the bottom all the way to the top.... There was a big fight and they said, ‘Well if you do not abide by what was said,’ that's what Doris Tijerino said, ‘you'll will be responsible for dividing AMNLAE’, and then we said, ‘No, you will be responsible for dividing the movement because we cannot accept any more in the name of anything, because we have waited too long, to postpone the things, and if you won't accept to do it, we will go out of AMNLAE, and do this whole damn thing by ourselves.’ And so we did (Interview, 1/25/00).

The electoral defeat of the FSLN and the conflict with the AMNLAE leadership set the stage for the birth of the autonomous women's movement.⁴ As María Lidia Mejía states, the electoral loss of the FSLN in 1990 actually helped the autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua: “After that, AMNLAE proclaimed its freedom, independence, and autonomy. It is becoming more independent than previously. The loss of the election helped us” (Interview, 1/28/00).

⁴ See my discussion in Chapter 8.

Ritha Fletes Zamora, member of both AMNLAE and the National Assembly, describes the transition after the electoral defeat:

Up until 1990, when we lost the elections, we lost the power, and we faced another reality. So, the politics of AMNLAE, that changed, in terms of just being an extension of the party.... The women who are directing AMNLAE are members of the party, but the policies have changed. What happened is that women of different political affiliations suffer from oppression, so we have to help all women. In 1990, there was a new direction for AMNLAE. AMNLAE went from being a party organization to a society open to all women. Due to this openness, Casas de Mujeres, AMNLAE/FSLN were partners - all over the country (Interview, 1/10/00).

Zamora argues that now, all of these organizations work for the defense of women's rights, and that the principal issue is creating campaigns to combat violence against women. According to Thelma Espinoza, Vice-Coordinator of AMNLAE: "In 1990, we perceived that a different relationship was necessary - autonomy was necessary for AMNLAE. Because the FSLN lost power, there were not many ways to help AMNLAE" (Interview 1/6/00). When asked if the Sandinistas had won the election, whether AMNLAE would have remained a party organization, Espinoza responded: "To tell the truth, the loss of power favored the idea of autonomy, but the process began in 1986. We haven't lost the link with the party, to get together and express ideas. As in any country, any organization, there are always differences between the organization and the party. There have been difficult times" (Interview 1/6/00).

Sandra Ramos López, former leader of the Women's Secretariat of the CST and now director of the Movement of Working and Unemployed Women, disagrees with Espinoza's account of the origin of such pressure for autonomy. López asserts that autonomy was not supported by AMNLAE, but rather from women inside the AMNLAE

organization: "It is not true that they looked for their own way - We pushed for AMNLAE to make a favor for women in this. AMNLAE did not want to be autonomous from the FSLN. I tell you this because I was one of the women to push AMNLAE to become autonomous" (Interview, 1/10/00). López continues with an analysis of the decision-making process within the AMNLAE organization:

The decision-making process has different levels....AMNLAE was below the structure of the party, but women leaders of AMNLAE...there are different levels of leadership. The engine of the organization was the women from below...they were promoting the changes. At the end, they were stopped by the top of the AMNLAE association. That was the reason many women left AMNLAE and formed their own organizations (Interview, 1/10/2000).

In 1993, AMNLAE's path toward autonomy culminated in a National Extraordinary Assembly with 400 delegates in attendance. This assembly represents the broadest organizational meeting held without dependence on the party or the state. According to National Coordinator Dora Zeledón, "We talked about transforming the gap of inequality between men and women in the private sphere, and promoting women's organizing all over the country....Discrimination passes across all women" (Interview, 1/28/00). The delegates also decided that, "To really unite women and advance in our programs, we needed democratic functions...no longer a national coordinator throwing lines to comply with but a National Council was created, managed in the Casas de Mujeres, Houses of Women" (Interview, 1/28/00). Today, the National Assembly contains 200 women elected from all over the country. There is a National Council of 17 women, all of the departmental coordinators, and an Executive Board of 5 members. Zeledón, elected at this Extraordinary Assembly, is AMNLAE's first elected National Coordinator.

As a result of AMNLAE's declaration of autonomy, at the Sandinista Congress in July, 1999, there was a reorientation of the FSLN party to create *political secretariats of women* in each of the departments throughout the country. The move of the FSLN in Nicaragua is very similar to that of FRELIMO in Mozambique: if the national women's organization is going to seek autonomy, then the party needs to create new party organizations of women. In Mozambique, this competition was enough to bring the OMM back to the party. In Nicaragua, the autonomous women's movement already had a life of its own, and so instead, this competition is bringing about the demise of AMNLAE. In other words, AMNLAE is still considered too Sandinista to attract members of the autonomous women's movement, yet it is not FSLN enough to be an organization of party women. Hence, its demise is being constructed. However, the importance of AMNLAE will always remain in the historical specificity of the moment it existed and the functions that it served.

4.5 Conclusion

Both the OMM in Mozambique and AMNLAE in Nicaragua struggled with issues of organizational identity between being a women's organization or a party organization of women. Despite these similarities, some striking differences between the two countries also emerged. In Mozambique, the adoption of a multi-party democracy and the subsequent electoral victory of FRELIMO caused the OMM to seek autonomy from the party, only to 'decide' to return to the party and remain a FRELIMO organization of women, the party being an intrinsic part of the OMM's identity. There are new women's NGOs existent in 'civil society' today which are contributing to an emerging feminist discourse, but the OMM remains the predominant organization for women in the country.

In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990 served as a catalyst not only for the autonomy of AMNLAE from the party but also for the proliferation of a vibrant autonomous women's movement composed of over 300 women's and self-identified feminist organizations, led by many who had been pushing from within AMNLAE for greater autonomy since the early to mid 1980s.

What we have seen in both contexts is the transformation of women from the passive objects to the active agents of history. The process of women's mobilization by FRELIMO and the FSLN and the subsequent women's organizing that took place within the OMM and AMNLAE have produced the feminist agency and the gendered analysis of women's oppression that has emerged in both countries today. This contemporary women's movement organizing will be examined in Chapter 8.

PART TWO: THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLES FOR WOMEN IN MOZAMBIQUE AND NICARAGUA

How well did FRELIMO and the Sandinistas fight women's oppression *in practice*? In Chapter 2, we examined different Marxist and feminist theoretical approaches to women's oppression and subsequent solutions offered for women's emancipation. In Chapter 3, we examined the discourse and practice around women's emancipation: what revolutionary leaders *said* about the importance of the liberation of women to the larger revolutionary agenda and the history of the struggle of the women's organizations (OMM and AMNLAE) with the parties. In Chapter 4, we examined the autonomy struggles that emerged in the women's organizations as they searched, to different degrees and in different ways, for organizational and ideological autonomy. Chapters 5 and 6 will attempt to offer a balance sheet to assess what *was* and what *was not* achieved for women in Mozambique and Nicaragua in the political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, and familial spheres of life: what really did (and did not) happen for women in terms of policy initiatives, laws passed, programs enacted? How well did the socialist revolutionary agendas outlined in each country address the gendered needs and concerns of women?

This section will argue that achievements were made for women in terms of political representation, equality before the law, and access to public participation in political mobilizing efforts and productive labor which gave women a greater stake in the revolution and in improving their own lives. Tremendous gains were also made by the Sandinista and FRELIMO revolutions in the areas of education, health and access to basic

economic resources. Such gains, made after centuries of colonial and dictatorial rule as well as years of neo-colonialism, cannot be understated. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that the greatest *limitation* of both of these revolutions was their inability (or unwillingness) to translate such public, political and economic gains in the productive sphere of the state and the market into *private* political, economic and *cultural* gains in the reproductive sphere of home and family.

What has *not* occurred as part of FRELIMO's or the Sandinistas's policy-making around 'development' is a questioning of the sexual division of labor in the family, the *status* attributed to the gendered roles in the sexual division of labor, and an equalizing of the cultural attitudes and expectations of men and women in the family. As a result, the sexual division of labor in the household and family remains intact, women continue to perform the majority of the unpaid reproductive labor, and attitudes of male superiority and *machismo* circumscribe women's experiences of reproductive choice and their struggles with domestic violence. It is my assertion that post-revolutionary societies remain as unequal as non-revolutionary societies as long as the sexual division of labor and the secondary status of women in the sphere of home and family remains unchallenged.

CHAPTER FIVE

Political Participation, Legal Reforms, and Cultural Restraints

"Its almost like we are born like this, genetically, almost, for men not to do this kind of thing! It's a total mentality: women and men will have to change their minds. The process of women's liberation is not so easy. It brings problems for both of them. For women to be free, it is hard for men to deal with that kind of woman. An oppressed woman versus a free woman: the oppressed woman is easier to deal with!"

Alcido Nguenya, a FRELIMO Member of Parliament, Interview, 7/21/99

5.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that while certain laws were passed to establish the legal equality of women and men, cultural impediments persisted which led to the continuing ideological and material oppression of women. Tremendous achievements *were made* for women in terms of political representation, the establishment of the rule of law and basic constitutional equality. However, legal inaction and pervasive cultural patriarchies prevented women's oppression in the reproductive spheres of home and family from being significantly challenged. Women's subordinate status in the sphere of the family, both culturally and materially, was not adequately addressed by either revolution.

5.2 The Political Representation of Women in Mozambique and Nicaragua

Mozambique has done very well in terms of the political representation of women in leadership positions. Soon after Independence in 1977, the representation of women in Mozambique ranged from 12% on the national level to 28% in local assemblies, numbers that rival many advanced industrial countries still today:

1977	%National Assembly	%Provincial Assembly	%District Assembly	%City Assembly	%Local Assembly
Women	12.39	14.70	23.81	20.87	28.30
Men	87.61	85.30	76.19	79.13	71.70

Source: OMM Informative Bulletin, 1980

Today, the FRELIMO party boasts very high numbers of women's representation on the national level:

1999	% Members of FRELIMO Party	% Members of Central Committee	% Deputies of Assembly of Republic
Women	42	28	43
Men	58	72	57

Source: FRELIMO Central Committee, 1999

Mozambique is eighth in the world in terms of the representation of women in Parliament, with women constituting 28% of the national legislature. In 1999 in the FRELIMO party, the Central Committee, which has a 25% quota for women membership, had 27.9% women in actuality. FRELIMO Members of Parliament, with a 35% party quota for women, actually comprise 43% women! The NGO Report on *The Situation of Women in Mozambique* states that "in 1992, **only 17.3%** of the 249 deputies to the National Assembly were women, and they, partly due to their exiguous numbers and partly due to socio-economic pressures, are not always able to defend women's interests" ([emphasis mine], 11). In 1994, 24% of the Deputies of Local Assemblies were women.

In addition, women constitute one-third of elected judges in the local People's Courts in Mozambique. In 1990, the representation of women in management positions within the Ministries ranged from 0% in the Ministries of Defense, Interior and Justice to 25% in the Ministry of Agriculture and 33% in the Ministry of Culture (A Mulher em Moçambique, 1990). In 1993, of the 105 leadership positions in the civil service, women occupied 10% (*The Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 13).

Obede Baloi cites the decision of the FRELIMO party to set quotas for women's representation as having a very important impact on women in society: "Women are not only to be in the kitchen, they can be in the Parliament! FRELIMO did more. Virgilia Matabele, a woman MP, is the Deputy Chair of the FRELIMO group in Parliament.

Having a woman communicating decisions of the ruling party has an impact” (Interview, 7/23/99). Sabina Santos, Director of the OMM National Training Center in Machava, supported the fact that FRELIMO was open to OMM demands for greater political representation of women: “It was a necessity to put women in government as Ministers and Vice Ministers. So, we had a direct discussion - give us names of women working in factories, graduates. The President asked if he could get a list of names. Now, we have one Minister and four Vice Ministers. It is a very good thing for us. We never had women in those areas before” (Interview, 7/20/99). Sérgio Viera, founding member of FRELIMO, also cited the political gains of women in Mozambique, impressive by any national standards today, while noting the political limitations as well:

In FRELIMO, 43% of the members of parliament are women!
Of seven Commissions of the Assembly, FRELIMO chairs four out of seven, and three are chaired by women...Many obstacles still exist. For example, women as governors of provinces and administrators of districts are only 5 of 120. It is not a linear process. A lot of things are involved. Like Lenin - strategically, technically, we have to be very patient (Interview, 7/15/99).

The gains in the political representation of women in governmental positions in Mozambique are often used as evidence of the party’s commitment to the emancipation of women. For Gertrudes Victorino, my questions seemed obvious: “Of course they had an analysis of women's oppression. They gave us space, otherwise we could not be in the Parliament, for example. Women are inside FRELIMO, in the government at every level: City Council, provincial, national. Ministers and Vice-Ministers, directors of firms and factories. Women are studying at the university” (Interviews, 7/14/99). Edda Collier, UN Gender Specialist in Mozambique, feels that it was the Marxist perspective of FRELIMO that helped women gain greater political representation than in most liberal democracies: “The Marxist perspective was clearly reflected in the Constitution of 1975 - Equality for

Everyone - 'sex' included...The 1990 Constitution also has no discrimination based on sex" (Interview, 7/30/99). It was this framework which Collier feels enabled the OMM, in 1975, to lobby for a quota for women within all political decision-making bodies. It was in this moment that an internal rule was created which stipulated that there had to be 1/3 women in all organs of the party. This quota policy for women has achieved much greater political representation for women in Mozambique than in many developed countries.

In terms of the quantitative representation of women, Nicaragua has done well, but not as well as Mozambique. In 1979, 33% of the FSLN members were women. That number decreased to 22% in 1984. Just before the 1990 elections, women filled 40% of the seats in the National Assembly, two of the ministries were headed by women, the Chief of Police was a woman, but still none of the nine members of the National Directorate were women (Collinson, 1990). By 1985, 45% of the Sandinista Police Force were women (Chuchryk, 158). In May, 1994 at the FSLN Special Congress, the decision was made that 30% of elected leadership positions at all levels would be reserved for women, and that five women would be elected to the National Directorate, thus expanding the Directorate from nine to fifteen members. However, in the 1996 election, only eight FSLN women were elected to the National Assembly (Isbester, 176). The number of women holding seats in the National Assembly dropped from 23.1% in 1990 to 22% on 1996 (Isbester, 176). Unlike FRELIMO, which established a quota for women in the late 1970s, the Sandinista party did not establish one until 1994.

Political Representation: Quantity v. Quality?

Women's political representation numerically does not necessarily translate into women-centered policy initiatives substantively. Elisa Muianga and Celeste Bango of

MULEIDE (Women, Law and Development Organization) speak of the quantitative and qualitative elements of women's representation in the first multi-party parliament in Mozambique:

In Africa, Mozambique has the second highest percentage of women in Parliament. The question is to know if they are fighting for women inside. Are they representing women? Probably not FRELIMO, but women in Parliament are discussing it in meetings with other organizations. We cannot be happy with the number of women in Parliament but with the *quality* of women in Parliament. This is the first parliament. It is a quick evaluation, but we are not satisfied. But, they are learning now. They have no practice. We must give them time, then criticize them [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/21/99).

Ivete Mboa also pointed out the difference between the quantity and the quality of women serving in parliament. While many women have ideas, some women "choose the party and not the people" (Interview, 7/7/99). In discussing the composition of political power in parliament, Carla Braga concurs that numbers are not enough: "How many times did this woman make an intervention in Parliament? How many times was she heard?" (Interview, 7/15/99). Despite pointing out that the Minister of Social Action is a woman, there are four women Vice-Ministers, and there has been an increase in the number of women in Parliament, Edda Collier also asserted that, "you don't necessarily get empowerment from participation" (Interview, 7/30/99).

Maria Elena Sequeira Rivas, Coordinator of the Women's Secretariat of the ATC, makes the same point about women's representation in Parliament in Nicaragua:

Sometimes, it's not enough for us to have a woman if she doesn't defend our interests. Its worse than a man! Therefore, for me, my organization, collectively, men and women, we are fighting for living spaces we all deserve. For example, at the FSLN there is a 30% quota because there is not clear consciousness. Quotas are necessary, yes, but from my point of view, those spaces are

not occupied by the women who should occupy them (Interview, 1/27/00).

Rivas correctly points out that increasing women's participation in political positions is only one aspect of representation and empowerment. What women do and say when they get there is just as important: "Today, there are more congresswomen and ministers of republics and municipal government leaders/mayors. In that way we have achieved. But the problem of consciousness we face between women themselves. For example, Violeta Chamorro, the President, told women to go home and take care of their kids" (Interview, 1/27/00).¹ María Lourdes Bolaños talked about the abysmal representation of women in leadership positions in Nicaragua as well as all over the world: "The Supreme Court and Electoral Commission have 12 candidates, 0 of whom are women. And the FSLN is the only party concerned with women. Not even the party, but *women of the party*" [emphasis mine] (Interview, 2/2/00). Clearly, while each country has made great strides in terms of women's representation in the national legislature, women's overall access to state leadership positions and their ability to pressure for women's interests *within* those positions still requires more work.

5.3 Legal Reforms for Women in Mozambique

Mozambique has attempted to create a unitary legal system which is a combination of Formal Law and Customary Law. Much of the formal law in Mozambique has been carried over from the period of Portuguese colonization. The Family Law, Civil Code, and Penal Code have not been changed. The Civil Code in Mozambique still states that the man is the head of the family. For example, if a married

¹ It is well documented that as President, Chamorro represented and supported policies in accordance with traditional views of women (See Isbester, 2000; Kampwirth, 1998).

woman wants to open a business, she needs her husband's permission. Many women lawyers and women's NGO's are working toward legal reform of the Civil Code in Mozambique. Carla Braga describes the discriminatory treatment women have received by Portuguese law, and subsequently, by FRELIMO inaction:

In the Portuguese Penal Code, crimes such as adultery were defined and punished in different ways, more harshly on women. Legal reforms are in process, but 20 years after independence, these laws are still enforced and still on the books! Why didn't FRELIMO or the OMM not take this as their charge? You can always blame colonialism, even after independence (Interview, 7/15/99).

For the most part, achievements for women in the legal sphere in Mozambique have been limited by: (1) legal inaction and (2) cultural norms.

Constitutional Equality

The Mozambican Constitution of 1975 declared "the elimination of colonial and traditional oppression and exploitation structures and their related mentality" (Article 4). It also stated that women's emancipation is "one of the essential tasks of the State" and established that women are "equal to men in their rights and duties" (Article 17). This principle is restated in the Constitution later when it declares that "women and men have the same rights and are subject to the same duties" and that this notion should guide "all State legislative and executive action" that "protects the marriage, the family, motherhood and childhood" (Article 29). Fatherhood is conspicuously absent from the list of things the State must protect in the family. As a result, the sphere of home, family and marriage continues to be understood as the sphere of women and children, thus perpetuating the sexual division of labor and eliminating men's responsibility to engage in the reproductive labor of the household, including family farming, food provision, cooking, cleaning and childcare. Moreover, while there is equality before the constitutional law, there is not equality before the civil or customary law. As the report on *The Situation of Women in Mozambique* concluded in 1991:

Although the Constitution enshrines the same rights for men and women, little was done, even in the purely technical field of legislation, to bring the existing norms into line with social change. Legal provisions that run counter to the proclaimed equality of rights are still in force, and are obstacles to change, preventing women from participating in the resolution of society's problems on an equal footing (15).

The laws that have received the most attention for running counter to the proclaimed equality of women's rights include the Nationality Law and the Family Law.

Gendered Inequality: The Nationality Law

Many people I interviewed cited the Nationality Law and the gendered discourse of Samora Machel around the issue of nationality as a key example of gendered inequality enshrined by law. The Nationality Law (enacted on the same day as the Constitution of 1975) deprived Mozambican women of their citizenship when marrying foreigners, but not Mozambican men (Berg and Gundersen, 252). This law remained in effect until 1987, despite its unconstitutionality. At the Second National Congress in 1976, Machel argued that Mozambican women were weaker than Mozambican men, and thus would be influenced by foreign men in a way that Mozambican men would not be influenced by foreign women: "Samora was a despot; Women lost their nationality. Women are too weak and will be too strongly influenced by foreign men" (Interview, 7/6/99). In the *Resolutions from the Second Conference of the Organization of Mozambican Women*, the OMM identifies how enemy infiltration is easier for women due to women's "unbalanced development" compared to men:

Mozambican woman's present situation manifests her unbalanced development in relation to man in cultural, socio-political and economic terms. It derives from her discriminatory education in traditional society which was aggravated by racial, social and sexual discrimination that Portuguese colonization imposed. It is in this context that we should understand why illiteracy, obscurantism, tribalism, regionalism, and racism, as well as inferiority complexes are more ingrained in women... Woman is frequently the transmitting

agent for wrong ideas because of her feeling of inferiority and insecurity. That is how enemy infiltration is made easier. The enemy will freely propagate lies thus trying to degenerate the Mozambican Revolution (1, 11).

This passage explains the thinking behind the unequal, gendered nature of the Nationality Law: women's 'unbalanced development', 'inferiority complexes' and 'discriminatory education' made them more vulnerable to foreign infiltration than Mozambican men.

Sam Barnes uses the Nationality Law to argue that FRELIMO supported the emancipation of women more in the realm of rhetoric than in reality:

Samora and Graça² were married...In Mozambique when a woman married a foreigner, she lost her nationality. There were inconsistencies. Women really are not equal. The Women's Detachment was gotten rid of: When? How? Why? So-called revolutionary roles were OK at a certain period of time, but they never made it to the sphere of the family. For example, domestic violence...A general of FRELIMO beat his wife to death behind a closed door. So, in the family, in terms of domestic violence and women's unpaid work, **it is no worse here than anyplace else** [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/2/99).

And, it is no better. In this area, did the revolution make a difference? Despite the Marxist rhetoric about the emancipation of women, the situation of women, particularly in the family, is no better --or no worse-- than in any other political system with or without the rhetoric. This helps contribute to the argument that women's subordination in the sphere of the family remains generalizable today across political, economic and cultural systems.

The Draft Family Law

Women's subordinate status in the family did receive some attention by the FRELIMO government. One of the first attempts at legal reform in the revolutionary period was directed at the Family Law. In 1980, a Draft Family Law was prepared by the Ministry of Justice and the Faculty of Law at Eduardo Mondlane University as part of a Family Law Project. It was designed to replace the Portuguese Family Law and to reform

² This is a reference to the second leader of FRELIMO and first President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, and Graça Machel, currently married to Nelson Mandela, and considering a bid for FRELIMO's presidential candidacy in 2004.

discriminatory customary law without directly addressing the diverse marriage systems that exist throughout Mozambique (matrilineal, patrilineal, Islamic, Christian, and civil, to name a few). From 1982-1990, parts of the Draft Family Law were put into use as a result of a Supreme Court of Appeal Directive, but the Draft Law itself has yet to be approved (Berg and Gundersen, 256). Terezinha da Silva, Director of the Faculty of Social Sciences, spoke of a very recent organized effort among academic feminists to lobby Parliament about the Family Law:

Two months ago, there was a proposal or request of the Ministry of Justice to discuss the Family Law. Men had attitudes at the issues raised. Some of us decided, let's organize a group of women, feminists, to organize, to influence the Parliament. On which issues can we get success? If you start with abortion, you'll go down. So, we started with property rights, inheritance, maintenance. Mostly academics feminists....We were so horrified with the attitudes of lawyers, educated men in Maputo, middle-upper class (Interview 7/23/99).

The Family Law recognizes shared property in the family and two types of divorce: mutual consent, and that sought by one spouse through litigation. Religious law is recognized along with customary law and prevails in the day to day life of society. Customary law recognizes monogamous and polygamous marriages, hinders women from obtaining contractual capacity and favors the father or his male relatives in custody situations. In patrilineal systems (Southern Mozambique) and Muslim societies, only the man is allowed to initiate a divorce because women are not considered legal adults. In matrilineal systems (Northern Mozambique), women have more power in terms of property and divorce. This is because, after marriage, the husband goes to live with the family of the wife, so he will be the one expelled from the home upon divorce. In patrilineal societies, the woman will be expelled and the lobolo³ must be paid back. Nina

³ Lobolo, or brideprice, refers to an exchange from the family of the groom to the family of the bride in patrilineal systems where the wife will come to live with the family of the groom. It is discussed in more detail in Section 5.4

Berg explains that reconstructing the Family Law in Mozambique is a complicated process due to the diversity of traditional family structures in existence:

There are two worlds, two realities in Mozambique. The force of modernity is a sore issue on FRELIMO's part, who had to give concessions to traditional structures. They managed to merge the Regalo/Chief and the FRELIMO judge to function quite well together....This country has so many people's views: matrilineal, patrilineal. A radical Family Law would not even get into Parliament! One guy has five mothers, says he is attending the funeral of his mothers. The family structures are so extremely complicated. All views are represented in Parliament, personal and regional. This is about taking power from people (Interview, 7/16/99).

The Draft Law was in use until the adoption of the New Constitution in 1990, when it was deemed null and void because a new Family Law had never been approved. Thus, the Draft Law, with its achievements and its flaws, can no longer be used to shape family policy. Women in Mozambique await the passage of a new Family Law that legally establishes equality within the family.

People's Popular Tribunals: A Local Path Toward Power for Women?

One of the most unique aspects of the Mozambican legal system that has an impact on family policy are the People's Popular Tribunals. In 1978, local People's Tribunals were established by the Judicial Organization Act in each province as part of an attempt to implement popular justice. The philosophy of popular justice was to create a system of local tribunals based on popular participation, informalism, and accessibility. Systems of popular justice were believed to be the *form* which would produce the *content* of social transformation: giving power *back* to people on the local level. Popular Tribunals are part of the formal structure of the Judiciary in Mozambique. Nina Berg, a lawyer with DANIDA, explains how the Popular Tribunals are designed to work, as well as the problems which have emerged in the legal sector in Mozambique:

The issue of how the popular courts should be supervised has been handled differently than many other African countries. Usually, there are two tracks: Customary Law and Formal Law.

So, the question remains in any given situation, what law applies?
 Mozambique decided to try to develop a unified legal system....
 The guidelines of the popular tribunals are "common sense."
 In principle, they are not to judge or decide a winner and a loser,
 but rather are to try to reach consensus (Interview, 7/16/99).

The loose norm of 'common sense' and the goal of consensus have allowed the popular tribunals to become a space of flexible justice on the local level where traditional norms have the potential to be either *perpetuated* or *challenged* by the judges overseeing the case.

One of the most positive aspects of the popular courts that has emerged is the extent to which women's interests have been handled. Because the court judges are local members of the community who use a local standard of 'good sense and justice' to resolve conflicts, they become one of the first, only and most important venues for women to express their grievances and seek conflict resolution, particularly disputes within the family. Often, cases of domestic violence, maintenance rights and family property are handled by the popular courts. Judges are instructed to implement customary law and the principles of equality and emancipation, including gender equality, within the guidelines of the Constitution. The popular tribunals have the jurisdiction to handle decisions related to all marriages that are not officially registered, which are the vast majority.⁴ Moreover, "women are frequently found as elected judges in the local popular tribunals. It is a matter of policy that out of the three to five judges working collectively in a tribunal, at least one should be a woman" (Berg and Gundersen, 253).

⁴ It is estimated that only 10% of marriages in Mozambique are officially registered with the state, while the remaining 90% are established according to traditional laws or simply cohabitation (Berg and Gundersen, 255).

Approximately 15% of the 9,000 elected popular court judges are women (Berg and Gundersen, 253).

Berg and Gundersen (1990) argue that “the legal reforms initiated after independence have led to improvements in the legal position of women, both *de jure* and *de facto*. One of the most significant changes is that women now have access to legal institutions which they previously did not have” (268). Polly Gastor adds that substantively “we are working toward the recognition of *de facto* unions and giving women full rights of maintenance, children, and inheritance” but she acknowledges that “the People's Justice System, and People's Courts at the local level of town and country are very important to women, particularly uneducated women: they are accessible, and some women became judges” (Interview, 7/13/99).

Berg and Gundersen (1990) conclude that while women's legal position in marriage, and upon divorce, is *stronger* in the popular tribunals than in customary law, with women in polygamous and monogamous unions granted the *same* protections, traditional gendered norms of behavior are still often upheld in a discriminatory way against women. For example, property rights are lost to women when they are considered the ‘guilty party’ in the divorce, either through adultery or not being a ‘proper’ wife and mother, but they are not lost to men, who have no comparable standard held against them. However, men are often held to the traditional gender standard of maintenance and economic responsibility for all of the women whom they have either married or shown an *intent* to marry:

Lobolo and polygamy were thus looked upon in their complexity, as issues which are relevant for establishing the facts and context of a case, but that do not give rise to legal claims. The popular

tribunal looked for pragmatic solutions that give protection to women in such a situation, but did not grant men their customary rights as a result of lobolo having been paid (266).

This interpretation of women's rights to maintenance within traditional societies works to the advantage of women in patrilineal societies, who otherwise have very few rights over household, children, family or economic decisions.

Sometimes, the popular courts actually challenge traditional norms. Nina Berg argues that community courts can function as social stabilizers, mediating between the two worlds of tradition and modernity, sometimes to women's benefit. However, cultural norms often dissuade women from utilizing the popular courts as an option. According to Eulália Temba of WLSAMAZ:

In everyday life, women are facing a lot of constraints: women lack information, and women may be educated and have information, but there is social pressure, and the social environment says not to go to court... We know we still live in an androcentric and patriarchal world. Women are always in a subordinated position. Women do not succeed going to court: 'Why go against your husband?' Even if they are OK in court, women ask 'what will happen to me tomorrow?' Sometimes, women decide to give up the case, even if it is successful. This environment creates constraints (Interview, 7/13/99).

Obviously, the unwillingness of women to challenge their husbands in the popular tribunals limits their ability to be effective, even if judges are willing to utilize their power to challenge traditional gender roles.

Legal reform for women, while essential, is inherently limited by the gaps between law, ideology, and culture. Sam Barnes argues that despite the fact that conventions like CEDAW were signed by the FRELIMO government, the laws on the books still conflict "because under FRELIMO, as a Marxist state, laws were not considered important. You had ideology to protect you, you don't need laws. So, many of the fascist laws are still in place. After ten years, they began looking at the laws, in the

early 90s. FRELIMO doesn't quite understand what it means to be a state run by laws" (Interview, 7/2/99). Jennifer Garvey, lawyer with the Ministry of Mineral Resources for 11 years, agrees that there had not been a 'culture of law' in Mozambique until 1990 and the establishment of the New Constitution: "The Portuguese were extraordinarily hierarchical, and the FRELIMO system was a very hierarchical and very centralized system. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. The rule of discretion was replaced by the rule of law (Interview, 7/15/00). And yet, even with 'good laws' on the books, cultural norms shape the extent to which laws are interpreted, enforced, and internalized within a population. How have cultural understandings limited achievements for women, particularly in the sphere of the family, in Mozambique?

5.4 The Cultural Context of Gender and the Family in Mozambique

One of the themes that emerged from my interviews regarding the oppression of women in the family is the distinction between legal principles and cultural practices. Manuel Tome asserts that whereas some things can be established by decree, such as freedom and equality for women, other practices such as lobolo, polygamy, and prostitution must be analyzed and changed from a cultural point of view:

After independence, we gave greater importance to women. The emancipation of women was seen as something women and men should fight for. We have made some mistakes, we have to admit that. This was a cultural revolution. We had to change centuries of thought...more deep work...one speech won't change that. Polygamy, the education of children, dignity in which women will not accept being a second or third wife. There are women who say 'We are very happy...once a week you sleep with me, no problem'...We did not have a profound analysis of prostitution...only a moral perspective not an economic one. We had a deep analysis, although not a very complete one (Interview, 7/29/99).

Cédia Montero, coordinator of Forum Mulher, agrees: "In Mozambique, as in other African countries, the cultural problems are still very strong" (Interview, 6/29/99). Montero implicates both African and Portuguese cultural traditions in the oppression of

women. Ivete Mboa, director of the Associação Das Donas de Casa in Matola outside of Maputo, also argues that women suffer the double cultural oppression of traditional Mozambican cultures and colonial patriarchies: "In some countries, including Mozambique, women have to suffer twice. During colonial times, society thought that men were superior to women, not equal to. In our culture, the man is a human being of the first category. The woman is of the second category" (Interview, 7/7/99).

Not only have Mozambican women suffered under the oppressive system of Portuguese colonization, but they have also suffered under a "traditional feudal ideology," an ideology which "conceives of the woman's role as serving men - as an object of pleasure, as a procreator, and as an unpaid worker" (Women's International Resource Exchange, 28). One of the main concerns expressed by the OMM in the *Resolutions of the Second Conference* was the fact that many women in Mozambique suffer from a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of inferiority concerning their own abilities. The OMM feels that the process of traditional education, including the perpetuation of such practices as initiation rites, lobolo (bride price) and polygamy, all of which occur in different areas and to different degrees today in Mozambique, has inculcated in women a "spirit of submission" which fosters a "passive acceptance" and subordination, often leaving women feeling unable to express their own opinions (ibid., 28). The family is neither a "haven" from the cruelty of the market as some Marxists argue, nor simply a concern of bourgeois feminists. The ideological values of traditional feudal society are "inculcated in a woman from the moment she is born by a whole educational system within the family" (Women's International Resource Exchange, 28).

FRELIMO, through the OMM, took a firm position that traditional education, initiation rites, religion and inequality in the family inculcate in women a feeling of inferiority that prevents women from seeing the possibility of their own emancipation:

Traditional society, as well as colonial society, saw woman as an object of pleasure and cheap manual labor. Apart from being

a laborer, they kept her away from science to impede any thought that society might be changed. Here, again, initiation rites inculcated in women erroneous concepts of her being inferior. Apart from making her conform this made her the transmitter of the theory of the impossibility of women's liberation. Religions are a form of obscurantism, though more subtle, which perpetuate the concept of the inferiority of woman....The process of rendering the woman inferior originates in traditional education. It is vindicated by the initiation rites and other such traditional practices which lead to passive conformism and lack of initiative. Woman becomes an object of appropriation and pleasure, bartered by the family and subjugated to the husband's will....The feeling of inferiority impedes woman's participation in meetings and even in the family where, faced with her husband and children, she is incapable of expressing her opinions. Her inhibition and lack of initiative become translated into an inability to take on responsible jobs and to break out of her conditioning (6, 12-13).

The position expressed here is very complicated. While it reveals a progressive understanding of the phenomena of "internalized oppression," explaining how oppressed groups, in this case, women, often internalize the values of their oppressor and come to believe in their own inferiority, it often seems to result in a kind of 'blaming the victim.' During the Conferência Extraordinária in 1984, the OMM looked at the causes of "why women stopped, didn't grow" (Interview, 7/20/99). Interviews were conducted across the entire population, young and old, men and women. According to Santos, the conclusions that were drawn were that "traditional education cuts the emancipation of women" (Interview, 7/20/99). Generóssa Cossa agrees that, "in the rural areas, boys are taught to be the man-boss-leader; girls, are taught to be mothers-obedient to their husbands. The different treatment of boys and girls has an impact. Maputo has two societies: patriarchal, in which the man is the head of the family, and matriarchal, in which women are the leaders. There is what is written in the Constitution, and then there is the practice" (Interview, 7/14/99). The cultural education of girls and boys in the family plays a very

important role in shaping gendered expectations of manhood and womanhood. This education is shaped by the two different marital systems in Mozambique: matrilineality and patrilineality.

Matrilineal and Patrilineal Societies in Mozambique

In order to discuss the cultural context of gender and the family in Mozambique, it is important to discuss both familial systems that exist within the country. There are two different marital/kinship/inheritance systems in Mozambique: patrilineal in the South, and matrilineal in the North. In the southern patrilineal systems, upon marriage the wife goes to live with the husband's family, who pays lobolo to the woman's family for the loss of her labor:

The situation that we found shows that the marriage establishes an exchange of services between families in which 'lobolo' has an economic and a moral basis and stabilizes the matrimony, making the husband and his family responsible for maintaining the woman. Marriage is patrilocal and the woman becomes the circulating element. Power over her is transferred from her family to that of her husband. In case of death of the husband, the woman continues to belong to the husband's family, not inheriting, nor being able to decide about herself, her children, or even the items she brought in at the wedding. The woman rarely divorces either, because there are not many reasons that can legitimate a woman's request, or because even if accepted by the relatives, the woman must always leave the children at her husband's (WLSAMAZ, 1997, 28).

In the northern matrilineal marriage systems, the man goes to live with the woman's family: "In Mozambique's matrilineal societies, residence is with the wife's family and the social father of the couple's children is the wife's brother, whereas in patrilineal societies, the social father is the biological father and the children belong to the husband's family (WLSAMAZ, 1997, 22). Lobolo, or bride price, is a practice which occurs throughout Mozambique. Originally, the lobolo only signified an alliance between

two families. Money was first introduced into this custom during colonization (Women's International Exchange, 30).

The brideprice is seen as compensation from one family to another for the loss of the labor power which the bride-to-be represents. It is important to note that in this custom the woman is acknowledged as having value in and of herself and her person, the loss of which is paid for economically. Lobolo, then, is very different from the exchange of a dowry, which is given to add value to the woman in question. The OMM, however, still feels that lobolo puts women in a position of total dependence on men, "who, because they have paid for them, can use and disown them as mere objects" (ibid., 28). Sabina Santos argues that "lobolo is the symbol of marriage," citing the fact that "money and jewels are used to get the woman as a wife (Interview, 7/20/99). Lobolo is still practiced in the capital city of Maputo and in the surrounding rural areas.

In many ways, there are significant differences between the power and decision-making available to women in each system. For example, in cases of domestic violence or divorce, women living with their own families in matrilineal systems have much more power: they have rights over the children, and often, it is the family of the wife that expels the husband in cases of violence, adultery or divorce. In patrilineal systems, the husband and his family have exclusive rights over the children and banish the wife in cases of divorce, often accepting adultery on the part of the husband. According to Sabina Santos, the center of the family is the man in the patriarchal South, while the center of the family is the woman in the matriarchal North:

Everything revolves around the man or the woman. For example, in the North, there are ritual initiations. Young women learn how to treat a husband, whereas in the South, women cannot know

anything about men! Yes, the men have the power because even in the north, the leading person at a marriage ceremony is the man. But in the North, when a man gets married to a woman, the man builds a home in the zone of the woman. In the South, the woman goes to live with the man. In the North, women are more powerful than in the South. In the north, a man can take a decision, but he consults his mother, wife. In the south, men consult women less (Interview, 7/20/99).

Nevertheless, in both systems, as many women I interviewed attested, it is still a man who often holds the property and decision-making power, even in the matrilineal systems. The 1997 WLSAMAZ study confirms these findings:

From the findings from the matrilineal groups, it can be concluded that although the marriage is defined and oriented by the wife's family, the men continue to hold power as uncles and brothers. Although inequality is common in all regions, regardless of lineage, in matrilineal societies, the woman has greater possibilities to intervene to modify the model of traditional marriage. That is because she occupies a more socially visible position that reinforces her 'destiny' as producer of resources and children (WLSAMAZ, 28).

It is also important to keep in mind that in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies, the presence of children determines the validity of the marriage, circumscribing the discourse and practice of women's reproductive rights: "In every region of the country, both in cities and countryside, a marriage is only fulfilled when there are children as the guarantee of family reconstitution. Children are a resource and an investment that at the same time provide a symbolic recognition of the family in society....In the social conception, a woman without children is not a complete person" (WLSAMAZ, 1997, 24). In patrilineal systems, if there are no children, then property goes to the husband's sister. If the husband dies, the wife is given to the husband's brother.

Polygamy: An Extension of Gendered Reproductive Labor

Polygamy is favored by the system of patriliney, whereby children belong by rights to the paternal clan. The OMM states that "in our patriarchal society, polygamy is a system whereby the man possesses a number of wives"(Women's International Exchange, 28). Despite the adaptation that has occurred over time, polygamy is about power and control of resources. Preserving the system of male domination which permeates the cultural realm of society, not to mention the minds and bodies of women themselves, polygamy perpetuates the unequal distribution of the economic and political resources the society has to offer. Moreover, polygamy perpetuates the sexual division of labor in which women are expected to be the reproductive care-takers of men and children.

So why do many Mozambican women support polygamy? The demographic imbalance of women to men is an argument often offered as to why each man may need to be betrothed to more than one woman. Due to the gendered labor patterns that take men to the cities while women stay home in the rural areas, the female to male ratio in some rural areas is 8 to 1. As a result, some women I interviewed argued that woman may *need* to share a man in order to have access to heterosexual pleasure, affect, emotional bonds, childbearing and economic subsistence. Sabina Santos explained the existence of polygamy in terms of the shortage of men, particularly in the rural areas, in Mozambique:

But we have a problem here in Mozambique because of the war. Women are 52% of the population and men are 48%. There is polygamy in Mozambique. This is another problem: each man has 2 or 3 women. Before, it was more. Now, it is around 3. The problem is that the family accepts it. Even the women accept it! One of the problems is that when alone, single, many men are looking to you. Once you get married, you get more respect! So, women would rather marry men with more than one wife than not marry at all. In the beginning, in the rural areas, the situation was worse.

Mothers, teachers, girls must marry, have children. Even mothers will accept that for her daughters and the first wife will, too. In the rural areas, it is worse (Interview, 7/20/99).

Santos' comments imply that perhaps if single women were *respected*, they would not *choose* a polygamous marriage. Américo Magaia discusses polygamy both in terms of the shortage of men in the rural areas due to urbanization, as well as an attitudinal acceptance of polygamy by 'traditional women': "Modern women are like my wife: monogamous, share everything with their husbands. In the rural areas, due to war, both the colonial and the civil war, there is a ratio of 8 women to 1 man....women accept it as natural for one man to have three to five wives, living in harmony..." (Interview, 7/24/99).

For Fatima Trinta, the issue of polygamy is not whether or not the women involved in polygamous marriages are positively or negatively affected, but, whether or not each wife is treated economically equal: "The question is that men do not treat women the same way [economically]. Why not treat all the women the same? The first one suffers more" (Interview, 7/28/99). When I asked Trinta to discuss the possibility of polygamy for women as well as for men, she responded in a way that revealed both the cultural assumptions and the material differences between women and men:

The problem is that when a woman has a relation with more than one man she becomes without value. With men, it is different: he is powerful, he is superior! It's getting worse. The OMM can do nothing to change that. Women need to be more sensible, respect yourself, full respect. The problem is that for a man, its different; a man gives money and food. Women depend on the man; men don't depend on women for these things, just fun. If women had economic independence, there would be no problem (Interview, 7/28/99).

According to Trinta, non-monogamous women decrease in value, whereas non-monogamous men do not. Why is this the case? What does this reveal about the nature of polygamy?

Polygamy is intrinsically an *economic* system as well as a *cultural* system. It is based on the *economic capacity* to care for multiple partners, and as a result, it is

inherently gendered in a world where women have less economic capacity than men. In a world of equal economic independence for women and men, the discourse around polygamy would take a very different form. Both domestic labor and inheritance are implicated in the current discourse around polygamy because of the gendered division of labor in the home, family, and act of reproduction:

There are two kinds of men - those who help, and those who don't, with no excuse: 'Work by yourself; when I get home, I want everything done.' When I have a lot of work, my husband helps me. We must continue to mobilize and sensitize the men, that women are persons too, they get tired, they need help. It's hard, because some men do not accept marriage, and have no children. Sometimes, they suggest, 'let me go out and have another woman and make children - I'll bring them home and then you can take care of them!' On Mozambique Island, I know a woman who could not have children who found a new wife for her husband, and she cares for and feeds the children (Interview, 7/28/99).

The intersection of polygamy with the sexual division of labor raises the following question: if men were expected to perform the care-giving labor for the children and the wives in the family, would they still choose to procure more of each?

Ana Maria Montero described the complexity of assessing women's oppression within 'modern society' as compared with their experiences within traditional practices such as polygamy:

That is not an easy question. Still what remains is that women in traditional society are more oppressed than in modern society. Sometimes, that doesn't fit correctly. In traditional social relations, women get some space to assert leadership positions more than in modern society. In discussions of reproductive rights, marriage, and polygamy...in Mozambique, who can be a polygamous man? Only those with wealth because they have to pay lobola! Polygamy also results in more women in the labor force for domestic labor and the children, and it requires a wife's authorization and advice. Older women stop doing heavy work that the younger wives do. Therefore, for some groups of women, polygamy is a form of liberation (Interview, 7/8/99).

I cannot disagree with this statement within the current structure of a gendered division of labor. And yet, I want to ask, aren't some groups of women being liberated at the expense of others? What if women were not *solely* responsible for the domestic labor? Then, procuring more *husbands* would be just as viable an option as procuring more *wives* for assistance in performing the tasks of reproductive labor. It seems to me that while the argument for polygamy as a labor-saving device for women may be true within the current gendered division of labor, it does not question the *gendered power dynamic* underpinning that division of labor, or the practice of polygamy itself.

5.5 Legal Reforms for Women in Nicaragua

In September, 1979, the Statute of Rights and Guarantees, Citizens Rights and the Bill of Rights established the legal equality of men and women in Nicaragua. These statutes were used until 1987 when the new Constitution was adopted. Many important laws for women and families were passed between 1979 and 1987. In 1979, a law was passed which prohibited the use of women as sexual objects in advertising. In 1981, the Adoption Law was passed which established the irrevocability of adoption in Nicaragua. Two laws in particular were passed regarding relations between women, men and children in the family: (1) the Law of Relations Between Mothers, Fathers, Children (1981), which recognized the legal rights of illegitimate children and established the equal rights of women and men over the custody of children in divorce settlements; and (2) the Nurturing Law (1982), which established the equal responsibility of mothers and fathers for their children. Previously, *patria potestad*, a legal concept in most Latin American societies which gives fathers rights over children without making them financially responsible, reigned supreme. These laws were an important step toward

correcting the contradiction which existed in Nicaraguan society between women's *responsibilities* within the family and men's *rights* according to Family Law. Such contradictions can also be seen in the Civil Law of 1904, which established preferential treatment for the father as the boss of the family. Infidelity of the woman was considered adultery and was penalized, while infidelity of the man was considered concubinage and was not penalized (Mesa Interview, 1/24/00).

In addition, a Unilateral Divorce Law was passed, allowing one member of a couple to obtain a divorce without demonstrating cause. This law was criticized by the Church for "attacking the main element of the family" (Mesa Interview, 1/24/00). Law 230 was passed in 1996, making domestic and intrafamilial violence a crime for the first time in Nicaragua. Law 143, the Food Law, was brought by women of the National Assembly to establish a material responsibility of parents for taking care of the children. It attempted to ensure allowances for housing, clothing, and food for children in order to provide a more material push to father's responsibility for children. The Food Law has not been approved. Auxiliadora Mesa, a lawyer at the Centro de Mujer y Familia, discussed the politics around the Food Law:

The Food Law did not receive approval by Daniel Ortega because it went against men's pockets. Many women demanded at the Council of State. AMNLAE promoted the Food Law which was approved by the Council of State. One of the provisions nullified the immunity given to officials and members of the Council of State. In 1992, we retained the issue of the Food Law. The document was re-made without the immunity clause (Interview, 1/24/00).

Angela Rosa Acevedo of the Center for Constitutional Rights acknowledges that the 1987 Constitution entailed much transformation and improvement in terms of regulations for individual human rights related to women:

This Constitution takes into account all the debates around the world regarding women's rights. At the level of the political system, it is different from ever seen before - pluralism. We recognized the mixed economy with this Constitution, and for the first time the three powers appear: (1) Electoral Supreme Council; (2) Judicial Power; (3) National Assembly. The most important thing of the 1987 Constitution was the participation of the people in the decision-making process (Interview, 1/11/00).

However, Acevedo argues that while the formal principle of equality for women was established in 1987, there was no accompanying legislation to make decision-making effective in this area: "We didn't fight against those ideas that are at the base of these inequalities. For example, the family is undemocratic. Motherhood is the principal vision of woman, along with control of woman's freedom through the social - women for others not for themselves. The fact of working in an independent organization for women [can help] to make that equality possible" (Interview, 1/11/00).

Vilma Núñez de Escorcía describes how inadequate the official gender policies of the FSLN were, and how even the laws that were passed were passed only with great effort from individual women and AMNLAE as an organization: "The official policies lacked a lot. I am convinced there was an advance, but some advances were not enough. They were not a result of party policy but an outcome of women's efforts. For example, the first transformation of the Family, was the Law of Relations: Mother, Father, Children, to equalize relations in the family. This was the struggle of [individual] women plus AMNLAE" (Interview, 2/2/00).

The fruits of women's labor seemed most evident when the FSLN issued its long formal statement on women and the Sandinista Revolution, known as *La Proclama*, read at the Third National Assembly of AMNLAE on International Women's Day, March 8,

1987. The most important statements made in *La Proclama* included: an acknowledgment of patriarchy and the additional sex exploitation specific to women; a condemnation of machismo; an argument that women's issues cannot be put off until after the war; and, for the first time, an assertion that dealing with the inequalities between men and women would actually strengthen, and not divide, the revolution (Collinson, 145). As a formal statement of the FSLN, *La Proclama* seemed to end the "ghettoization of the woman question." Now, the entire FSLN had the responsibility of considering the concerns of women. In the words of Beth Stephens:

The Proclamation thus came out strongly in support of those who argue that women's oppression cannot be overcome as part of the general battle against exploitation and inequality, but rather requires a *head-on confrontation with the ideology of machismo* and its manifestations in the "private" realm of the home and personal relations [emphasis mine] (Stephens, 16).

Why the change of heart? Why, after all the years of clearly stating that women's specific concerns were not only distinct from and secondary to the class-based concerns of the revolution, but also that they would divide the movement, would the FSLN suddenly acknowledge the importance of the concerns of Nicaraguan women? The decision was much more practically than ideologically oriented. With so many men mobilized for the war effort, "it was imperative for the survival of the revolution that women's productivity be raised, particularly in the cash crop sector" (Collinson, 145). Thus, the FSLN's strategy regarding women appeared to be based on increasing women's participation in the "productive activities" of cash crop agriculture, with no reconsideration whatsoever of the category of "production." As Patricia Chuchryk (1991) concurs, the FSLN strategy continued to focus on increasing the participation of women

in productive activities, and, thus often ignored issues related to women and reproduction (143). Katherine Isbester (2001) cites the FSLN's declining support among women of all ages as a factor in the Sandinistas' change of heart.⁵ I would take issue with Stephens' argument that the FSLN ever intended a "head-on confrontation with the ideology of machismo." The struggles for autonomy that had emerged within AMNLAE by 1987, growing in strength to the present day, reveal not only the unwillingness of the FSLN to adequately take on machismo, but also the refusal of women within the party to accept it any longer.

In December, 1994, an executive and legislative commission was put in charge of the Children's Code. There are five books in the Family Code, the fifth of which is the Children's Code. According to Auxiliadora Mesa, "international organizations like UNICEF were more willing to focus on children than on the family" (Interview, 1/24/00). In 1998, under the pressure of the Women's Commission, efforts were directed "to rescue the problem of family law" (Mesa Interview, 1/24/00). Despite the fact that the Food Law has not yet been passed and that other problems with the Family Law still exist, LaRamee and Polakoff (1998) argue that "the laws that were passed soon after the proclamation, officially changed the definition of the family, granted full equality to women, authorized police to intervene in situations of domestic violence, allowed women to file for divorce for the first time, and imposed regulations on industry for the provision of childcare services" (182). All of this took place within a climate of declining legitimacy for the

⁵ Isbester (2001) cites a 1998 survey of 1,123 randomly selected Managuans in which 63% of women did not identify with any political party as evidence for the FSLN's declining popularity. Despite its questionable intent, Isbester still sees *La Proclama* as a moral symbolic victory for Nicaraguan women (89).

FSLN, and increasing lobbying power on the part of the autonomous women's movement.⁶

5.6 Women, Culture and the Family in Nicaragua: The Ideology of Machismo

Just as in Mozambique, many people I interviewed in Nicaragua referred to the necessity of changing cultural attitudes of machismo in order to improve gender relations between women and men. What exactly is machismo and how do ideological attitudes create material realities? Maxine Molyneux (1985) defines machismo as a "value system underpinned by widespread internal migration under which men had relations with several women and left them to raise the children" (146). Traditionally, machismo is measured by the number of children a man has fathered. Angela Rosa Acevedo addresses the cultural assumptions behind male procreation:

There is a cultural tendency that is very common in Nicaragua. Many men have the idea that if they have as many kids as they can, this is how they show their masculinity. At the same time, culture identifies women as the reproducers - the bodies that make the kids. So, men have kids outside of marriage and the women are left caring for the children born outside of marriage. (Interview, 1/11/00).

According to Comandante Carlos Núñez, a dominant male figure in the FSLN, machismo means: "reducing the woman to an object. The man acts as head of the family, directs everything, takes command, imposes his will without taking into account what I would call the exercise of democracy in the home" (Collinson, 9). As Núñez clearly realizes, the establishment of "democracy in the home" can only be achieved by attacking machismo.

A young undergraduate from Casa Miriam explains how machismo has been taught to women and men within the values of the family:

⁶ For my discussion of the contemporary women's movement in Nicaragua, see Chapter 8. For more on the development of AMNLAE as a social movement, see Katherine Isbester (2001) Still Fighting: The Nicaraguan Women's Movement, 1977-2000.

Machismo is the historical condition of the superiority of men to women in many aspects of life. I don't think just men are machista. Mothers, brought ideas from different generations, who also teach their kids machismo. To change machismo, we also need to change women. To teach mothers not to make differences between their daughters and sons. For society, it is bad that machismo exists. It prevents women from achieving their full development. The mentality starts in the family, institutions, and government. The struggle is in the minds of women and men (Interview, 2/4/00).

The struggle to end machista culture and establish women's equality *is* in the minds of men and women. And yet, the struggle is also *in and on* women's bodies. Ana María Pizarro is critical of cultural explanations which use machismo and machista attitudes of Nicaraguan women and men to explain patriarchy devoid of an acknowledgment of the relationship between culture and materiality: "Some explanations blame culture and men's sexual practices. I don't think that it is culture. I think patriarchalism is expressed in terms of men's control of women's bodies" (Interview, 1/21/00). To me, a better approach to understanding machismo is through the lens of the *intersection of culture and materiality*.

The ideology of machismo and the materiality of women's oppression are intricately linked. Cultural attitudes manifest themselves into empirical realities in the everyday lives of women. Machista attitudes materialize in women's experiences of domestic violence, curtailed mobility and behavior in the public sphere, and the gendered division of labor. Vilma Núñez de Escorcía asserts that there are many manifestations of machismo in all spheres of life of men's behavior, including relations with their daughters, separating the public sphere from the family sphere, and the use and abuse of male power (Interview, 2/2/00). For example, Concepción López, AMNLAE and FSLN

leader in Leon, describes how machismo played itself out in her family in terms of different expectations for the male and female members of the household: "As my father was...he didn't allow my mother or his daughter to go out without permission. We didn't have the right to go out...to schedule, for pleasure, to make ourselves beautiful. My father was a machista. The man could put on cologne and go out, but the woman had to stay at home. Machismo is rooted in the countryside. For example, men don't allow women to participate, to come to the city, to buy things - just if they are sick" (Interview, 2/4/00). Machista cultural ideas also determine how women and men define 'work' in Nicaraguan society. According to Maria Rosa Renzi:

Machista is a society in which all the policies are targeted by and for men. Women's role in society is not appreciated, not considered. Many women consider that they do not work, but that they just help their husband, when 80% of the money home comes from them! They do not consider their work at home, work (Interview, 1/24/00).

It is particularly noteworthy that when women are not only performing more physical productive and reproductive labor, but are actually bringing more income into the family, a typical masculine measure of work productivity, they still consider themselves as 'helping' their husband and not actually 'working' in their own right. Gendered constructions of 'work' will be addressed in Chapter 6.

How was machismo manifested within the Sandinista leadership? Vilma Núñez de Escorcía comments on the early understanding of Sandinista women that Sandinista men could easily integrate their revolutionary ideas with machista practices:

Doing a revolution doesn't stop you from being machista! A revolutionary person has a set of values, convictions, practices of equality. But their treatment of women: we knew pretty early you can be very revolutionary and lack something in practice. The machismo of the Sandinista leaders was not just in not seeing

the merit of women as professionals in a space that we deserved, but it was also being abused: politics, charisma, hitting on young girls/women, seducing...the abusiveness of Clinton – male power (Interview, 2/2/00).

Male power often took the form of long-term political leadership. Even Sandinista militant Doris Tijerino associated machismo with leadership lacking limits: “It is wrong for one person to stay forever in a position. One of my critiques is leaders staying too long and not giving space to anybody else. I had my period, and I left. This is a machista attitude” (Interview, 1/27/00). Interestingly enough, however, when I applied Tijerino’s standard to Daniel Ortega as head of the FSLN party and presidential candidate for the third time, she felt it was a different situation: “The case of Ortega is very different from the mass organizations. The FSLN is a very diversified organization...the majority sectors within the party do not admit easily a proposal of change. So, Ortega becomes a unifying element” (Interview, 1/27/00).

With machista attitudes so culturally embedded, how does one begin to challenge the ideology and materiality of machismo? Dora Zeledón sees education as the key to fighting machismo: “Machismo is in the minds of men and women. How do you change that? Education” (Interview, 1/28/00). Jaime Wheelock agrees that education is essential for challenging patriarchal notions of women in the family:

The first aspect must be education. It is not enough to establish a legal framework because the obstacles for women's participation come from the family. The Nicaraguan family, both rural and urban, is very traditional. Part of the misunderstanding with the revolution had to do with women's role. We wanted women to become part of the organizations, but the family structures were very patriarchal. It was considered a violation of the family that we got so deep into their customs. Some of the military movement in the countryside was a revolt of the campesinos to these drastic changes. They have their own worlds, their own norms....You've got to change relations

in the family, influencing within the family, duty to read and write. Even who teaches the young people. In some cases, if the professor was a young boy, parents did not allow close relations with their daughters as students. Even worse, if young women were invited to participate in the union meeting, it had to be held in the kitchen! Those were considered hostile attacks (Interview, 1/24/00).

Education is a key element of challenging patriarchal attitudes both in the public discourse and the private sphere of the family. Education was a central concern of both revolutions and an area where many achievements have been made. The extent to which that education actually challenged patriarchal notions of machismo is another question. However, access of young girls and women to education is a central component of any project of women's emancipation.

5.7 Education and Literacy for Women in Mozambique and Nicaragua

In 1975, only 7% of the Mozambican population had an education of 4th grade or higher, and 3% of the population was literate. FRELIMO made enormous strides in education in the literacy campaigns during the first years of the revolution, gains that were lost during the decade of the war with RENAMO:

Literacy Rates in Mozambique by Age and Gender

<u>Age</u>	<u>1980</u>		<u>1991</u>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
15-24	41%	83%	29%	51%
25-39	54%	91%	32%	70%
40-59	72%	96%	57%	88%

Source: *Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 1994, 22.

Clearly, the initial gains after the revolution have been lost over a decade of 'civil war.' Gulamo Taju and Ana Maria Montero spoke of the major gain of the 'massification' of education that took place under FRELIMO (Interview, 7/8/99). Today, many people argue

that while the *quality* of both education and health care has increased, its *accessibility* for the majority of the population has decreased. It is important to remember that the educated elite is still very small in Mozambique. Less than 1% of the Mozambican population today is university-educated.

Teresa Cruz e Silva believes “women are taking their space. The problem is literacy. You can only find good jobs with literacy.... Most of the population are women, in the rural areas. This is a poor agricultural country. Women are the producers of this country, they are mostly illiterate” (Interview, 7/1/99). Literacy and school enrollment rates today reveal the gendered nature of the incredible setbacks in social development Mozambicans have experienced during the 80s and 90s:

Adult Literacy Rate (1997): 40.5%

Women: 25.0%

Men: 56.7%

Source: Human Development Report, 1999.

Combined First/Second/Third Level Gross Enrollment Ratio (1997): 25%

Women: 20.0%

Men: 29.0%

Source: Human Development Report, 1999.

Manuel Tomé, Secretary General of FRELIMO, spoke about the importance of education for the empowerment of girls and women, and proclaimed the party’s commitment to it:

Our government has decided, it is FRELIMO policy, to mobilize women in the rural areas...to get families to send their children, especially their girls, to school..."Girls to the School" program. As you know, in rural areas, due to premature marriage, many girls stop going to school. With the onset of the menstrual period for women comes the possibility to marry. The results so far have been very good. You can see the impact in universities. Now, some faculties are 50/50 women and men (Interview, 7/29/99).

Generossa Cossa agrees that girls and boys need to be given more time to go to school and to do homework at home. At the level of primary school, girls and boys attend at a

50%/50% rate, but in secondary school, women's participation decreases. Cossa blames the gendered participation of girls in the reproductive labor of home and family for their lack of educational achievement:

Because of cooking, bringing water, all these activities, girls are not prepared the next day, they fail, don't do as well, and are condemned to marry early. Parents don't realize that when they ask their daughters to do home activities, they are taking time away from them to study. We have to sensitize families. NUMAC is working in that direction. The less time the girls spend cooking and doing housework, can prepare them for their future...to have a better husband! Mothers are not helping change things! Their daughters are expected to do the domestic work! We discuss this, sharing responsibilities in the family. I can assure you this issue was not even on the agenda. It is quite interesting. Men and boys have to be asked to do more work. Family Law is difficult. Men don't want to give up their power, and it is not only men. Women are used to having male power on top of them! (Interview, 7/14/99).

As was the case in Mozambique, women participated as the main actors in the health and literacy brigadistas in Nicaragua which were mobilized almost immediately after the Sandinista victory. The revolutionary achievements in the areas of education and health are well documented.⁷ Of the 60,000 teenagers that went out into the countryside to teach peasants to read and write, 60% were women (Zwerling, 90). From 1979 to 1981, illiteracy went from 50% to 13%! (Zwerling, 92). For María Elena Sequeira Rivas, of the Women's Secretariat of the ATC, two of the fundamental aspects of women's emancipation realized through this kind of participation have been women's expanded sense of self and willingness to defend their own rights (Interview, 1/27/00). One of the major obstacles to these goals, however, is decreasing literacy in the post-revolutionary era. Rivas points out that today in the countryside, illiteracy is at 40%; 3 of every 5 people are illiterate. Rivas also states that today, 30,000 women are affiliated with the Women's

⁷ See, for example, Thomas W. Walker. *Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino*; Boulder: Westview Press, 1981; Thomas Walker (ed) *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Nicaragua*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991; Katherine Isbester. *Still Fighting: The Nicaraguan Women's Movement, 1977-2000*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001.

Secretariat of the ATC, 60% of whom are single mothers who care for their children by themselves “because the father left” (Interview, 1/27/00). Of the 30,000, there are approximately 1,000 women who are leaders, most of whom did not finish primary or secondary schooling. Today, literacy and educational enrollment figures exist at between 60 and 65% of the population, with little to no disparity based on gender, definitely better than the situation in Mozambique:

Adult Literacy Rate (1997): 63.4%

Women: 63.3%

Men: 64.4%

Source: Human Development Report, 1999.

Combined First/Second/Third Level Gross Enrollment Ratio (1997): 63.0%

Women: 65.0%

Men: 61.0%

Source: Human Development Report, 1999.

Great strides were made in the area of educational enrollment and literacy during the revolutionary periods in both countries, gains that have been lost by the civil wars of the 1980s, neoliberal structural adjustment programs of the 1990s, and the gendered relationship of boys and girls to education. While each of these revolutions laid the groundwork for political and social development, a *gendered and cultural understanding* of what that development should look like *for women* was not adequately incorporated. The next chapter will address women’s participation in the economy and the extent to which it has been ‘liberating’ for women and men.

5.8 Conclusion

In our view, true emancipation for women cannot be brought about by formal equality only, even if it leads to increased opportunities in public life and equal rights on fundamental issues like the right to divorce. The notion of equality must also challenge the relations inside the family, which are based on differences. Introducing formal equality in a society where social and cultural norms are based on

differences can lead to what theoretical discussions in women's law describe as a situation of 'de jure equality and de facto discrimination'. This is the result when gender-neutral laws meet gender-specific realities (Berg and Gundersen, 268-269).

Tremendous gains were made by the Sandinista and FRELIMO revolutions in terms of political representation, equality before the law, education, and access to basic material resources for populations which had been denied the basic ability to rule and govern themselves for centuries due to dictatorial and colonial authorities. Gilma Yadira Tinoco, Director of the Comisión Interuniversitaria de Estudios de Género, cites women's participation in Mozambique in the crusade of education, the promotion to popular participation of women as leaders in the community, and women's access to certain political positions as three areas of mobilization which promoted women's empowerment in previously unrepresented spheres of life. Such gains made in both countries, particularly amidst foreign-funded 'civil wars,' cannot be understated. However, legal inaction in Mozambique, and cultural patriarchies in both Mozambique and Nicaragua, have seriously limited women's emancipation in the reproductive sphere of home and family. Challenging male superiority in the family (or in society) was not on the agenda of either revolution. Ideology and materiality are mutually reinforcing. Ideological campaigns to challenge machismo and male domination and encourage female opportunity and equality must accompany material changes in the sexual division of labor, access of girls and women to education, equal relations in marriage and family, equal power in political decision-making institutions, and equal access to social, political, economic and legal rights.

CHAPTER SIX

Challenging Old Myths, Creating New Ones: Military Participation, Economic Production and Women's Emancipation in Mozambique and Nicaragua

"We realized that women are not just important at the family level but also in the economic area. Women are present in the economy. They make a contribution to the wealth of the nation and to the GNP."

Sonia Agurto, FIDEG, Interview, Managua, 1/10/00

6.1 Introduction

The FRELIMO and Sandinista revolutions identified the emancipation of women with women's increased participation in the public worlds of military defense and economic production. As a result, there were tremendous achievements for women in terms of challenging myths of women's innate incapacity and access to the public spheres of defense and the market. However, each of these achievements comes with its own setback. Women's military participation served to challenge traditional gender roles as well as create a political culture of war which reinscribed patriarchal power relations. Women's increased participation in formal and informal economies led to women's increased consciousness about their own capabilities. However, it also led to an increased burden of labor for women that was not offset by men's increased participation in reproductive labor in the family economy. As a result, although women's power has increased in the family, it has taken the form of women's increased workload; the *gendered power relations* between women and men have not been significantly altered. In fact, the challenging of *half* of the sexual division of labor (women into production) has altered notions of men and women's roles (masculinity and femininity) in ways that have not necessarily been liberating for women or men. As long as gendered participation in the spheres of production and reproduction persists, women's emancipation will remain a utopian myth.

6.2 Challenging Myths of Women's Incapacity: Military Participation and Women's Emancipation

There are many perspectives about the impact of women's military roles on women's equality and emancipation. Many feminists argue that women's military involvement simply increases women's access to the masculine roles of patriarchy, oppression, and war. However, many others argue that the military participation of women during the war for liberation in Mozambique served as one of the most significant contributions not only to women's equality in Mozambique, but also to the ongoing global struggle for women's liberation. From the very beginning, a basic tenet of FRELIMO's ideology was the "fundamental interconnection between the total process of transformation and the liberation of women" (Urdang, 1989, 94.) Leith Mullings (1976) states that some of the most significant transformations in the status of women have occurred in Mozambique, "where the liberation of women was declared a major and necessary step in the process of social revolution" (256). Hafkin and Bay (1976) declare that many observers cited the newly independent regime in Mozambique as a model to be emulated in terms of their treatment of women (17).

How important is the active military involvement of women for the success of a socialist revolution? How about for the success of a feminist revolution? According to Américo Magaia, a prominent businessman today and FRELIMO militant who spent five years in jail under the Portuguese PIDE, women's military involvement in the anti-colonial war contributed to their process of emancipation:

In our traditional culture, women perform the household duties: children, cooking, etc. But with FRELIMO that changed. In the beginning, women did the food preparation and nursing, etc. As a progression, women participated militarily....They used women as carriers of weapons. They have the ability to do what the men

were doing...Because of traditions, women accepted their inferiority. But since they proved they could shoot and kill the enemy, then there was no difference...This was the beginning of their own liberation (Interview, 7/24/99).

Polly Gastor also argues that participation in the liberation struggle was emancipatory for women: "This was the thing to be doing. New kinds of relations between men and women emerged through a lot of opposition. In the Women's Detachment, women were trained alongside men in the same camp. Women were also being role models for girls. In the liberated areas, they would target girls to go to schools. The families needed convincing!" (Interview, 7/13/99). Initially, men in the military strongly opposed such participation by women. Many people I interviewed commented that the greatest resistance in the countryside was voiced about the fact that women in the military detachment were wearing pants! As Eulália Temba of WLSAMAZ remembers, "Women had to wear uniforms with pants. Women had always worn skirts. One of the challenges to masculine power was for women to wear pants, a uniform, and use weapons. Women participated in all of this" (Interview, 7/13/99).

Américo Magaia agrees, describing the difficulty FRELIMO had in creating the Women's Detachment due to gender, sexual and age dynamics within society: "FRELIMO had to convince the soldiers to share the front lines with girls...there was fear they would have private relations with them! And, in our traditional society, it is considered an insult for girls/women to wear trousers...so, it was not easy to recruit for or create the Destacamento Feminino¹. Wise people, elderly, age 70-80, were saying 'NO,

¹ See Chapter 3, Section 3.2, pp. 77-79 for a description of the origin and history of the Women's Detachment.

you are bringing disgrace to our country. Where have you seen women performing the same tasks as men...wearing trousers...' so, it was not easy" (Interview, 7/24/99).

In many ways, the presence of armed women in and of itself served as a critical form of political education to "dispel myths about the innate incapacity of women" (International Resource Exchange, 31). At the very least, it sparked a discourse about the differences and similarities between men and women. Manuel Tomé, current Secretary-General of the FRELIMO party, describes the debate which took place "trying to give women their adequate place in the armed struggle," culminating in the creation of the Destacamento Feminino in 1968: "There were very interesting discussions: women cannot do fighting versus women can do the same work. Of course, women and men are not biologically identical, but we are essentially the same. The Destacamento Feminino was a turning point for women in FRELIMO: not only were they taking care of children and old people, but they were also Freedom Fighters" (7/29/99). It appears as though in Mozambique, women's involvement in the revolution as freedom fighters helped challenge traditional notions of women's inferiority.² In addition, as Edda Collier stated, UN Gender Specialist in Maputo, it was women's military involvement in the war that gave them greater credibility in the early 90s when they started demanding peace (Interview, 7/30/99). The successful military leadership of women during the Nicaraguan revolution is well documented. Women directed the liberation of León, the first city that was taken. In addition, each of the takeovers of Managua, Massaya, Granada, and the

² Ali Mazrui (1973) emphasizes the importance of FRELIMO's use of women combatants through his definition of a new type of resistance which he feels has been implemented in Southern Africa, inspired by the Marxist tradition: androgynous warriorhood. Androgynous warriorhood is defined as "a principle which seeks to end the masculine monopoly of the skills of war" (Mazrui, 189). Mazrui asserts that the leftist regimes in Africa, particular in former Portuguese colonies, have seriously attempted to incorporate women militarily into their struggle. citing FRELIMO's use of women as early as the late 1960's (191).

Pacific, one of the main leaders was a woman. Ritha Fletes Zamora, Sandinista member of the National Assembly, argues that women's military participation helped "break through structures of oppression. We also showed them through practice. Doris Tijerino, Mónica Baltodano, Gladys Baez, Claudia Chamorro, all militarily showed they could do it" (Interview, 1/10/00). However, although women's military participation helped challenge myths of women's incapacity in Nicaragua, as it did in Mozambique, many women argue that the military structure of the revolution created a *political culture of war* within society which *reinscribed* patriarchal power relations. Moreover, while women's military leadership appears to have helped challenge women's and men's sense of women's gender role limitations, and was feminist in that sense, it does not seem to have helped establish a *feminist* consciousness of women's oppression or alter women's status and equality in other spheres.

6.2 Challenging Myths of Women's Incapacity: Women and Economic Production

One of the most often cited achievements of the Mozambican and Nicaraguan revolutions is that the participation of women in the public projects of military defense and economic production challenged pre-conceived myths about women's incapacity. The questioning of women's traditional behavior in the private sphere and welcoming of women's participation in the public sphere that did take place were the most revolutionary aspects of the liberation struggle for women. As Eulália Temba of WLSAMAZ states: "They started to permit the participation of women even in the armed struggle, breaking all stereotypes, all traditional ways: women as inferior, staying home, caring for children. There was very important social change in Mozambique in my

opinion. Not all FRELIMO members, particularly men, agreed with the political and economic decision-making regarding women” (Interview, 7/13/99).

However, despite the fact that women’s inherent inferiority was questioned, and women’s innate incapacity was rejected, women’s abilities to reveal and express their capacities were still inscribed by men. Listen to how Terezinha da Silva, Director of the Faculty of Social Sciences, describes the commitment of FRELIMO and Eduardo Mondlane to the emancipation of women:

Let's put women into development. Put women into the front of FRELIMO activities at the secondary level, working to carry guns, carry water, cook food. They asked the OMM to do the social activities. The tendency is to look at women as the property of men. (Interview, 7/23/99).

Women were permitted to carry water and cook food for the revolution. How revolutionary is this? Women were *already* carrying water and cooking food for the family, and thus for society, expected and not counted as an ‘economic contribution’ to production. Moreover, women carrying water and cooking food for the revolution does not challenge the pre-existent and continuing power relation between women and men in the sexual division of labor, particularly in the reproductive sphere of home and family.

Similarly, in the Nicaraguan case, María Elena Sequeira Rivas states that one of the most important achievements of the FSLN and AMNLAE has been the elimination of the myths of women’s incapacity: “With the FSLN and the Luisa Amanda Espinosa Movement, we have achieved a lot. Those myths were broken. For example, women not being at the war front, or women not being able to keep up with production. When the men were at war, women showed them - women kept up with production” (Interview, 1/27/00). Acknowledging that women can ‘keep up with production’ is only one aspect

of women's emancipation. It seems to me that what a *gendered* analysis of women's oppression will contribute differently than a class analysis is a reframing of the question: perhaps we should be asking *can men keep up with reproduction?* Rivas even has hanging up in her office at the ATC the slogan, "Cocina en huelga" (Kitchen on Strike!) Moreover, as Thelma Espinoza, Vice-Coordinator of AMNLAE, points out, women had already been 'keeping up with production':

In the beginning, in 1979 - the FSLN integrated and defended equal rights for women. However, what happened for a long time, until 1990, the ideas stayed in theory. Despite that, women gained space, showed everybody they could do things men could do. For example, work in the fields in production. In 1970, women were always working in the fields with children, coffee crops. The difference in the 1980s, all kinds of women participated in production, students, young people, men and women in the production of coffee. It was part of the culture - women always worked (Interview, 1/6/00).

It is important to note that in citing women's practical commitment to the revolution, Espinoza points out that women had always worked, before, during and after the revolution, even if what women did was not counted as 'work.'

Nonetheless, Sofia Montenegro describes how women's economic participation contributed to the development of women's consciousness, perhaps because for the first time, women's 'work' was counted as productive and necessary:

The war meant that hundreds of thousands of men went out to war, many women also went out to war, but basically it opened up a space for women to have the possibilities to run factories and to be the so-called rear guard in the economy, so that's where I think it was a big training school for many women, in which women discovered many capabilities and possibilities, of running a factory, being a leader, being a boss, and beginning to think not only in the small space of the home but to think that you were responsible for a territory, or being responsible for a national organization (Interview, 1/25/00).

Montenegro's account is very reminiscent of a liberal feminist notion that what is necessary for women's empowerment is women's entrance and participation in the public

spheres of the market, the state and civil society to enable women to gain the confidence and sense of self to know that they have the capacity to perform what had previously been deemed 'men's work'. This proved to be challenging in and of itself in Nicaragua to patriarchal notions of male and female roles in the public and private sphere:

That sort of thing widens your sense of commitment, on the one hand, and responsibility on the other, but at the same time is a challenge to yourself. And I think this was a very critical point because women discovered, we discovered, that we could do it alone. That we could run the damn thing while all these men were busy fighting....So, when men came back from the war they found out they were mutual strangers. Because they wanted the things to go back to the status quo before they went, and women obviously resisted, because that meant giving up their jobs, giving up participation, giving up whatever....This provoked, of course, many ruptures of couples, conflicts in the family and whatever. And it created a space and the need to discuss these types of things... (Interview, 1/25/00).

And yet, it still wasn't enough. The most transformative element of women's participation in economic production took place when men *came back* from the war.

Women's entrance into the public worlds of work, government and society, while *contributing* to feminist agency, did not *eliminate* the cultural underpinnings of patriarchal notions about appropriate behavior for women and men, especially in the family in terms of reproductive labor and gender violence in the home. According to Montenegro, women's consciousness for themselves emerged as women "began to see the inconsistency of the public speech with the private behavior" (Interview, 1/25/00). For example, the ability for women to rise within the structures of the party based on merit was theoretically there, "but if you were busy administering the crisis in the home, obviously the one who was going to have an ascent or a promotion or whatever was your husband, or your lover, but not you. Because he had someone doing all the work so that he had time" (Interview, 1/25/00). The perception generally accepted was that women

must not be rising in party structures because they were incapable, rather than because “we had the worst part of the deal” (Interview, 1/25/00).

Undoubtedly, the process of military and public economic participation was, in and of itself, an achievement for Nicaraguan and Mozambican women. When asked about their experiences in the two revolutions, most women expressed gaining a sense of self-efficacy and confidence, overcoming “domestic isolation,” and discovering common problems shared with other women through communication in the public sphere. However, contrary to the Marxist-Leninist philosophies of FRELIMO and the FSLN, women’s participation in economic production and military defense was not a *sufficient* condition for their emancipation; it was a necessary step for the development of women’s gendered consciousness. In any movement based on the formation of a collective identity, changing attitudes, and personal as well as political transformation, participation is a necessary component of consciousness.

6.4 Women, the Economy, and the Family: The Intersection of Production and Reproduction in Mozambique and Nicaragua

With Mozambique’s independence in 1975, women became one of the main issues on the government’s agenda, to such an extent that the effective participation of women in society was considered an essential condition for the triumph of the revolution. In other words, implicitly or explicitly, the transformation of society required fundamental changes in relations between men and women, and in the sexual division of labor, a source of inequality between the sexes and which fomented discrimination against a woman as ‘the slaves’ slave’. The policies of the FRELIMO government encouraged the *real participation of women in the economy*¹, improvements in their education and precarious state of health and de jure and de facto participation in political decision-making bodies [emphasis mine] (WLSAMOZ, 1992, xv).

The revolutionary policies of the FRELIMO government were designed to emancipate women through their ‘real participation’ in the economy. With 96% of

women engaging in subsistence agriculture to feed their families and sell their goods in informal markets, weren't they already 'really' participating in the Mozambican economy? Perhaps the most important sentence for the purposes of my study is what appears in the footnote contained in the above quoted passage: "Although this position was correct, it ignored the fact that, as the main food producers in the family sector, women were already participating actively in the country's economy" (WLSAMAZ, 1992, xv). Who is considered a part of the 'economically active population' will determine who gets to help shape public policy in the sphere of the economy, in whose interests such policy will be shaped, and who will benefit.

Women's unpaid subsistence agriculture, family farming, and all aspects of labor in the reproductive sphere are usually *not* considered active contributions to the 'productive' economy. Despite their rhetorical commitment to women's emancipation, both FRELIMO and the FSLN focused on production at the expense of reproduction without seeing the intersection of the two spheres from the perspective of women. The emphasis on large-scale state farms, the devaluation of family farming, the gendered access to paid agricultural labor on state farms and cooperative membership, and the perpetuation of the sexual division of labor in the sphere of reproduction all reveal the limitations of a productivist, economistic model of emancipation that does not consider the reality of the intersections of these spheres in women's lives.

Throughout Africa, women are solely responsible for the maintenance of the households and are the primary producers of food crops. Women contribute an estimated three-quarters of the labor required to produce the food consumed in Africa (Lele, 1991, 46). According to the FAO, women provide 90% of the labor for processing food crops

and providing water and fuelwood for the household; 80% of the labor in food storage and travel from farm to village; 90% of the work in hoeing and weeding and 60% of the work in harvesting and marketing (Lele, 1991, 50). And yet women are not usually considered part of the 'economically active population' unless their work involves the transaction of money. Thus, women have been exploited on the basis of their contributions both to production and to reproduction. While men in Mozambique tend to be cash croppers or migrant laborers working for a low wage, the majority of women are food croppers engaging in unpaid subsistence farming "not only for themselves and their dependents but the male workers as well" (Sheldon, 1991, 576). In addition, women are responsible for all the unpaid household labor and childrearing, constituting their dual labor burden. A restructuring of the *reproductive* sphere did not accompany FRELIMO's plan for women's emancipation, which focused exclusively on the increased participation of women in the *productive* economy.

The 'Rural Transformation' Plans of FRELIMO and the FSLN

When FRELIMO came to power in Mozambique in 1975, the rural transformation of Mozambique was cited as the country's most important priority of development (Urdang, 1989, 107). As 90% of the population lived and worked in rural areas, it is easy to understand why agriculture was seen as the key to the future of Mozambique (Davidson, 228). Most of the agricultural production occurring at this time was family farming, and most of it was done by women. The hope of female family farmers was always to produce not only enough to feed their households, but also a surplus to sell so that other necessities, including soap, cooking oil, and capulanas (hoes) could be bought (Urdang, 1989, 59).

One of the visions of FRELIMO was the collectivization of agriculture, seen as a means of linking the liberation of women with socialist production. During the *Second Conference of the Organization of Mozambican Women* held in 1976, a text was prepared which described FRELIMO's ideology and strategy for the rural transformation of the countryside:

Reduced to an object of pleasure, a reproducer of children, a producer of food for the family's subsistence, an unsalaried worker in the service of the "head of the family," the woman peasant at the same time has a very great revolutionary potential from which the Mozambican revolution cannot be cut off. This observation is based on the objective reality that our principal activity is agriculture and that most agriculture is for subsistence and is done by women. The revolution must aim at transforming this agriculture into organized, planned, collective agriculture. Mozambican women not only cannot remain outside this process, but they must be its principal agents and beneficiaries (Urdang, 1989, 59).

This statement by the FRELIMO leadership strongly suggests an understanding of the plight of Mozambican women farmers as well as a commitment to the transformation of the countryside. The plan itself was divided into three sectors: state farms, agricultural cooperatives and family farms. Communal villages were also planned to support the cooperatives and family farms, while providing the labor for the state farms. Communal villages were established with the government's promise of new services, for "only when people lived in concentrated settlements, the government argued, could it begin to provide services such as water pumps, schools, clinics; to do so for a widely dispersed population was impossible" (Urdang, 114).

One of the problems expressed by many of the younger women in the cooperative was that, unlike many in Nicaragua, it did not have a *creche* (childcare center). It is important to note that while a *community* attitude was formed around agricultural

production, childcare responsibilities as well as household maintenance remained largely in the hands of individual female members. While she feels FRELIMO made "an admirable effort to restructure gender relations of production," Davidson (1988) concludes that the restructuring of reproductive tasks was not achieved, thus leaving Mozambican peasant women with a dual labor burden (244). Moreover, despite women's access to land, they often did not have access to the *technology* of the cooperatives, including such equipment as the tractor and irrigation pump, which were controlled by men. Women in both Mozambique and Nicaragua identified use of the tractor as a tool of sexual blackmail.

State farms have been the least successful creation of FRELIMO's rural transformation plan. Urdang (1989) states that despite the fact that they received the largest allocation of resources, they were "badly conceived and never viable" (26). Agricultural investments from 1977-1983 reveal FRELIMO's large-scale, state farming bias, and as a result, their lack of attention to women's *gender* interests in the productive sphere: State Sector - 90%; Cooperatives - 2%; Small Scale Family Farming - Virtually Nothing (Bowen, 2000). The most predominant criticism of the rural development project, in general, and of state farms in particular, is that women, regarded as the "principal agents and beneficiaries," were not consulted at all during the planning and implementation process:

In Mozambique, one must ask whether the outcome could have been different, at least to some degree, if the government had gone to the women themselves before embarking on their program of rural transformation. It is fairly certain that they would have insisted on strong state support for family production rather than pumping limited resources into state farms (Urdang, 27).

Urdang (1989) concludes that if women had been consulted, Mozambique could have shifted to family farming eight years earlier, and been better able to feed the population (26). Instead, the FRELIMO government, just as under colonization, focused more on cash cropping than on ensuring food for daily consumption. Moreover, the focus on state farms perpetuated a gendered access to the money economy. Paid work on state farms was predominantly the work of men for two reasons: state farms offered virtually the only pay packet for agricultural workers, and driving tractors, an essential part of the job description, had always been considered "men's work" (Urdang, 91-104). Thus, a gendered division of labor persisted even within the 'revolutionary' rural development plan. Work for pay (production) is work for men; work for free (reproduction) is work for women.

Women's equal economic status was officially codified in the Mozambican Constitution, in which Article 17 states that "women and men have equal rights and duties in the economic sphere." Several important laws have been passed to grant women rights in the economic sphere. The Law of Sixty Days passed in 1976 permits pregnant women workers 60 days paid leave. Article 228 of the Rural Labor Code grants all women workers the right to miss two days of work per month without losing any salary. And in 1981-82, the Labor Act was passed which enacted legislation to protect women from job and wage discrimination.

And yet, women's participation in the paid sphere of the market is very low in Mozambique, while their participation in unpaid reproductive labor is enormous. In Mozambique in 1990, women accounted for 1% of wage laborers, 1% of women worked in co-operatives, 8% worked in industry and 19% worked in the commercial sector (*Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 1994, 29). In 1990, the percentage of women working in the agricultural sector was 96.56%, yet only 1% of women worked in cooperatives (*Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 1994, 29). This means that the other 95% of women working in the agricultural sector were engaged in the unpaid

reproductive labor of family farming. Women “are the main people directly responsible for food production, and through their domestic work ensure the reproduction of the labor force. Due to their excessive workloads and low educational levels, women continue to occupy the worst paid jobs and to have difficulty in obtaining formal employment. 91.6% of women are in the agricultural sector” (*Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 1994, 29).

Women's participation in cooperatives in Nicaragua was also low, but was higher than in Mozambique. In 1982, 6% of cooperative members were women, and in 1990, 12% (CIERA). Despite the fact that women made up the majority of the workforce on many cooperatives, only 50% of co-operatives contained women members (Collinson, 51). Most women continued to work as seasonal laborers and thus have been unable to receive the benefits of full co-operative membership, including taking part in the decision-making process, and receiving a share of the profits and technical training. The Sandinista investment in agricultural development generally reveals the same pattern as in Mozambique, with large-scale state farming projects receiving the largest investment and family farming receiving the smallest, yet with more of an investment in the family sector: State Farms - 50%; Cooperatives - 30%; Private Ownership/Family Farming - 20%. Private property was absorbed and cooperatives boomed the first five years after the revolution. After the fall of the Somoza dictatorship, the FSLN nationalized all of the land owned by Somoza and his friends, one-third of the land in Nicaragua. This land was turned into both agricultural co-operatives as well as state farms. In addition, due to the 1981 Agrarian Reform Law, a legal system was set up whereby judges could hear cases of peasants who wanted to expropriate land to form co-operatives.

There were two types of agricultural co-operatives in Nicaragua. The CAS (Sandinista Agricultural Co-operative) is a completely cooperative venture where the land is farmed collectively. The CCS (Credit Service Cooperative) consists of families who farm their own plots and only share resources and credits. Among most co-operative members, the CCS is more popular. However, it is interesting to note that when women

formed and participated in co-operatives, they preferred the CAS, believing that the CCS structure would lead to "individualism" (Collinson, 50). Cooperatives constituted 13% of the land area in the 80s, but only 6% of land area in the 90s (Interview, 1/24/00). After the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, the distribution of land has changed dramatically, as the holdings of both small and medium producers and state owned public areas have decreased while large privately owned land has increased:

	1990	1991	1992
Small and Medium Producers	56.0	40.0	29.0
Large Private Land	31.0	56.0	71.0
Popular Public Area (APP)	13.0	4.0	0.0

Source: Banco Central de Nicaragua, 1994, cited in Cynthia Chavez Metoyer (1997), p. 125.

According to Maria Rosa Renzi, the Sandinista Agrarian Reform Program redistributed 2,000,000 manzana (city blocks) to campesinos. The number of private landowners increased, accompanied by a decrease in prices and lower wages, which created an incentive for the opening of the black market. The system was modeled on 80% state ownership" (Interview, 1/24/00).

Why haven't the benefits of cooperative farming for women been as far-reaching as expected in either Mozambique or Nicaragua? For the most part, the answer lies in the reproductive sphere of the home and family, and the continuation of the sexual division of labor. Most women have children who they need to care for and cannot leave alone for an eight-hour work day. In addition, men's attitudes and the legacy of machismo are also an important factor impeding women's full membership in cooperatives. In Nicaragua, because women's "contribution to productive work has been so undervalued in the past, many men still have not even considered the possibility of women becoming full cooperative members" (Collinson, 51). As Cynthia Chavez Metoyer (1997) points out,

"the Law of Cooperatives provided the *legal grounds* for women's incorporation and leadership in production cooperatives under the same conditions as their male counterparts" [emphasis mine] (120). However, to what extent were the social, cultural and personal grounds laid for women's equal incorporation and leadership in cooperatives? Data compiled by Chavez Metoyer (1997) reveals that women's public economic and political responsibilities increased, while they continued to be responsible for both production and reproduction in the household: "In short, the outcomes of the Sandinista agrarian reform failed to accomplish the original intentions to integrate women into the cooperative movement because structural and ideological barriers such as the subvaluation of women's work, the 'double day' workload, and historically constructed norms of the gender division of labor were not eliminated" (123). With the Sandinista and FRELIMO emphasis on large-scale state farms, the devaluation of family farming, the gendered access to paid agricultural labor, and the perpetuation of the sexual division of labor in the sphere of reproduction, neither country fully explored the possibilities for women within a communal or an individualized family farming context.

A very interesting observation appears from analyzing GDP and labor force participation by sector in each country. In both Mozambique and Nicaragua, agriculture accounts for 34% of GDP; the service sector accounts for the largest percentage of GDP in each country (48% in Mozambique and 44% in Nicaragua), while industry accounts for the least (18% and 22%, respectively) (World Factbook, 2000). In Nicaragua, there is a close approximation between the input of labor force participation and the output of GDP: 43% of the population works in services, 42% in agriculture and 15% in industry. However, in Mozambique, there is a huge discrepancy between the agricultural input of

the population and the percentage agricultural output in terms of GDP: 81% of the labor force participates in agriculture, 13% of the population works in services while 6 % works in industry. This means that while **81%** of the population is working in agricultural production, only **34%** of what is produced contributes to the GDP. This is explained predominantly by the fact that most of the agricultural production performed in Mozambique is subsistence based family farming, performed by women for no wage, and therefore invisible, 'unproductive' and not counted in the GDP. It also means that the input of the agricultural laboring population is not manifested in sufficient output for the population. Investments need to be made in terms of infrastructure and industry, such as processing raw materials rather than exporting them out of the country, so that the balance of trade can be altered and more of the country's resources can be turned into wealth *inside* the country.³

The Land Campaign and the New Land Law in Mozambique: Potentials and Limitations for Women's Emancipation

The most promising recent achievement for women in agricultural labor in Mozambique is the passage of the New Land Law in 1997. While the Land Law establishes new and innovative precedent for women's continued *access* to land, it does not address women's *disproportionate contribution* to production and reproduction, and therefore leaves unchallenged the gendered relationship of women and men to the land.

José Negrão is National Coordinator of the Terra Campanha (Land Campaign), a movement of over 200 organizations, including NGOs, grassroots organizations and churches that have been the strongest advocates in the successful passage of the New

³ The position of the IMF and the World Bank preventing the increased manufacturing of cashews in Mozambique has been well documented. See Joseph Hanlon (1996), Peace Without Profits: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding in Mozambique and the 1999 United Nations Mozambique Country Report.

Land Law. The members of the Land Campaign have identified tenant security as the real problem for peasant producers, predominantly women, in Mozambique. While the World Bank proposed issuing land titles for each single family, and government land policy since 1995 has focused on small shareholders and private enterprise, the Land Campaign concluded that neither approach was right.

Despite the fact that women have been working the land for centuries, women have not always *owned* the land, which has usually been passed down through the husband's lineage in patrilineal societies and through male relatives of women within matrilineal societies. Incorporating a gendered perspective, advocates for the New Land Law demanded that land ownership be granted to the 'individual' or a 'community,' not to the 'head of household' or the 'family,' both of which have historically, through customary and civil law, placed land rights in the hands of men. Women, as the predominant agricultural producers in Mozambique, have finally become the focus of the policies on land tenure: "This provides more decision-making of what she is: an individual and often member of a community, not a family. We are very proud of this" (Interview, 7/19/99). Moreover, the law is specifically defined in terms of 'individuals' and not 'heads of household' which have always legally been understood to be male.

In addition, Negrão and the Land Campaign argued that, "If we want to solve the problem of tenant security, we must establish a right of occupation based on oral testimony" (Interview, 7/19/99). As a result, the New Land Law allows for two very unique aspects of land ownership: community ownership, and rights to ownership expressed through oral testimony. Because women in the field seldom owned property, the establishment the recognition of oral testimony is particularly important. Today,

Mozambique is the only country in Africa in which the rights of occupation can be asserted through oral testimony.

Rachel Waterhouse, Coordinator of the Program on Land Rights and Gender Equity for Action Aid, worked on a case study on gender relations and land tenure in a village in Maputo Province, conducting research and civic education around the Land Law as it was being revised. Issues such as community versus individual land titles and women's representation were discussed. According to the Old Land Law of 1979, peasant farmers occupying the land had the rights to use the land. It was hard to have written evidence during the adjudication process. In the civil code, written evidence overrides oral evidence. In 1986, regulations were passed to apply the title and deed to the use and benefit of the land: "It was practically free, but you had to have the land demarcated and mapped out. To have it shown on the map was expensive. Only the government did it, because these were times of war. So, the question was raised, 'How can we offer people more security? How can we better protect the rights of peasant farmers?'" (Interview, 7/21/99). One of the most complicated aspects of the New Land Law is the regulations for community titles. Practitioners are still working on the technical process of how the community will be represented, particularly when men tend to migrate, and women stay and work the land.

Communal ownership and oral testimony provide very interesting possibilities for ensuring women's reproductive and productive capacities through land tenure, access and security. Women engage primarily in family farming with the intention of feeding their families and producing enough surplus to sell their food crops in the informal market. The survival of women and their families depends upon women's access to land. Negrão

and the Land Campaign are attempting to link women's family farming with Mozambique's development by challenging the typical assumption that development equals commercial production:

We have to transform subsistence versus commercial. Why do we take for granted that it is like this? I am questioning the assumptions of land issues, development and other concepts of the North.... There is no development without savings and investment of savings in the country. During the socialist years, labor went to state farms and we saw growth without development....Our point in the Campaign is to mobilize the savings of the rich guy and get him to invest it in the small owner. Both cotton and cashews are produced by small holders....We must increase the manufacturing done in Mozambique with the small holder through family farming (Interview, 7/19/99).

The Land Campaign appears to understand that women and small landholders are the predominant producers in Mozambique, and that for development to take place, they must be the beneficiaries of economic investment. The sovereignty of Mozambique's development decisions, and the ability of women to have access to land, labor and capital in the processes of production and reproduction, are intricately linked.

Despite the Land Campaign's positive assessment of the New Land Law, the extent to which the law will actually benefit women requires future research. In many ways, the Law highlights the possibilities *and* limitations for women's empowerment in agricultural Mozambique. Land tenure, access and security are all necessary conditions for protecting women's reproductive capabilities in providing for their families, as well as their productive capacities to sell their crops for a wage in the money economy. But they are not sufficient conditions. Men and women's gendered participation in productive and reproductive labor continues to determine the differential experience of freedom and exploitation within which men and women live, particularly in the agricultural economies

of the developing world. As Carla Braga points out, land access is not the only important element of women's emancipation: "Women [already] have access to land in different degrees: "If not, they couldn't be the main producers in Mozambique!" (Interview, 7/15/99). Braga shares my concern that women's excessive workload in the spheres of production and reproduction continues to persist, ignored by struggles for land security: "It doesn't affect them in terms of access. There is a shortage of manpower! *Access is not the problem, but too much work for women!*" [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/15/99). Once again, the gendered nature of the division of productive and reproductive labor remains an unanalyzed component of the equality of women and men and persists as an absent (yet essential) element of women's emancipation.

6.5 Gendered Participation in Productive and Reproductive Labor

It is widely accepted among scholars that a sexual division of labour operates in both the market and in subsistence production and reproduction. Men are typically protected from most domestic responsibilities because sexual divisions of labour, combined with other socially constructed hierarchies, make domestic reproduction and production biological extensions of women....I am not suggesting that divisions of labour by sex are inherently exploitative. Yet they become so when they establish hierarchies of responsibilities that value 'masculine work' over 'feminine work' (Metoyer, 126-127).

Cynthia Chavez Metoyer (1997) not only states well the relationship between production and reproduction within the sexual division of labor globally, but she also identifies the locus of exploitation within that sexual division of labor: valuing men's work over women's work. In both revolutionary contexts that I have studied, women's emancipation was understood as women's participation in previously designated "men's work" - defense and production outside the home; there was no comparable encouragement of men to participate in "women's work" nor any *other* understanding of

what women's emancipation might constitute. This is clearly a result of the unequal value attached to "men and women's work" and the economistic framing of emancipation. With few exceptions, women 'elevated' themselves to perform men's work, while men refused to 'lower' themselves to perform the work done by women. This has resulted in: (1) an undue burden of labor in the lives of women, and (2) a *questioning* of the role of men. As women engage more and more in the monetized economies of informal markets and continue to perform the unpaid family farming, gendered notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are challenged in ways that are not necessarily 'emancipatory' for women or men.

Javier Matus Lazo of CENADE argues, "the thing is not to give more work to women. Also, give women's work to men! Women go to meetings, go to church, work with their families; men work half a day, and then lay down in the hammock!" (Interview, 1/19/00). Irma Ortega agrees with this gendered analysis of the productive and reproductive spheres of labor in Nicaragua, adding the disadvantages that continued for women even when they entered the public sphere of production: "Even bringing women into the public sphere had disadvantages: lesser salaries, limited training, male bosses, sex-segregated labor. As for men in the reproductive sphere - people will say men were at war. It is a way to cover up that argument. Men didn't take up those responsibilities here. In the rural areas, even though both do the same job category, the man is seen as a "producer", the woman as an "assistant" to him! (Interview, 1/18/00). Sonia Agurto of FIDEG, a research NGO founded in 1990 studying micro and macro economics in Nicaragua, reminds us that even what men and women define as 'work' is a gendered construction, often shaped by the category of ownership: "Through the whole

history women have been doing productive work. But for rural women, the man owns land. She works sometimes more than he. But when asked, 'Do you work?' the answer she gives is, 'No. I am just a housewife. I do not work.' So, at the time of signing economic policies, women were not given credit" (Interview, 1/10/00).

In a 1997 study by FIDEG, "La Esperanza Tiene Nombre de Mujer: La Economía Nicaraguense Desde Una Perspectiva de Género" (Hope Has Women's Name: The Nicaraguan Economy from a Gender Perspective), the categories of productive and reproductive space are used throughout to examine the inequalities that exist between women and men in both urban and rural sectors. Here is a sample chart tabulating the comparative distribution of time spent working by men and women:

**Distribution of Time of People in Urban and Rural Sectors at the National Level
by Sex in Productive and Reproductive Spaces (Structural Percentage)**

	Ages 15-19				Ages 20-24			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Productive Space	57.95	42.05	82.01	17.99	51.39	48.61	42.05	57.95
Reproductive Space	9.34	90.66	19.03	80.97	8.56	91.44	19.30	80.70
	Ages 45-65				Over 65			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Productive Space	47.36	52.64	82.22	17.78	54.20	45.80	86.05	13.95
Reproductive Space	9.91	90.09	23.52	76.48	15.62	84.38	35.02	64.98

Source: María Rosa Renzi and Sonia Agurto, *La Esperanza Tiene Nombre de Mujer: La Economía Nicaraguense Desde Una Perspectiva de Género*, 202-203.

It is evident overall that women spend much more time than men engaging in work in the reproductive sphere, and men spend much more time than women engaging in work in

the productive sphere. What is perhaps even more striking is that when women and men are working comparably in the productive sphere (urban, age 20-24: 49%/51%), *and even when women are engaging more in productive labor than men*, (rural, age 20-24: 58%/42%; urban, age 45-65: 53%/47%) women are *still* performing more of the reproductive labor, 80% to 20% in rural areas and 90% to 10% in urban areas. It is this phenomenon that results in the double and triple burden of labor for women, the lower wages and decreased economic capacity of women, and the continued cultural expectations of women's work in the home that perpetuates women's cultural and material oppression in the family. The following chart on time allocation in the life of a rural woman, her daughters, her husband, and her sons in Nicaragua reveals the gendered division of labor in the family that persisted even during the 'idealistic' early years of the revolution:

Time Allocation of One Day in the Life of a Rural Woman

	Women	Daughters	Husband/Sons
Household Maintenance	9 hrs 38 min.	6 hrs 39 min.	50 min.
Cooking/ Dishwashing	6 hrs 43 min.	2 hrs 2 min.	-
Collect Water	35 min.	5 min.	-
Fetch Wood	-	20 min.	35 min.
Cleaning	5 min.	7 min.	-
Sewing	10 min.	2 hrs 35 min.	-
Errands	-	55 min.	-
Childcare	2 hrs 5 min.	35 min.	15 min.
TOTAL	19 hrs 16 min.	13 hrs 18 min.	1 hr 40 min.

Source: Martha Luz Padilla and Nyurka Perez, 'La Mujer SemiProletaria,' CIERA, 1981, Cited in Cynthia Chavez Metoyer, p 123 (1997).

The experience for women appears to be the same in Mozambique. According to *The Situation of Women in Mozambique*, a report compiled by Women's NGOs to The African Preparatory Conference for Beijing in Senegal in 1994 for the NGO

Forum in Beijing in 1995:

Life is difficult for women in Mozambique, a consequence of such factors as their high illiteracy rates, precarious health, excessive workload and minuscule degree of participation in decision-taking bodies. Nonetheless, women continue to be the main producers of food and survival strategies, even though this role is not socially recognized and men retain the effective administration of the income produced by women on the formal and/or informal labor markets (9).

The report continues by stating that the traditional image of women remains “as the ‘doer’ of domestic tasks, always subordinate to or dependent upon the man, head of the family, who works outside the home” (9, 15). Terezinha Da Silva, Director of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Eduardo Mondlane University, asserts that the division of labor between production and reproduction is about the control of resources, what is counted as ‘work’ and who is considered as contributing to development:

The problems are of inequality and power in the family. Economic work is done even inside the household, work as a productive role, yet the domestic sphere is not considered part of a productive role, and thus is not considered work.... We need statistics on how much work is done in the family and not taken into account in the national census because it is not considered ‘work’.... FRELIMO now doesn't take this into account (Interview, 7/23/99).

The divisions of inside/outside, private/public, household/market and the informal/formal economy also become blurred when women are selling vegetables from their ‘subsistence’ agricultural production on family farms on streets and highways in order to try to subsist. In an era of globalization, ‘subsistence agriculture’ requires sale in the market economy in order to truly mean subsistence.

Carmen Gamilo, a woman from Beira who works at the OMM Day Care facility, described the goals she has for herself as a woman: “I want to develop, to grow, to show I'm a person, too. I'm not born just to be a toy for someone else. I'm a person, too, and I can build anything and do anything a man can do (Interview, 7/26/99). One of the obstacles Gamilo cites to women's growth and development is when “a woman wants to

work, has no place to work, no jobs...she can sew, and then sell when she is finished, but even if she knows how to sew, who will buy? It is easier to sell in the informal market” (Interview, 7/26/99). But what happens when a woman does enter the formal or informal labor market? Is there a change in the division of reproductive labor between the husband and the wife? Gamilo comments:

Now, a woman can get out of the role of a man and show that she exists. We heard our mothers only stayed home. We have a voice now. We are active now. We work outside the home. Some men help. Some men say, you decided to work, you need to know that the work at home is also yours. Some women get up at 4:00 a.m. Today, a woman needs to work. A man's money is not enough. She must work to help him (Interview, 7/26/99).

Ergo the problem. A woman needs to work for income in the informal or formal market as a survival strategy because, even if her husband does work for pay, it is not enough to survive. And yet, “she needs to know that the work in the home is also hers” (Interview, 7/26/99).

Women’s Participation in the Informal Economy

The Women and Law in Southern Africa, Mozambique (WLSAMAZ) Research Project published the results of a study in 1992 conducted in various urban and rural suburbs of Maputo on *Maintenance Rights and Women in Mozambique* which address these very issues of women's participation in paid, unpaid, formal and informal labor. Maintenance rights were defined for the purposes of the study as “the laws which deliberate on the responsibilities of parents to support their children, and on the duty and right of spouses to provide each other with mutual financial and material assistance during and after marriage” (WLSAMAZ, 1992, 1). It is important to note that one of the explicitly stated conceptions framing this study was “a feminist perspective, defending women’s rights within the context of gender relations” revealing the willingness of some of the newer NGOs to identify with feminism (WLSAMAZ, 1992, xvii).

The target population consisted of women with maintenance problems and eligible to exercise their maintenance rights. Using marital status as the point of reference, six groups of women were identified from the sample: single mothers (9.4%), married women (30.3%), separated women (10.4%), divorced women (2.7%), abandoned women (4.6%) and widows (26.7%). The target population consisted of: women between the ages of 20 and 29, and 30 and 39; households of women and children with an average of eight members in urban areas and six in rural areas; 2/3 women heads of household; 50% of women with no formal education; US\$ 80 per capita family income (WLSAMOZ, 1992, xx). The study determined that “the most important activities of the target group, apart from domestic work, are in the informal economic sector. They include buying and selling goods and domestic production for sale. Both take place in the informal market, in the so called ‘dumba-nengues’....90% are unable to purchase sufficient food for a diet providing 900 calories per day (WLSAMOZ, 1992, xx).

‘Dumba-Nengue’ is a southern Mozambican proverb which means that “you have to trust your feet” (Magaia, 2). In her account of the RENAMO war in Mozambique, Lina Magaia explains how “most of the peasants abandoned their fertile lands and profitable cashew trees after the MNR [RENAMO] plundered their fields, burned their homes, press-ganged their sons, and raped their wives and daughters. Those who ‘trusted their feet’ survived, but the areas to which they fled were less hospitable so that today they live in poverty” (Isaacman Introduction, 2). Today, dumba-nengue refers both to the notion that you have to keep on running to survive, and to the actual informal markets women have created to do just that.

How have women in Mozambique been able to continue to perform all of the reproductive labor of the home and family, including family farming, as well as create income-generating survival strategies in the informal market? According to Maria Alvero, OMM Nampula:

The OMM does sensitivity training for men, to tell the man he must help her, because she will be more tired. With the old people, this is hard; with the young people, if both go outside and leave Mozambique to study or work, he will be more willing to help...if both stay here, he will be less willing (Interview, 7/28/99).

The OMM has also established Interest Circles for women to come together at the local level and talk about their needs and concerns. The topics of conversation often involve “sewing and the domestic economy...We teach women cooking, caring for children, health, nutrition, education” (Interview, 7/28/99). There are four interest circles in Nampula City which meet two times a week. About twenty women attend each meeting. OMM activists often go out to other areas, to people’s houses or to small farms, teaching in the home. According to Alvero, issues of women’s work in the sphere of reproductive labor emerge as the most important problems women face:

One of the biggest problems is that women complain they work harder, even when both are not working. She wakes up early, tends to the house, cooking, goes to the small farm, still carries the children, baby on back...That's why we do sensitivity training and theatre - to show how things work! To change minds! (Interview, 7/28/99).

Ivete Mboa also describes the double burden of labor that results from women’s unequal responsibilities in the reproductive sphere: “Women suffer twice. Even women who exercise [the use of] money and have a job to work, these women have to go home and do the domestic activities. Men do nothing at home! Women do both!” (Interview, 7/7/99). Her analysis comes with some optimism and hope, however, that things begin to change when men experience the reality of women’s lives:

Many men in society are beginning to understand. For example, I know a couple where the woman had an accident and was close to death. The man began to work at home, and he began to understand how important his wife was. Now, he is a good man completely! Of course, women are the mothers, so we have to change their minds. The sons of today are the husbands of tomorrow (Interview, 7/7/99).

Hermengilda Thumbó is less optimistic: “The attitudes of men are not very different, not very improved. Now, we’re losing this small gain. Men now want women to gain good

income and also take care of the children and the home. We are going back (Interview, 7/23/99). When I asked Thumbo if more men were participating in reproductive labor, she replied that it was a little more, but not much, and that "Women are fundamental to this change, how we raise our children, our sons and daughters... (Interview, 7/23/99). Ana Maria Montero agrees, describing how the gendered division of labor in the home is reproduced in the minds of sons who watch their fathers' lack of participation in the domestic sphere:

Now I'm divorced. During the time I lived with my husband, it was difficult to change the thinking of the child if different people are in the home. I was married, my husband did not help me with the house activities. My son saw that, and learned that it is not necessary to do that. My son later saw his nephew washing dishes and asked his nephew, "Why are you washing the dishes?" His answer: because all the people in the house need to do the same (Interview, 7/8/99).

Mboa, Thumbo and Montero remind us that one way women can change the minds of men is through feminist parenting: not reinscribing the sexual division of labor in the tasks we provide our sons and daughters. Sérgio Viera disagrees. He argues that change is more likely to occur through practical necessity:

It is still the attitude of men that housework is for women, but changes do occur - not because you wish because you are forced to - my wife is working and I am working. Practical and immediate. It is not because of a philosophical belief but because of a practical necessity....Law cannot be completely separate from reality. When will domestic work disappear? With development. Economic development: mechanization, better qualification, not by law (Interview, 7/15/99).

And yet, if domestic work has not 'disappeared' in the most advanced, economically developed industrial countries in the world, how likely is Viera's hypothesis? Rather than theorize about the 'disappearance' of domestic labor in the future, revolutionary leaders would do better to encourage men to share the burden of reproductive labor with women in the present.

The History of Male Migrant Labor and the Sexual Division of Labor

The history of male migrant labor in Mozambique has often been cited as a major contributing factor to the sexual division of labor. In fact, migrant labor has both *contributed to* and *challenged* the sexual division of labor in Mozambique. Men's migration to urban areas to look for work has left women in the rural areas tending to the fields and engaging in all of the reproductive labor of the family economy. However, it has also caused women to rise to the level of head of household, pursue income-generating survival strategies, and assert decision-making power through the family. Again, although women's experiences in the public sphere of paid work contribute to women's consciousness, men's consciousness and women's emancipation require men's participation in reproduction.

Sérgio Viera cited the historical situation of male migrant labor in Mozambique as part of the colonial context that led to the division of labor existing in Mozambique today:

The historical process of copper mining created monetary income and migratory labor in the Southern region of Africa (Zambia, Zaire, Congo, Rhodesia, South Africa). Agriculture was with women, including the food crops responsibility. Then, the economy started to change. More women got involved in monetarized employment. Usually, the salaries of women were less than that of men (Interview, 7/15/99).

Viera goes on to argue that the categories of paid and unpaid labor are urbanized, industrialized, monetarized and, therefore, not as relevant in an agricultural economy.

Rachel Waterhouse, on the other hand, uses the same context of the history of male migrant labor in cities and women's agricultural labor on farms to show precisely *how* relevant and interconnected the categories of paid and unpaid labor are in Mozambique:

Today, there is a lot more wealth to be had, but there is a larger gap between the haves and the have nots. There is massive unemployment which is not being reabsorbed into agricultural production. There is a long tradition of migrant labor. There are also decreasing wages, so farming also suffers. Money buys your ox, plow and food, so they are all interdependent:

no-wage and wage labor. Men are looking for work. It is not easy to rebuild. Migrant labor goes back 100 years, even if they are helping out on the farm. Men do some farming, but usually they are in the cities looking for work, charcoal and firewood business. Men and reproductive labor? That has never really been talked about (Interview, 7/21/99).

Men's searching for 'productive' paid labor in cities has a direct, interconnected impact on women's increased productive and reproductive labor on family farms and sales in the informal economy.

How has this gendered relationship between migrant work and family farming impacted women's emancipation? Edda Collier argues that in some ways, this division of labor provided women with an opportunity to challenge gender-role stereotypes: "Women came from rural zones, left extended families, married or divorced, left due to the economic crisis, and came to urban zones. Men were always mine workers - in dormitories. Women did the reproductive work...informal businesses, paid work, had multiple sexual relations. The mines situation made women able to break free from traditional gender roles" (Interview, 7/30/99). Ana Rita Sithole also described how the history of male migrant labor can be understood as contributing to women's increased power in the family:

Many women are heads of the family due to the war and mining. Men have gone to Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Most of the women who head families have power...Women are taking power slowly. If you want to be equals, you have to work side by side with the men. We have to work together. But we also have to take the lead ourselves. Enabling girls to go to secondary schools - most girls stay home with mothers/sisters. In Mozambique, women are a very important source of power, we know that and we have shown it...If we don't work hard, then once a woman gets into power she becomes a man (Interview, 7/15/99).

In a parallel argument, Cynthia Chavez Metoyer (2000) states that the scarcity of male labor during the Contra war required women to enter sectors of the agricultural and

industrial economy dominated by men, thus challenging sex-segregated employment. Yet despite this apparent challenging of the sexual division of labor, “women’s status remained subordinate to that of men” (33). Why, one might wonder?

Chavez Metoyer adds that, “*Moreover*, a rigid division of labor persisted in which women were considered primarily responsible for reproductive work” [emphasis mine] (33). Her use of the term ‘moreover’ places the maintenance of the sexual division of labor in the home as an additional aside. I would argue that the maintenance of rigid gender roles within the sphere of reproductive labor is not ‘moreover’ but, rather, is the *key* to women’s continued subordinate status. The root cause of women’s subordinate status globally is women’s continued performance of the unpaid, care-giving, reproductive labor in the home and family. Welcoming women into productive work in the public sphere of paid labor will never *in and of itself* eliminate women’s subordinate status to men; only a simultaneous altering of the sexual division of labor within the reproductive sphere of the home and family will begin to challenge women’s subordinate status in all spheres of society. Challenging only one-half of the sexual division of labor is really no challenge at all. As long as reproductive, care-giving labor is performed, expected and ignored, predominantly by women, men will never value it, and men will never value women.

A Space for Men? Gender Reciprocity in the Spheres of Production and Reproduction

If women’s gender roles are expanding to include the tasks of men, but men’s gender roles are not expanding at an equal rate to include the tasks of women, are men in a sense not *being replaced* within an imbalanced feminism? Hermengilda Thumbo speaks of exactly this problem:

Men are not expected to be the economic provider and still not expected to do anything else! We don't realize our power. We are the ones who produce the income and the wealth. But we are afraid. I don't want to live alone, but I don't want to live with

someone I don't like. Men with a progressive attitude are scarce. We need more good quality men. Most of my friends are divorced and on their second marriage, so that says something (Interview, 7/23/99).

As women are becoming more and more adept at reproductive maintenance and income-generating activities, what lies ahead for the relationships *between* women and men?

Terezinha da Silva sees women's survival strategies as becoming threatening to men:

Men are threatened by women today. More men are unemployed. *Women as a survival strategy do everything. They are inventing ways of making income.* Men do nothing! We saw how much women are a threat. We have the power because we have the money and vice versa. Now, if they don't have money or a job, you see women doing hard work [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/23/99).

As long as the sexual division of labor in the reproductive sphere persists while women are participating in increased numbers in the paid economy, women will continue to carry a laborious burden, and men's roles will continue to be in question.

Ana Maria Montero also worries about the impact that gendered changes in society are having on men (Interview, 7/8/99). Montero argues that the stress masculinity puts on men increases their level of mortality. Masculinity is associated with participation in paid labor. Femininity is associated with work in the informal sector. Men still engage more in the production of commercial crops while women engage in subsistence production or family farming. As a result, in an economy with decreasing jobs, women are accepted more in the informal sector than men, and therefore are more successful. Montero argues that the informal sector is subverting notions of masculinity and femininity, and as a result, women are becoming the leading breadwinners and political decision-makers in the family. But according to Montero, this process is paying a heavy toll on men in society:

When men are unemployed, their masculinity is challenged. The

in-laws think they are not a man. Even working for a low wage. The wives and husbands may not accept it if we challenge current gender relations. There is a need for 'feminist' associations. How are we preparing the next generation through socialization? Feminism has a big voice outside, but not inside Mozambique.... (Interview, 7/8/99).

Feminist reconsiderations of gender role expectations and sexual divisions of labor will liberate both women and men from limiting and constraining notions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', however globally or locally constructed.

Nina Berg raised similar questions about the difficulties of challenging women's roles in African societies because of the lack of a role for men:

It is hard on men - alcoholism in Africa is a huge problem. Women would always have care-taking. This is a huge problem in African societies. Gender issues are not equal to women's issues. Women do too much work. Men have no place at all, no sphere at all. Breadwinner? Unemployment, frustration...The question is, where are the men? (Interview, 7/16/99).

Many scholars of African feminisms cite the place and the power that African women have always asserted in the home. According to Ana Fernandes, "The African woman has a lot of power. She makes all of the decisions in the home" (Interview, 6/30/99). Feminist agency, then, becomes an issue of asserting power *through* the reproductive sphere of the home rather than seeking a power to *overcome* the home. What is interesting, however, is that while many people I interviewed cited Mozambican women as the center of survival, the center of the household, and the wielder of power over decision-making in the household when it comes to children, very few acknowledged the degree to which Mozambican women are *overworked* as a result of such 'power': having the responsibility to do all of the unpaid reproductive labor, and work in the informal market selling produce to earn money. "While women's heavy workload is recognized as an unfair burden, Mozambican society does not confront the situation directly" (EMF, 11). In order for women's work, and women's power, in the reproductive sphere to be reassessed in Africa, gender issues will have to be the core of the movement instead of

women's issues. The roles of women and men will have to be analyzed, understood and challenged within the context of the political, economic, and socio-cultural realities.

Toward that end, WLSAMAZ completed a study in 1997 entitled, "Families in a Changing Environment in Mozambique," in which they asked the pivotal question: *which survival strategies modify the gender and power relations within families in terms of access and control of resources and the exercise of reproductive rights?* (13). The study explicitly defines households as "social units of co-operation and generators of the production and reproduction strategies of their members" (13). This study confirms my hypotheses about women, work and feminism in Mozambique. In some ways, women in Mozambique assert power *through* the sphere of the home and family and have deliberative, decision-making power as men become increasingly less central in this sphere for various complex reasons. However, women's increased power often simply takes the form of **increased work** within a traditionally defined gendered set of roles, without challenging the nature of those roles:

In a society that is particularly affected by the absence of men, through emigration or war, it is possible to speak, although cautiously, of an alteration in power relations or rather a transfer of power, although provisional and not very visible. If the woman continues to be subordinated by the place for which she is destined, as clearly expressed in the education of girls, and by the functions that she has to fulfill in sustaining the home and routine problem resolution, she is gaining a new visibility in the private and public spheres. **While there are signs that show a certain transfer of powers, it is questionable whether the woman's accumulation of functions is any more than an addition to her tasks without altering the social role(s) destined for her** [emphasis mine] (19).

This is exactly what I had anticipated. Women's increased functions in the public and private spheres of work, home and family do not appear to have been accompanied by a transformation of the *gendered power relations* between women and men within these spheres: "The position of the woman in either the large families (extended or multiple) or the nuclear family, is defined by a sexual division of labor and on the basis of

reproduction, i.e., on a family model where the woman gains identity through her function of wife and mother - a guarantor of continuity of a certain social order" (WLSAMAZ, 1997, 22). Eulália Temba agrees that FRELIMO's lack of a program of emancipation for women in the reproductive sphere has not only led to more work for women and less work for men, but it has also left untouched the persistence of gender violence in the home:

I agree that more work increased. There were changes in the public sphere, all things still the same in private: double burden, gender violence, violence against women. We know there are FRELIMO members, educated men, who are violent with their wives, and not helping their wives at home. In the urban area, more men may help women. In the rural areas, culture and tradition are still very strong. For a man to do a woman's job is not well received...(Interview, 7/13/99).

Because of the hierarchical relationship established between 'men's work' and 'women's work,' women are *made better* by performing the tasks assigned to men, while men are *made worse* by performing the tasks assigned to women.

Nina Berg and Aase Gundersen (1991) argue that the concept of equality that has been articulated in Mozambique has been the "broader socialist concept of equality, which has been introduced without any specific analysis of gender issues" (251). They spell out very clearly the gendered implications this has on the continuing sexual division of labor in the country, and women's unacknowledged performance in productive and reproductive labor:

With the emphasis on participation in production and decision-making, the notions of equality and emancipation, as put forward by the Mozambican authorities, have the male model as norm; women should be emancipated to be more like men. This approach overlooks the fact that women are already responsible for the majority of the country's agricultural production, namely the family farm labor, in addition to trading activities in the informal sector, extensive household tasks and child-rearing. The traditional

sexual division of labor, especially in rural areas, leaves women with little time to assume additional duties in the name of equality and emancipation (251).

Lina Magaia, writer, Parliamentarian and long-time Mozambican activist, gives a very simple yet profound everyday example of how women and men need to have equal political status rights in the reproductive realm of the family:

Women and men believe things should be that way....They have to feel it. Women are feeling it in their blood. They developed the family themselves. Why do I depend on him? For example, a woman had her baby on her back, and she wanted to dance. So, she took the baby and gave it to the husband. This is a little example of freedom. It is representative of having the same rights as men (Interview, 7/6/99).

Women are beginning to ask the questions that challenge the gendered division of labor in the home. As Ana Fernandes states, "The role of women in the family is still traditional. Even if a women works outside the home, she is still responsible for the cooking, cleaning, etc. There are four children in my family: two girls and two boys. We cook lots of meals for the father. Why doesn't he do that for himself?" (Interview, 6/30/99).

6.6 Conclusion

The Sandinista and FRELIMO revolutions brought about major achievements for women in terms of participation in military defense and economic production. Women's access to public participation through various political mobilizing efforts gave them a greater sense of their own abilities, capacities, rights, and desires. The sexual division of labor has been half-challenged: women have been encouraged to take on men's roles. In fact, women will often gain an increased sense of self-respect if they can "do the same thing a male can do." What has not occurred as part of FRELIMO's or the Sandinistas's policy-making around 'development' is either the encouragement of men to engage in "women's work" or a questioning of the *status* attributed to the gendered roles in the sexual division of labor, much less the division itself. As a result, the sexual division of labor in the household and family economy remains intact, as it has in every other

"revolutionary" society known to woman! As Catherine MacKinnon (1989) has stated, the type of liberation achieved in most socialist societies renders women as free as men to work outside the home, while men remain free from work within it (10). This description, fitting of the situation in Mozambique and Nicaragua, stems from Marx's own gendered conclusion that the sexual division of reproductive labor is "natural", and that domestic labor is non-productive. As long as the sexual division of labor and the secondary status of women in the sphere of home and family remain unchallenged and unchanged, women's subordinate status will persist in post-revolutionary societies as it does in non-revolutionary societies.

PART THREE: FROM MOBILIZATION TO ORGANIZATION: DEMOCRATIZATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND NICARAGUA

What is the relationship between revolution, democracy, and feminism? How have the Sandinista and FRELIMO revolutions been transformed into Nicaraguan and Mozambican democracies? Has citizen participation increased within 'civil society' or decreased since the period of the party-based mass organizations? How has feminism developed from the revolutionary into the post-revolutionary period in each country? How about *feminist* citizen participation? How have women's organizations and women's movements developed in Mozambique and Nicaragua? After a critical examination of the notions of 'democratization' and 'civil society' in Chapter 7, this section will examine the contemporary women's movements and current constructions of 'feminism' in Mozambique and Nicaragua.

My research has revealed that women have gone from being *mobilized by* FRELIMO and the Sandinistas for the purpose of achieving the nationalist and socialist goals of the revolutionary parties in power to *organizing themselves* for feminist political change, to varying degrees, within an autonomous 'civil society.' Moreover, the contemporary women's movements in each country seem to have evolved to a large extent based upon the party politics. While the women of the OMM voted to pursue autonomy under the new multi-party state, they have subsequently decided amid much controversy in 1997 to return to FRELIMO as a party organization. While there has been an increase in NGOs in Mozambique, many complain of the NGO-ization of development, and the OMM remains the most prominent women's organization in the country. They have, however, helped to create *Forum Mulher*, an autonomous umbrella organization of all the emerging women's groups in the country.

In Nicaragua, on the other hand, since the Sandinistas lost power to the UNO in the elections of 1990 and to the Liberal Alliance in 1996, AMNLAE has become and remains an autonomous organization. However, there has been a vast proliferation of

other women's NGOs and a self-defined feminist movement in Nicaragua, which has left AMNLAE, to a large extent, a women's organization of the past. AMNLAE has become simply one of many organizations within the autonomous women's and feminist movements of Nicaragua. In fact, one of the strongest movements in civil society today in Nicaragua is the women's movement. The autonomous women's movement first emerged when grassroots women began pushing from below within AMNLAE, and all of the other Sandinista mass organizations, as early as the mid 80s due to substantive and procedural discontent (see Chapter 4). Now that the FSLN is out of power and AMNLAE has asserted its autonomy, there is a real space to be critical. Feminist agency has emerged for many Nicaraguan women who left the FSLN and the revolutionary mass organizations to pursue their own autonomous organizing in post-revolutionary civil society.

In the post-revolutionary period in Nicaragua, feminist voices are flourishing, voices that were previously repressed under the Sandinistas. Autonomous women's and feminist organizing has increased within an expanded 'civil society'. There is a plethora of organizations covering a diversity of interests within a decentralized movement. However, those voices are also more dispersed, less unified, and therefore, some would argue, less powerful. In both Nicaragua and Mozambique, it appears that freedom of association in civil society has replaced the power to effect change through the state. Moreover, while basic political freedoms and diverse cultural expressions have increased, economic democracy and certain aspects of participatory democracy have decreased in both countries. Today in Nicaragua, after the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990 and again in 1996, many people argue that there is greater *political* democracy, given the decreasing role of the state and the party and the increasing role of autonomous organizations in civil society. However, there is less *economic* democracy because of the decreasing commitment of the state to an equitable distribution of wealth and public services, and the increasing privatization of the market. The story is the same in

Mozambique. Democracy seen only as representative government would not produce such a nuanced understanding of the political and economic forces which shape people's everyday lives.

Despite the fact that, for the most part, the OMM, created by FRELIMO, and AMNLAE, controlled by the FSLN, were constrained by the top down leadership of their revolutionary parties, both parties created the space for the women's organizing, gendered analyses and feminist movements taking place today. In light of the electoral losses of the Sandinistas in 1990 and again in 1996, much discussion is taking place around the legacy of the revolution. One of the most important legacies of the Sandinista revolution has been the mobilization and participation of the masses in the political life of society. The mobilization of women is one of the democratizing elements that the Sandinistas initiated that deserves the credit for the kind of expansion of civil society and autonomous organizing taking place today. Feminism in Nicaragua has emerged both *because of*, and *in spite of*, the Sandinistas.

In an interesting contrast, post-revolutionary women's organizing is taking different forms in Mozambique and Nicaragua. In Mozambique, the historical and consistent demands of women are for increased education for girls and expanded economic opportunities for women. However, new demands to end violence against women, reform the family law, and gather information about attitudes concerning reproductive rights are emerging. In the contemporary women's movements of Nicaragua, women's autonomous organizing has brought issues to the surface that were repressed or ignored under the Sandinistas: sexuality; reproductive rights; public denunciation of domestic violence, sexual abuse, harassment of women on the job and all forms of sexual violence; the decriminalization of abortion; men's participation in reproductive labor; and men's cultural attitudes toward women. This has all taken place within a neoliberal economic climate that has increased unemployment, poverty, and the gap between rich and poor. In both countries, the economic effects of neoliberal policies

explain why women's economic opportunities and access to education remain on the agenda of the autonomous women's organizations. Thus, especially in Nicaragua, there is not a choice taking place between sex/violence/culture feminism and economic feminism, equality and difference, or practical and strategic gender interests as many American and European feminists espouse. Rather, women's experiences living and organizing in everyday life are raising the reality of the intersections between women's public and private gendered interests in the spheres of politics, economics, society, culture, home and family, whether women identify with the term 'feminist' or not.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Democratization and Civil Society in Post-Revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua

“Revolutions are not permanent. It is a mistake to think in terms of permanent revolution. Any revolution that doesn't end up in democracy becomes a counter-revolution. If we make an historical evaluation of the Sandinista or Nicaraguan Revolution, we have to admit that it accomplished its main objectives: to overthrow the dictatorship, to make changes regarding property ownership in favor of the lower classes, and to establish the basis for democracy. We accomplished in many crucial aspects giving freedom to a human force, and leaving it organized. Organized social popular forces are the basis of any democracy. In addition, we put a professional armed forces in place and we established laws, both constitutional and electoral. It was with our own laws that the FSLN lost the elections. But with it, what was lost was the government, not the revolution. The revolution continues on.”

Jaime Wheelock, former FSLN National Directorate and Minister of
Agriculture, Interview, Managua, 1/24/00

7.1 Introduction

Much of the recent scholarship in comparative politics, on the right and the left, holds up civil society as the great hope of democratic consolidation.¹ I will argue that this civil society approach assumes a very particular definition of democracy: one that is both liberal and capitalist, and one that is characterized by basic political rights and freedoms and neoliberal economics. In effect, these scholars argue for pluralism from a position of monism: while they value the pluralism of civil society, as Adam Przeworski has stated, liberal capitalist democracy is the only game in town.²

¹ Diamond, Larry. Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1999. Huntington, Samuel. Third Wave. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. Putnam, Robert. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

² Adam Przeworski. Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

This chapter addresses the complicated changes that a liberal, democratic, capitalist civil society have ushered into Mozambique and Nicaragua in the past decade. The first section examines the concepts of democracy and democratization and demonstrates that while political democracy has increased in the post-revolutionary periods in both countries, economic democracy has decreased.³ As a result, I will argue that one of the great losses of the post-revolutionary period has been the reduction of *revolutionary democracy* to *neoliberal democracy*. The second section of this chapter addresses the discourse and materiality of 'civil society' by examining the changes in participatory democracy that have taken place from the revolutionary to the post-revolutionary period and makes three key points: (1) revolutionary mass participation through a centralized state has given way to post-revolutionary autonomous organizing in civil society characterized by greater freedom and more diversity; however, *party membership* has replaced *citizenship* in both countries and as a result, has limited access to discursive democracy; (2) the NGO-ization of civil society has resulted in a dominance of donor community interests rather than grassroots interests. Moreover, NGOs in civil society have risen as a *necessary* replacement to fill the void created by a neoliberal state. As a result, civil society is becoming a *weak substitute* for a fuller conception of democracy; (3) while autonomous organizing in 'civil society' has produced greater decentralization, more diversity and more freedom within the women's movement, it may have also resulted in less power to effect national level change.

³I am using the concepts of political, economic and participatory democracy as defined by Katherine Hoyt (1997): 1. political or representative democracy establishes a republican form of government based on periodic elections and universal suffrage; 2. participatory or mass democracy incorporates citizen participation through mass organizations in civil society; 3. economic democracy attempts to establish a more equitable distribution of wealth and more democratic control of the people over the resources and economic decision-making of the nation. I will define *revolutionary democracy* as a type of democracy which attempts to integrate all of the political, economic and participatory aspects described above.

Despite the fact that in Nicaragua autonomous organizations in civil society are bringing to the surface critical issues that were previously repressed under the revolutionary governments, the NGO movement is burgeoning with organizations trying to fill the void left by the loss of the Sandinista state. Moreover, NGOs in both countries are funded by an international donor community which often determines the interests over grassroots organizations. In effect, I assert that civil society is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for democracy. Democratization of the state, the market and the family must remain part of *any* equation for democratic consolidation.

7.2 Democracy and Democratization: A Critical Examination

Many debates have taken place in the literature over competing definitions of democracy: indirect or representative versus direct; elite versus popular; electoral participation versus discursive participation; procedural versus substantive. The definition of democracy which predominates within the discipline of political science is that of Joseph Schumpeter (1947): democracy is a political system with free, fair, competitive, multiparty periodic elections in which elites compete for the people's votes within a framework of universal suffrage and the rule of law protects basic political freedoms.⁴ Although this definition is very important in establishing the basis of political democracy, many scholars have argued that it is based upon a limited, procedural, elite notion of democracy.⁵

⁴ Robert Dahl, Polyarchy, Huntington, Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, and Rueschmeyer, Stephens and Stephens, Capitalist Development and Democracy all adopt a similar procedural definition of democracy.

⁵ See, for example, Richard Sklar, "Democracy in Africa" in *African Studies Review*, 26, #3/4, 1983 and James Petras and Fernando Leiva, Democracy and Poverty in Chile: The Limits to Electoral Politics.

One way to begin to address the biases in the literature on democratization is to ask the question how, when, and in what ways have Mozambique and Nicaragua undergone a process of democratization? When I asked Carlos Cardoso⁶, a prominent Mozambican journalist since the liberation struggle, to describe the changes that had taken place for women in Mozambique from the revolutionary period to the period of political democratization, he rightfully took issue with the epistemological distinction my question inherently made between these two periods. These were not two different processes for Cardoso, but rather were one and the same. According to much of the literature on transitions to democracy, Mozambique and Nicaragua have been undergoing a transition to democracy only since 1990, when both countries adopted a multi-party electoral system. In actuality, Mozambique has been undergoing a transition to democracy since 1962 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania when three anti-colonial groups united under the leadership of Eduardo Mondlane and formed FRELIMO. Similarly, Nicaragua has been undergoing a transition to democracy since 1962 when the FSLN was founded, and other anti-Somoza groups began forming to oust the 46 year US supported dictatorship of the Somoza family. Anti-colonial wars of liberation and anti-dictatorial struggles have not always been understood as part of the process of democratization.

Another problem with the discourse of "Transitions to Democracy" is that the term 'transition' implies a developmentalist progression from something worse toward something better. During their recent transitions to liberal, capitalist, multi-party democracy, Mozambique and Nicaragua have experienced increasing political freedoms

⁶ Since my research was conducted, Carlos Cardoso was murdered in downtown Maputo in November 2000. It was reported in *Africa Confidential* (vol 41, number 24 – 08 December, 2000) that some believe that he was assassinated because of his investigation into a US\$15 million bank fraud.

and increasing commodification, accompanied by decreasing access to the commodities people need to survive and increasing economic inequality. In addition, although autonomous organizing has certainly increased in 'civil society' today, many people argue that grassroots discourse has actually decreased. Thus, a more nuanced analysis of 'democratization' is necessary to adequately understand the changes that have taken place in people's lives from 1979-1990, and from 1990 to the present.

What did the transition to democracy mean in Mozambique and Nicaragua? How were people's everyday realities affected, both economically and politically? Most of the people I interviewed in both countries described a complex combination of economic and political losses *and* political gains as a result of democratization: basic political rights and freedoms have increased; access to basic resources has decreased; access to *autonomous organizing* has increased; yet grassroots discourse within party structures has decreased. Thus, participatory democracy through the state revolutionary mass organizations has been replaced by autonomous organizing in 'civil society' with both positive and negative consequences. The autonomous organizing of today, made possible both *because of* and *in response to* the mobilization and participation of the revolutionary periods, has brought issues and criticisms to the surface that were repressed during the 1980s. Yet a limited definition of democracy as multi-party elections has replaced a vision of democracy as participation, citizenship, social justice, and equality. As a result, 'civil society' appears to have become a weak replacement for participatory democracy rather than a key component of a larger vision of social citizenship. This chapter assesses the complex consequences of 'democratization' in Mozambique and Nicaragua by

examining the economic, political and participatory manifestations of democracy and civil society in the contemporary period.

Surviving Democratization in Mozambique and Nicaragua: From Revolutionary Democracy to Neoliberal Democracy

One of the common themes that emerged from my interviews in both countries was that a reductionist understanding of the concept of democracy accompanied the transition from the revolutionary to the post-revolutionary period. During the revolutionary period, a comprehensive view of democracy as having political, participatory and economic aspects predominated, as Hoyt (1997) has argued in the case of Nicaragua. I will refer to this definition of democracy as *revolutionary democracy*. In the post-revolutionary period, democracy has been reduced to its narrowly political aspects only (multi-party elections and basic political rights), and in fact has been paired with a neoliberal approach to economic policy with a shrinking welfare state and an expanded role for international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. I will refer to this approach toward democracy as *neoliberal democracy*, and argue that revolutionary democracy has been replaced with neoliberal democracy in both countries. Virtually everyone I interviewed described a gain in terms of political democracy, a loss in terms of economic democracy, and certain gains *and* losses in terms of participatory or social democracy. If this is the case, then we certainly need a more nuanced understanding of democracy. I would argue that we should cease using the concept of 'democracy' without a modifier to explain exactly what aspect of the system we are talking about, i.e., political democracy, economic democracy, participatory democracy. There is no need for theory that confuses more than it clarifies.

Mónica Zalaquett of the Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia addresses the reduction of revolutionary to neoliberal democracy in Nicaragua by focusing on the distinction between political and economic rights, and questioning the reduction of democracy to political rights. When I asked if Nicaragua was more or less democratic today under a neoliberal capitalist multi-party state, Zalaquett responded by distinguishing between what she referred to as bourgeois democracy and economic democracy:

It depends on how you define democracy. If it is political rights to elections - bourgeoisie democracy – then there have been certain improvements. However, if you understand democracy in the wider sense of social and economic rights, there has not been an advancement. To the contrary, we have moved backwards. In the current period, there have been certain losses of the advances of the revolution. If you consider the social aspects: literacy has decreased. Illiteracy is up from 12% to 30%. Agrarian reform was equally distributed. There were a few families owning great properties. Now, land is being concentrated in a few hands, every year it is getting worse. It is different for country people. There is no other option than selling their properties. Add to that more than 70% of the population recognized as poor, 50% as extremely poor. You cannot see this as an economic democracy! (Interview, 1/17/00).

Lilleana Salinas also critiques the reduction of democracy in the 1990s in Nicaragua to a few political freedoms: “Democracy is the power of everybody. We are not living a democracy. If we misinterpret the word as freedom of speech, political participation.... these are democratic values; however, despite these things, there are no laws to protect my life, in terms of dignity, respect and the right to education” (Interview, 1/13/00).

Some of the people I interviewed compared Sandinista democracy with the neoliberal democracy of today, and expressed dissatisfaction with *both* approaches to democracy. Irma Ortega of CIPRES, critical of the concentration of power of the FSLN in the 1980s, describes in vivid detail what has been lost in the neoliberal period. Ortega

argues that *neither democracy nor development* in Nicaragua can be understood as the establishment of the free market when the majority of the nation's people do not have the capacity to purchase the goods sold at MNCs:

Was there a democracy in 1984? There was a lot of concentration of party, but from that to now, I wouldn't say it was a democracy, but a concentration of power by the FSLN. Devil's advocates would say the situation of war pushed them to apply excessive control. Democracy today? We have to ask what people's power exists today? Everyday, dignified life is limited....The opening of McDonald's...this is a wonderful thing we have achieved, but people don't have the power to acquire... We have McDonald's, the circles in the city, automarkets, the cinema, fountains with lights...but the poverty of the population is increasing and there is terrible unemployment, drugs, prostitution, money laundering. We cannot prove it, but we can see it. So, I don't know which moment was worse. The 1980s, during the war, the lines to get basic food were very long, but more or less people had some capacity. Of course, some had more. But today, what percentage of the population has access to basic necessities? (Interview, 1/18/00).

According to the 2001 Human Development Report, 50.3 % of the Nicaraguan population lives below the national poverty level; in Mozambique, 49.2% of the population at birth has the probability of *not* surviving to age 40.

Justiniano Liebl, liberation theologian in Nicaragua for fifty years, describes how this increasing poverty manifests itself as a loss of access to the basic resources of survival for many Nicaraguans:

People lost their food. Before, nobody was ever without food or jobs. There were little salaries. Every fifteen days, we all got arroz, frijoles, rice, beans, oil, sugar. Nobody went hungry, nobody. There were no rich people, and was not a lot extra. To get milk, you had to go to five different stores. There was a shortage of everything: toilet paper, soap, milk. The gringos were the enemies of humanity (Interview, 1/7/00).

Yalile Giacomán agrees, describing how many of the economic gains made under the Sandinista regime have been lost since their electoral defeat: “There were not people begging. There were not kids at street lights. All kids were at school. We lost health care. Education is practically private....90% knew how to read and write. Practically everybody had a job. Everybody ate.... At the time of the Sandinistas, I was able to save \$50. Today, I make more and I don't save anything! (Interview, 1/12/00). With increasing privatization and costs of living, not only does savings decrease, but so do the vision and the possibility of economic democracy.

The same kind of reduction of revolutionary democracy to neoliberal democracy has also taken place in Mozambique. Célia Diniz's analysis of the transition from revolutionary to post-revolutionary Mozambique addresses the monism that results from global capitalism:

There is nobody here to defend Marxism. The values/ideas are coming from that time. What would people defend today? Not values, but things: a house, a job. Liberal capitalism versus not having these things. There is a non-stop march coming all over Africa. Call it globalization, call it capitalism, people are trying to adjust. The Superpowers are the U.S., the IMF, and the World Bank. Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3, Zone 4 markets have been well orchestrated all over the world. All people are affected by these things...There is no capacity at all to counterpoint anything, not even ideas....We need an alternative. There are no alternatives. Is this really democracy? (Interview, 7/1/99).

The lack of alternatives to neoliberal globalization that Diniz speaks of so eloquently hardly seems to resemble pluralism or democracy. As poverty increases, individuals have less of an ability to influence democratic outcomes in everyday life. And as international financial institutions play an ever increasing role in shaping the global economy, states have less and less power to ensure a minimal standard of living for their populations.

From Socialism to Capitalism: Political Democratization, Market Capitalization and the IMF

The trends we have seen in Mozambique and Nicaragua are political democratization, market capitalization, neoliberal economic policies dominated by international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, and a declining role of the domestic state in terms of establishing a basic standard of living for all citizens. Ana Fernandes, manager of Rio Péle textile factory in Maputo, describes what this has meant for Mozambicans:

Political rights, GNP and inflation have all increased. The economy is generally doing better, but how does it reflect in the population? The IMF and World Bank are part of the problem. They are killing the local industries. This is NOT better for the future. The State was financing everything. Now, there is abandonment, neo-colonization. We export raw materials, so we need to protect local industries...80% of the population is poor...very poor. A few are very wealthy and have Mercedes, Ferraris....In the U.S. 'socialism is terrible.' I don't feel it was that bad. In socialism, everybody had the right to the same things. Health care was free. We had Cuban and Chinese doctors. Education was free, but...In the 80s, the country could not afford it. Everything was free, free, free! But we did not have the infrastructure. Now, we are not socialists, we are capitalists. With the sudden changes, you start to question the economic indicators. They say Mozambique is a great example for the IMF and the World Bank. It is doing so good. But look at the population! We must need different economic indicators (Interview, 6/30/99).

Teresa Cruz e Silva, director of the Center for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University, agrees: "The World Bank and the IMF used to consider this country as an example because of the peace process and structural adjustment measures, but there is more and more poverty in this country....It is difficult to change policies. The situation now is very difficult because the economic policies of FRELIMO failed. So we are

dependent on the IMF and World Bank now. As Joseph Hanlon⁷ said, 'The World Bank is the chief of the nation.' " (Interview, 7/1/99).

The same situation is taking place in Nicaragua. Poverty has been exacerbated into beggary as the IMF and World Bank are praised for macro-economic indicators and the state has less control over the economy. As Lilleana Salinas summarizes:

That's not development - even though you see them, you can't go there. That's how people think - we now have Supermercados, but no one can go there! The neoliberal government is praised by international donors. But they are demanding - poverty. For example, we had poor, but now we have beggars! It is not true that the World Bank and the IMF want to save us. We are part of a globalization process - the thing no one wants to stop....making guns, drug trafficking, arms trafficking. Our sons and daughters are poorer than we! (Interview, 1/13/00).

Many people I interviewed described the loss of governmental autonomy that has accompanied the anti-majoritarian application of neoliberalism in Nicaragua and Mozambique specifically, and the Third World more generally. Mónica Zalaquett describes the loss of domestic economic power that has accompanied the increased influence of international financial institutions:

Here, there are two big influences: financial organizations, like the World Bank, IMF, and Interamerican Bank of Development, that manage our economy. Different functionaries of government are really subordinated to them. We don't have economic policies set by our own country...This is not necessarily bad, but...they are not very worried about the social effects. The World Bank and the IMF had other interests: the interests of European countries and the US and making these countries overcome poverty (Interview, 1/17/00).

Structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed by the IMF and World Bank since the late 1980s have had a profound impact on the everyday survival of

⁷ Reference to Joseph Hanlon, author of Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots? Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991 and Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding in Mozambique. Oxford: James Currey, 1996.

Mozambicans and Nicaraguans. The economic reform program in Mozambique was accompanied by a massive devaluation of currency, resulting in the 1987 rate of 42 medicals to the dollar falling to 840 medicals to the dollar! (Huffman, 25). This currency devaluation, along with the removal of subsidies which went along with the package, "caused sharp price rises that were not compensated for by wage increases" (Clift, 27). Thus, urban poverty has increased, and an inability to purchase enough food for the family in cities accompanies the inability of many rural women to produce food for the family. The new Chamorro government in Nicaragua accepted an economic "reform" program in 1990 which devalued the national currency by 180%, increased inflation by 150% and decreased workers' salaries by 1/3! (Pérez-Alemán, 254).

Women suffer a particular fate when structural adjustment programs are imposed because of their relationship to reproduction. As Cliff (1991) states, all structural adjustment policies have a built-in gender bias because they ignore productive, unpaid labor:

When macro-economic policies are formulated to reallocate resources, the lack of explicit consideration of the process of reproduction and maintenance of human resources tells against women. For the implicit assumption of macro-economic policy is that *the process of reproduction and maintenance of human resources which is carried out unpaid by women will continue regardless of the way in which resources are reallocated* [emphasis mine] (Cliff, 26).

The cost of a longer and harder working day for women will not be considered in the evaluation of the success of such macro-economic policies as currency devaluation because it is invisible, informal, assumed, and often unpaid. Once again, the disregard for the social reproduction of human resources and the assumption of the survival

mechanism of informal markets perpetuates a gendered notion of 'development' and places women in a position of exploitation and subordination.

In describing how women have been affected by the economic transition from socialism to capitalism, Sabina Santos, Director of an OMM Training Center in Machava, a rural community outside of Maputo, describes how women have suffered more in the transition:

All women want the establishment of economic stability. During the socialist regime after independence, the situation changed drastically. Today, with the multi-party system and free market capitalism, there is another big change. One suffers and feels it more. Under socialism, things were free. Now, we buy everything. Women are the ones who suffer it more everyday (Interview, 7/20/99).

With their gendered responsibility for social reproduction and family maintenance, women carry a disproportionate burden of structural adjustment policies on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, democratic consolidation will never be a reality as long as international financial institutions determine economic policies for states that increase poverty and decrease people's access to the goods and services required for survival.

Political Democracy: Freedom of Speech and Basic Political Freedoms

Despite the increased poverty and decreased commitment to economic democracy ushered into the post-revolutionary periods in Mozambique and Nicaragua, have there been any important gains in political democracy? Célia Diniz referred to Mozambique under a one-party state as "a very discretionary system, very dangerous, with no counter-power" (Interview, 7/1/99). Many people I interviewed referred to the rounding up of unemployed people and prostitutes to be taken to Niassa, a province in the North of the country, to go to re-education camps, referring to the particularly well-known story of Luís de Brito, Mozambican professor and head of the Faculty of Marxism-Leninism at

Eduardo Mondlane University, who was taken to Niassa! This was “clearly a mistake” (Interview).

Grupos Dinimizadores were the dynamizing groups or cells of FRELIMO, organized on the local level, “everywhere, on the job, where you live.” Some people interviewed referred to the positive aspects of the dynamizing group meetings as places where discursive democracy and participation took place on a regular, localized basis. Others criticized the rush to judgment that often emerged from the power of the groups:

For example, there was a robbery at UEM. The Grupo Dinimizador (GD) had the police and political powers. There was a Saturday morning meeting at 10 a.m. The GD presents the findings of the robbery of the transport sector. The meeting ended. At 2pm, the Political Police were outside. They took the guys accused to re-education camps without their day in court. It was very complicated in those days. We told the Director of the University you cannot do things like that. One guy stayed in the camp for years. Discretionary justice. It's much better now. It is always dangerous when you have only one choice. The multi-party system is much more open, fresher. FRELIMO continues to be very influential (Interview).

Maria Fernanda Farinha of AUSTRAL also cites greater freedom of expression as the positive political change that has taken place after the adoption of the multi-party system in Mozambique: “People feel more free. There was a lot of repression. I never felt it. I always felt I could say whatever I wanted. I don't need people to give me room. I'll take it! But there were people who felt one thing: that there was one way of thinking, not much debate” (Interview, 7/8/99).

Feminist theorist and activist Sofia Montenegro pointed out some of the same political gains in the post-revolutionary period in Nicaragua: “The gains include a less dogmatic vision of the world for what is proper of the left - insight, tolerance, good bourgeois tolerance, good bourgeois values: respect for individualism. Collectivism

denied individuality. The next experiment needs to combine the best of both worlds: commonality plus individuality without one overcoming the other. I think this depolarization of politics is necessary. It was painful learning the gain” (Interview, 1/25/00).

It seems that while political freedoms have increased, particularly freedom to critique the party and of local initiative, access to basic necessities, and thus economic democracy, has decreased. Signe Arnfred, Danish scholar and researcher who has spent a significant amount of time in Mozambique, summarizes well what has been gained politically and what has been lost economically in the transition from a socialist one-party state to a multi-party democratic capitalist state:

Today, we have gained more openness. The fear and repression of FRELIMO, being afraid of criticizing the party, not more open to political debate. There was no debate. It was the party line in the early 80s. The politics of the party was a uniform line, you were not supposed to question. You felt like participating in meetings as long as you didn't question the party line. People were materially poor, but happier then. We had a feeling of a better future which we don't have now. Education and health care were free! Since the structural adjustment discussion has been taking place, it is very sad to see. It was hard to find things before but there was a hopeful feeling (Interview, 11/17/99).

Participatory Democracy: From the Revolutionary Participation of Women in the State to Autonomous Organizing in Civil Society

The transition to a multi-party state in Mozambique and to a *non-Sandinista* multi-party state in Nicaragua has had a great deal of impact on the nature of democratic participation in the post-revolutionary period. Both countries experienced a transition from a centralized, single-party state apparatus that played an historically significant role in organizing their populations to participate in mass-based organizations governed by the ruling party, to a decentralized, multi-party state characterized by autonomous

organizing in 'civil society' outside the state party governing apparatus. What impact has this transition had on the nature of participatory democracy in both countries? Three main themes emerged from my research in this area: (1) the revolutionary period constituted a highly participatory period characterized by more discourse among the general population but less discursive and organizational freedom; (2) the post-revolutionary period is characterized by many decentralized autonomous organizations, with greater freedom, more diversity, more space for individual initiative, and horizontal decision-making structures; (3) the NGO-ization of civil society has led to the domination of international funding agencies over grassroots concerns, where NGOs led by urban elites are often funded at the expense of the state. As a result, civil society is becoming a weak substitute for democracy.

Revolutionary Participation in Mozambique and Nicaragua

Jocqueline M. Evans, a young leader in the FSLN Women's League in Granada, asserts that the major contribution she perceived by the FSLN during the revolutionary period was the importance given to the increased participation of young people and women:

The primary objective after the overthrow of Somoza, was to consolidate the revolution. There was a new interpretation of the administration of public popular power. This demanded that the masses get involved in popular organizations, like AMNLAE, the CST, ATC. The goal we were pursuing was to create a better distribution of wealth for the masses. At that first moment, women's participation increased in these tasks: police, armed forces, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Plannification.... We became more sensitive to our role as citizens - we went to the rural areas for the literacy campaigns, crusade of literacy, women, youth.... I was the woman growing up to see that freedom. Women had more opportunities to project themselves into the army, health, knowledge.... To sum up, women's participation was fundamental and important to the FSLN (Interview, 1/28/00).

Dora Zeledón, the current coordinator of AMNLAE, also describes the historic role the Sandinista revolution played in mobilizing women to get involved and in bringing women into the public sphere: “There was a broad process of consultation. Women were consulted at the grassroots level. Women won the right to get out of the four walls of the house and into the public sphere into posts of power and leadership. The revolution opened an historic opportunity for women because women made a difference with that participation” (Interview, 1/28/00). Zeledón goes on to argue that despite the fact that gender consciousness was not really a part of the FSLN, the efforts that were made on behalf of women have led to the fact that “today, we have one of the most active and belligerent women's movements in Central America!” (Interview, 1/28/00).

Ana María Pizarro, Director of SI MUJER, similarly states the connection between the mobilization of women during the revolution and the organization of women taking place today: “At a general level, we cannot deny or ignore women's participation during the revolution. Women during the revolution acquired their own voice, their own leadership, that makes the feminist movement today the strongest and best organized in Central America!” (Interview, 1/21/00). María Rosa Renzi, UNDP Gender Representative, agrees that the revolution provided the resources to create more participation, allowing women later to develop their “organizational capacity” (Interview, 1/21/00).

Rosario Pasquier, Director, Asociación de Padres de Familia Doris María Morales Tijerino, more than paying tribute to the revolutionary years, actually argues that people were *more* politicized during the revolutionary years than they are today:

I think we should talk about the Revolution as a whole. It was made by many people, not one. For example, right now, many people of this country have to make the changes. We lived through the dictatorship, wanted to study, saw the poor nutrition of kids. The revolution was something magical, something wonderful. With the revolution, people participated more. For example, women read the paper, got involved. Then, society was more politicized. People are less politicized now. In that period, solidarity prevailed. We made piñadas for all of the kids at Christmastime. We shared the things we didn't have. We took care of things in the evening. At Cine Blanco, we'd see a prostitute – 'hey girl, aren't you worried?' In everyday life, things have changed (Interview, 1/6/00).

Perhaps Noè Silva epitomizes best the effect that living in a revolutionary society can have on one's notion of 'people power' and political efficacy: "We need to make another revolution! It doesn't have to be a war. The people need to step up and demand from the government. They are supposed to work for us - they don't! We elected them, we can take them down! We did it once – with weapons!" (Interview, 1/27/00).

Since FRELIMO, the revolutionary party, is still in power in Mozambique, there is both less criticism of the party taking place as well as less of a need to defend the legacy of the revolution. Everyone I interviewed paid unanimous homage to FRELIMO as the party that liberated Mozambique, and the party that emancipated women. According to Elisa Muianga and Celeste Bango of MULEIDE: "FRELIMO was the first one to start to give value to women - an equal seat. For example, in the liberated zones, the men helped the women and the children. The Feminine League became the OMM. Reference is obliged to the OMM, which is an inspiration to women's organizations then and now. MULEIDE, MBEU, AMRU, ADOCA⁸: there are many women's organizations today, made up of members of the OMM" (Interview, 7/21/99).

Decreased Discourse: Party Membership v. Citizenship

Did the revolutionary period offer anything better in terms of participation of the masses? Many people I interviewed argued that there was actually more *pluralism* in the

⁸ See Appendix. See also Chapter 8, which describes many of the NGOs in the contemporary women's movements in both countries.

single party system in Mozambique because there was more grassroots consultation and discussion of different outlooks. The late Carlos Cardoso pointed out the ironic inconsistency of equating multi-partyism with political democratization: “Now, there is *formally more pluralism*, but *actually less consultation*. This is the first government that makes more decisions in private than in public since independence” [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/9/99). For Cardoso, “the only thing that has substantially increased is freedom of speech. The last three years of this government has been the most democratic in terms of freedom of speech, but the least democratic in terms of consultation” (Interview, 7/9/99). Today, in the multi-party state, there is less official consultation between the government and the people. Liberal capitalist democracy is the only game in town.

One of the most often cited reasons for this loss of discursive democracy is the fact that *party membership has replaced basic citizenship* in both Mozambique and Nicaragua. In a discussion I had with Gulamo Taju and Ana Maria Montero, heading the NGO Development Project at Eduardo Mondlane University, Taju pointed out the distinction that has emerged today in Mozambique between citizen and party member: “We are not members of FRELIMO. Before, as a citizen, I participated openly. Today, as a citizen, I cannot participate unless I am a member of the party. This is a new model of a multi-party society: ‘non-members’ are excluded (Interview, 7/8/99). This is one of the negative aspects that has emerged from the transition to a Western style liberal democracy: political party power in a newly emerging multi-party state allows *membership* to trump *citizenship*. Ritha Fletes Zamora, FSLN member of the National Assembly, argues that the same thing is happening in Nicaragua: “one of the principal policies of neoliberalism is that the only way for women and men to achieve positions of power is through parties” (Interview, 1/10/00). As Mónica Baltodano summarizes Nicaraguan politics today, “It has become a system of parties and not of people”

(Interview, 1/26/00).⁹ The Pact that has been formed between the Liberal Alliance and the FSLN, assuring institutional power-sharing between the parties and establishing an entrenched two-party system, is perhaps the most empirical example of this new system of parties over people.¹⁰

Post-Revolutionary Participation: More Freedom, More Diversity

One of the most positive elements cited regarding the change from a one-party state to a multi-party state in both countries is, quite simply, that today *more* organizations exist autonomously from FRELIMO and the FSLN, and therefore, there is more space for freedom of speech and the expression of opinions and ideas that differ from the party/state/government.

Since the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990, there has been a vast proliferation of new organizations in Nicaragua. Javier Matus Lazo of CENADE cites the strengthening of civil society as a positive aspect of this transition: "There are more NGOs, more autonomy, not in the interests of the party but of the groups themselves" (Interview, 1/19/00). Lazo also critiqued the state-centered socialist approach adopted by the Sandinistas: "the huge state was very expensive for society, very bureaucratic. The government/state cannot manage production. State enterprises were the great mistake of

⁹There is an entire debate about the extent to which political parties are the heart of democracy and, in fact, the best way to collect and represent the interests of the masses (See E.E. Schattschneider, Party Government, New York: Rinehart, 1942; and The Semi-Sovereign People) or, rather, represent the elite interests of politicians (See John H. Aldrich, Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995). Aldrich disagrees with Schattschneider and argues that today's parties are "parties in control" or parties that act as mechanisms for providing ambitious office seekers with the "name recognition" and entire machine for getting elected. The work of Piven and Cloward (See Poor People's Movements, 1995; Why Americans Still Don't Vote, 2000) reveals the limitations of contemporary political parties to serve the interests of the poor and thus argues that social movements, political protest and disruption serve as a more effective means of change. My intention here is simply to raise the issue and set the terms of this debate for future research in post-revolutionary multi-party states.

¹⁰ The Pact refers to an alliance made between the party in power, the Liberal Alliance, and the predominant opposition party, the FSLN, to constitutionally define the institutions of government in terms of the two dominant political parties, thus ensuring power-sharing between the parties and preventing any kind of third party movement. For more information on the Pact, see Karen Kampwirth (1998).

the revolution. They cost a lot and didn't produce much, not because of the Sandinistas but because of socialism..." (Interview, 1/19/00).

Long-time Sandinista Yalile Giacomán of CAPRI agrees with the gains ushered in by the autonomous organizations: "We have improved in the area of civil society. For example, during the Sandinista era, the main organization for women was AMNLAE. Nowadays, there are many organizations for women that have incorporated the Sandinista ideology - Puntos de Encuentro, Si Mujer..." (Interview, 1/12/00). Giacomán notes that since the adoption of a multi-party democracy and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas, the two positive results have been the absence of war, and the presence of autonomous NGOs: "The civil organizations are better than the FSLN organizations. We were organized according to the structure of the party. They would teach us that social problems have community solutions. Even members of the resistance [Contras] are following the line of civil organizations" (Interview, 1/12/00). Eva María Sam Qui, Director of the Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN also comments on the development of organizations in civil society as compared to the FSLN party: "The mass organizations have developed and transformed, are more horizontal, there is more participation of members, they have their own agenda, they have overcome the structure of the party. The party has not transformed" (Interview, 1/17/00).

Maria Fernanda Farinha argues that things are better today in Mozambique because of the expanding civil society: "There are more organizations, NGO's, associations in the 1990s. More opportunities for the people to get involved. More *different* opportunities for the people to get involved" (Interview, 7/8/99). However, despite the positive organizing element of the new 'civil society,' Farinha also cites the divisions that can occur as a result of more options: "There were more things to put people together before. Today, there are more things to pull people apart. Before, we had survival in common" (Interview, 7/8/99). Luisa Capelão, a Portuguese Mozambican native working with USAID, not surprisingly praised the growth of a strong civil society:

“We need a strong civil society. We did not have a strong civil society under FRELIMO. For 90% of the NGOs that started, the source of the funds has been for women, gender, human rights” (Interview, 7/8/99). What could possibly be wrong with increased funding for women’s and human rights NGOs?

Participatory Democracy or Neoliberal Necessity: The NGO-ization of Civil Society

The multiplicity of diverse organizations in civil society has been a definite improvement in terms of citizen participation. However, two negative consequences have emerged as a result of this transition: (1) the “NGO-ization” of civil society: new organizations often represent the interests of the donor community and not the grassroots interests of the people; (2) NGOs have risen to fill the void created by a declining neo-liberal welfare state.

While there may be more room for individual creativity within non-governmental organizations, agendas are often superimposed from above, from the donor community of USAID, the IMF and the World Bank, and other international development agencies:

USAID plays a very important role among donors. It is a bi-lateral donor funding \$74-75 million to Mozambique, its biggest Sub-Saharan program. The Democratic Donors Working Group deals with budget, health, development and includes ambassadors, and the Director of USAID, UNDP, and the World Bank. The Development Partners Group (DPG) is the brains at the top of it all (Interview).

In an interesting analysis of the excluded, the marginalized, and the powerless sectors of Mozambican society, Ana Maria Montero concludes that while they have experienced a *decreasing* opportunity to participate within the democratization process of the multi-party system, there has been an *increasing* opportunity for people to take initiative and organize creatively. However, she worries whether or not this initiative is reflective of actual grassroots concerns or rather simply mirrors the interests of international funding agencies:

International agencies like USAID are more concerned with women (gender), human rights, civic education, the environment... not necessarily hunger, jobs, housing... They may be imposing their agendas and changing the objectives of the organizations, intervening in local activities, disputing local spaces. The NGO's did not fill the gap for mass participation (Interview, 7/8/99).

Montero used the concept of 'the NGO-ization of development' to refer to the top-down process of money and influence exercised from the international donor community through local NGOs. Moreover, Montero has concluded that the new opportunities for organizing through the auspices of NGOs is an opportunity open predominantly to *urban elites*: "NGOs are constituted by the urban elites that feel excluded from politics and economics... They have no capital to run a business. NGOs provide an alternative way to deal with the political and economic exclusion of elites" (Interview, 7/8/99). For Montero, Mozambique's transition to a liberal capitalist democracy has allowed more spaces to emerge for urban elites to organize, but not necessarily for other sectors of society.

Carlos Cardoso agreed with the general sentiment expressed by Montero and Taju regarding the NGO-ization of development. While there is room for more individual creativity, agendas are also superimposed. He reminds us, however, that there are exceptions to the rule, and he expresses greater hope for the possibilities of civil society: "There are NGOs that are genuinely in the movement, despite the fact that they began because of donor money.... There is a wave of opportunism, but some good is being done. Civil society is the struggle for a better epoch" (Interview, 7/9/99). The question remains: who will be a part of that struggle, and who will define what 'the better epoch' will look like?

Justiniano Liebl, who has worked on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua for years and now works at CAPRI, an organization which publishes a directory of all of the NGOs in Nicaragua, makes an argument that in Nicaragua the Sandinista organizations of

yesterday are the NGOs of today: "The popular mass organizations became the NGOs. The NGOs today are doing the work that the Sandinistas were better at! The people who lost their jobs with the Frente formed NGOs. Alemán feels he has to destroy the NGOs, because they are mostly Sandinista residue" (Interview 1/7/00).¹¹ Many people interviewed commented that the NGOs of civil society today are simply filling the void left by the defeat of the Sandinista government and doing the work that should be the responsibility of the state. In the 1980s, there were nine NGOs in Nicaragua. In the early 1990s, hundreds were born. As Mónica Zalaquett attests, civil society has been "practically born with thousands of Sandinistas from government trying to continue the revolution from outside, finding spaces for survival, salary, to work alongside government" in NGOs (Interview, 1/17/00).

Irma Ortega's story, a very common one among activist women in Nicaragua, exemplifies this transition from working within the Sandinista state to working within a post-revolutionary NGO. Ortega started to work with the Sandinistas immediately after the July 19, 1979 triumph of the revolution with the Sandinistas and was employed by the FSLN until they lost power in 1990. She worked with the Ministry of Agricultural Development from 1979-1982 at the Center for Investigations and Studies of Agrarian Reform (CIERA), and afterward continued working for the FSLN party for eight more years. After being unemployed in 1990, she began working at CIPRES conducting research on agrarian cooperatives, women's access to land, and development of bean and corn seed. She has been at CIPRES ever since: "This work has been an enriching experience. It has allowed me to be in contact with many women throughout the country.

¹¹ In 1998, in response to concerns that the money contributed to the Nicaraguan government for Hurricane Mitch relief efforts was squandered by the government rather than used to meet the needs of the victims, over 300 NGOs, associations and social movements in civil society came together to form the Coordinadora Civil. Karen Kampwirth (2001) has argued that Alemán's attacks on the spokeswoman of the Coordinadora Civil and on other individual NGO workers and social movement activists have been Anti-Sandinista, xenophobic and misogynist, targeting foreign-born naturalized citizens and women, particularly those connected to the feminist movement.

Besides being the director of many projects, I attend other conferences, teaching, training with women. Another thing very enriching for me is talking to women of other NGOs because I am in charge of gender here at CIPRES” (Interview, 1/18/00).

From her vantage point both inside the state and party apparatus and now outside the state in the NGO community, Ortega provides a very interesting critique of the changes that democratization and civil society have ushered into Nicaragua. In the following passage, Ortega describes the transformation in the organizing that has taken place from the revolutionary period to the present, making the critical point that the NGOs have merely risen to fill a void created by a neoliberal state:

Effectively, there was a lot of grassroots participation: children, youth, women, rural, urban workers...but the limiting obstacle was that everything revolved around the structure of the party.... In the 1990s, the most active groups today are women. The unions are still active, but they are divided too much. It is important to get together without changing the individuality of each. The women's encuentro motto was 'Unity with Diversity.' Many women's movements (the Network of Women on violence and health) have emerged in the 1990s with the emerging of NGOs. Rather than being a demonstration of 'democracy' that we have today, it is more of a necessity of society to address problems the government and the state no longer address. The state is becoming free of these responsibilities. It is more than the outcome of 'wonderful democracy'(Interview, 1/18/00).

María Rosa Renzi, UNDP Gender Representative makes very similar claims about the rise of NGOs to fill the void of a weak state: “Some sectors of civil society have flourished. Some of these things the state has stopped doing. Is this a social motivation or a necessity?” (Interview, 1/24/00). The NGO-ization of civil society appears to be a necessary outcome of a neoliberal state: activists attempting to fill the holes of a sinking ship.

Civil Society: A Weak Substitute for Democracy?

When the FSLN lost control of the state, many Sandinistas attempted to try to continue the work of a 'welfare state' through NGOs in civil society. But how can civil

society compete with the power of the state? Mónica Zalaquett reflects: “NGOs address many things: health, education, humanitarian commitment, professional development. But the action of organizations is a very limited space. Spaces are being closed... choking what is still democratic” (Interview, 1/17/00). Zalaquett agrees that the autonomous organizing of today has the freedom and vibrancy the Sandinista period was lacking; however, what is lost, is an organized governmental strategy:

Many Sandinistas left, not just referring to the Sergio Ramírez branch¹², but there are many who belong to no particular branch. We lead our Sandinismo from the NGOs - This feels like more of a transformative element than all my years with the FSLN. I think now, there is more richness, more creativity, more initiative, more freedom of speech, but a lot of disorder....not a part of a plan of a nation. I don't know where we are going as a government or as a people... Neither the government nor the NGOs should be put before people's interests...I favor the creation of permanent coordinating spaces of NGOs with governments over specific topics (Interview, 1/17/00).

So, is civil society an agent for democratization or a weak substitute for democracy? Clearly, it has the potential to be both, but one thing is certain: civil society does not *equal* democracy. Another person interviewed from Mozambique comments on how the donor community works with certain NGOs at the *expense* of government agencies: “Development driven-donors in the 90s like to give money to the NGOs. This is the financial connection - that's the way grants go. This has hurt some government institutions” (Interview). This helps contribute to the argument that civil society is expanding at the expense of the state, as a weak substitute for democracy.

Perhaps Zoilamérica Narvaez states best the distinction between a vibrant civil society and a powerful democracy. Narvaez credits the recent period of democratization with creating new spaces, new leaders, and new thinking around ideas and practices, but

¹² Sergio Ramírez, former Nicaraguan Vice President under Daniel Ortega, and some other prominent Sandinistas, left the party to express dissent with the lack of internal democratization in the FSLN and formed the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS). While the MRS contains many well respected Sandinista leaders, the party has not been able to establish any significant electoral success.

she praises the revolution for establishing a 'culture of organization' in Nicaragua. Moreover, she expresses concern over the new divisions that democratization has created, and offers a more challenging definition of democracy than multi-party elections:

The culture of organization has been the heritage of the revolution – a lot of organizations, a lot of participation. Now, it's true, for more opportunities, but now there is a new authoritarian system. We do not have the capacity for new coalitions, we do not have capacity building. In the past, we focused on what we had in common; now, there are more divisions, more weakness. There is hopelessness among the people, who just want to survive. We don't have a common idea of nation, we don't have common heroes, common symbols....In the 90s, we fell in love with social movements, in love with more identities. There are as many problems as there are identities. But political power issues cross everything....The structure of power stays the same. Political power must be transformed. The issue of democracy is not just the number of participants or spaces for process but the issue of the production of ideas about power (Interview, 1/14/00).

Power is often used to distinguish between what is *possible* within the realm of the state and what is merely *discussed* within the realm of civil society. Ana Criquillon describes the power differential between the revolutionary organizations and NGOs of today: "The union organizations were at the center of the revolution, the center position, the power of the revolution....To be at the center is to have more power, more power to change things...Unions have lost power in policy-making today due to neoliberal government and policies" (Interview, 1/20/00). Pressure from organizations in civil society can only go so far, especially decentralized NGOs led by urban elites and funded by the international donor community. Democratization will only be achieved when the civil society, the family, the market, and the state are targets for social, political and economic change.

7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, both countries have experienced gains in political democracy in terms of freedom of speech and expression, and losses in economic democracy in terms

of decreasing access to basic necessities and increasing economic inequality. The transitions from centralized single-party states to decentralized multi-party states have led to complicated gains and losses in terms of participatory democracy. Autonomous organizing in civil society has replaced mass organizations of the state, allowing for more freedom of association, more diversity, and greater grassroots initiative. However, both countries have also seen the NGO-ization of civil society, in which international funding agencies fund urban elites to help ease the pain of neoliberal structural adjustment policies. Moreover, party-membership seems to have replaced citizenship in terms of mass-based discourse on national policy issues.

Ultimately, autonomous organizing in post-revolutionary civil society constitutes both the prospects for progressive change through the exercise of grassroots agency, as well as the proliferation of liberal democratic capitalist monism through the preservation of the political and economic status quo of the international funding community. This is precisely why any movement for revolutionary democratic change cannot rest on civil society alone. It is clear that the process of the revolutions encouraged the participation of the masses, and as such, is largely responsible for the increase in autonomous organizing in civil society today; however, it is also clear that the revolutions *discouraged* diversity, and squelched dissent. Issues and positions which did not concur with the 'party line' are now being pursued through various autonomous organizations. The next chapter will address exactly the kind of diverse organizing that is taking place today in the autonomous women's movements of Mozambique and Nicaragua.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Contemporary Women's Movements and Emerging Feminisms in Mozambique and Nicaragua

“As you said, our women are fighting to survive. Women are the chief of the family. They are fighting to improve their economic life. At this moment, we are fighting for gender equality. Not differences of sex. We know the sexes are different, but the capacities are the same: administrators, managers, making decisions, giving opinions...We are fighting for gender equality. Yes, this is feminism.”

Paulina Mateus, Secretary-General of the OMM, Interview, 7/5/99

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the kinds of organizing taking place, the current debates, and the constructions of feminism emerging in the autonomous women's movements in Mozambique and Nicaragua, including an assessment of the relationship of the OMM and AMNLAE to the autonomous women's organizations in each country today. In Mozambique, the OMM, a FRELIMO organization, remains the predominant national women's organization, despite its loss of appeal to younger women and some members of the academic intellectual community. Approximately 50 women's organizations and gender-related NGOs have emerged in the post-revolutionary period. In Nicaragua, AMNLAE is simply one of over 300 women's organizations in the autonomous women's and feminist movements that exist all over the country. Despite AMNLAE's official autonomy, its loss of legitimacy with women over the years and continued affiliation with the FSLN has left it with much less of a leadership role in the contemporary women's movement. The electoral victory of FRELIMO and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas has helped create the very different terrains upon which the contemporary women's movements have developed. The state-as-enemy scenario in Nicaragua under the Chamorro and Aleman governments has fostered greater autonomy, greater discursive feminism, and an easier target for social movement organizing than the state-as-friend paradigm in Mozambique.

Contemporary women's organizing is taking different forms in Mozambique and Nicaragua. In Mozambique, women's organizing focuses on the law, economic development, and more recently, violence against women. In Nicaragua, women's organizing is coalescing around an intersectional approach to body politics. Issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, health, culture, the economy and the law are being constructed around a common understanding of women's bodily integrity. Women's organizations are recognizing the linkages between women's rights to be free from violence, to choose when, whether and how many children to have, to have access to health care and to economic opportunities, and to care for themselves and their families. However, while there seems to be a *divergence* in terms of the organizing taking place in the contemporary women's movement in each country, there is a *convergence* in the way feminism is understood in both countries. Feminisms in both Mozambique and Nicaragua, and I would argue, in much of the developing world, are being constructed in ways that challenge the practical/strategic, productive/reproductive, and economics/sex-violence-culture divides often upheld in American and European feminisms.

8.2 Contemporary Women's Organizing in Mozambique: Law, Economic Development and Violence Against Women

The OMM Today: The Need for an Intersectional Approach?

There are different perspectives about the role of the OMM today in Mozambique. For the most part, everyone agrees that the OMM is both historically responsible for the mobilization of women in the country and remains the most prominent women's organization today. According to Edda Collier, "The OMM today is still the main women's organization. They have representation at all levels - national, provincial, district and they are better at mobilization. Other NGOs are doing one thing only" (Interview, 7/30/99). Teresa Cruz e Silva, Director of the Center for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University, agrees: "Even today, the OMM in rural areas has stayed quite popular, they are trying to solve the problems of women" (Interview, 7/1/99). Carmen

Gamilo, an activist and worker at the OMM Center in Beira, says that one of the best things about the OMM is that it helps “to open the eyes of women to many other things they can plan to be” (Interview, 7/26/99). For Gertrudes Victorino, one of the best aspects of the OMM is that “generally, the OMM can find all kinds of women, but the base of the OMM is for the rural women...for us!” (Interview, 1/14/99). According to Celia Diniz, even now, the OMM has tremendous outreach and networking capacity, “working in Zambezia, for example, on land issues, documenting registration for women to have their documents to prove their identity” (Interview, 7/1/99).

On the other hand, some people I interviewed questioned the presence and continued prominence of the OMM. Generossa Cossa, Secretary of the branch of the OMM at Eduardo Mondlane University from 1988-1995, stated, “They think I’m still the secretary. The OMM branch at the University is not functioning clearly. It is government-oriented....There are also big problems at the OMM here. Lecturers do not want to work with the OMM, they said, for illiterate and uneducated women!” (Interview, 7/14/99). According to Sandra Manuel, a young university student, “the OMM was powerful in the beginning, but you cannot see much that they are doing now” (Interview, 7/12/99). Clearly, the differences among and between women, including, class, education, and age to name a few, are emerging in Mozambique, and may provoke the need for a greater diversity of organizations rather than the ‘one organization to include all women’ model that was also deemed inadequate in Nicaragua. According to Harriet McGuire, Former Director of USIA, Maputo: “The OMM is generally respected for what it did: consciousness-raising, education. I don’t see that the younger generation has any interest in the OMM, and they are not interested in giving up the reins. The OMM is a creature of its time, and its time may be up (Interview, 7/16/99). Maria Fernanda Farinha, agrees: “The OMM can’t find an agenda. It can’t connect to a constituency. It needs an orientation” (Interview, 7/8/99).

I would argue that three of the problems with the OMM's orientation have to do with: (1) its lack of an autonomous identity for women separate from the FRELIMO party; (2) its affiliation with the ruling government of FRELIMO, which may make it more difficult to target that government for effective political change for women; and (3) its lack of attention to women's diversities. However, it was evident from Chapter 4 that the OMM did not work as an autonomous women's organization separate from the FRELIMO party because its FRELIMO affiliation has always been an intrinsic part of its identity. It seems to me, then, that the continuing growth of the Mozambican women's movement requires one of the following two scenarios: (1) the OMM has to work to foster an independent 'feminist' identity; or (2) other organizations need to continue to emerge to provide women the space to develop an autonomous identity from FRELIMO, enabling them to act as an adequate critic of the ruling party on behalf of women.

Part of the issue of identity for the OMM is the organization's inadequate dealing with women's diversities.¹ Women in both Mozambique and Nicaragua discovered during the process of organizing that an agenda to please *all women* cannot be created given women's other multifarious identities. Moreover, it seems inevitable that 'the women's organization' of the revolutionary period would give way to 'many women's organizations' in the post-revolutionary period, as has been the case for AMNLAE in Nicaragua. It also seems to be important empirical evidence that the 'one-identity' approach is giving way to a more *intersectional* approach in the contemporary period. According to Gertrudes Victorino, "After Nairobi, the OMM saw that it cannot please *all* kinds of women, and that *women come from different classes. Now, there are organizations that deal with each kind of woman: intellectual, rural, students*" [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/14/99). And there are other divisive issues that are emerging. Maria

¹ See my discussion on the benefits of addressing diversity in Chapter 4, Section 4.4, and on the need for intersectionality in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.

Fernanda Farinha describes the areas of reproductive life that she feels women's groups in Mozambique should be focusing on but are ignoring:

Having children is a men's issue! If you don't give a man kids he wants to go and get another woman! Polygamy is not legal, but it is accepted. Fear of getting pregnant means to control. Abortion is illegal. If a woman is married, the opinion of her husband is needed. Because abortion is illegal, the doctor doesn't want to do it without a man's approval. Women's groups don't talk about these issues. There is no women's group trying to change this (Interview, 7/8/99).

There seem to be voices emerging for the first time in Mozambique that are raising issues that have not been raised before (i.e., domestic violence, abortion, reproductive rights) and demanding spaces outside of the OMM to organize. When I asked the Secretary-General of the OMM how she felt about the creation and existence of other women's organizations in Mozambique, Mateus replied, "I feel that it is good. Some of the women that belong to other organizations or associations are still members of the OMM. Women and education, women and health. The OMM cannot do everything. We are all women, we are all working for women, we have common objectives" (Interview, 7/5/99).

The current issue agenda for the OMM focuses on economic development, education and the law. The OMM provides training for women, participation in international meetings for women to analyze activities and identify common ideas and common problems affecting women, and activities in the areas of women's education, health and legal rights in the provinces, including a Social Program for Justice and Equality. Also in each province, there are small economic agricultural projects for women and *Interest Circles* organized on the local level where groups of twenty women activists hold regular meetings to address women's needs in the areas of cooking and sewing. The OMM also has training centers and programs in adult education. The OMM Provincial/City Center in Beira offers childcare for primary school age children and adult education for women. The OMM activities Carmen Gamilo described in Beira include

sewing, crochet, seminars on baby care, family planning, the environment, pregnancy, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and taboos. There are sixteen Circles of Interest in Sofala province alone. This seems to be the best feminist service the OMM provides: access to education and information for women on the local grassroots level all over the country.

In assessing the relationship of the OMM to the new women's NGOs that have developed in the 1990s, Eulália Temba states, "The OMM covered all the women in the country. Now, there is a proliferation of NGOs. The OMM was first. The OMM was implemented at the community level. The NGOs are not very in depth in women's lives as the OMM was. Women do participate, and have a voice. But, you cannot forget the resistance of men" (Interview, 7/13/99). Despite the fact that the OMM has a presence in every province in Mozambique, it seems to function more as a *party organization of women* and less as a *women's organization*. The OMM was effectively the Women's League of the political party (see Chapters 3 and 4) and has never really had the autonomy to develop a feminist analysis of women's oppression. However, as just discussed, its strength is in its capacity to mobilize and bring services to women in the rural areas, and, in that sense, serves a *feminist function*. However, I would predict that the OMM, like AMNLAE, will continue to decline as a women's organization unless it works on creating an identity for women separate from FRELIMO that incorporates an understanding of women's diversities.

Autonomous Women's Organizations in Mozambique: Economic Development, Education, Violence Against Women and Women's Legal Rights

Ana Maria Montero works with the NGO Development Project of Eduardo Mondlane University. According to Montero, "the NGO process in Mozambique consists mainly of national NGO's taking part in societal activities with the opening, democratizing process in Mozambique" (Interview, 7/8/99). Montero believes that there are many women in Mozambican organizations, associations, and movements today

because of the fact that for many years, women could only participate politically, economically, and socially in the OMM:

Women had to be a member of the OMM to have the opportunity to participate or give their experience. When the country gave the opportunity to all people to organize in associations, the women found the place..women found a place to exchange ideas and discuss their situation in Mozambique. Associations give excluded women the opportunity to show the people that they have the capacity to do anything in different sectors (Interview, 7/8/99).

Today, there are 50 women's associations in Mozambique, an increase from 1997 when there were 25 associations in total. Most of the newly created autonomous women's organizations and NGO's in Mozambique are doing work in the areas of economic development, violence against women, education and women's legal rights. In this section, I will examine examples of four different kinds of women's organizations in Mozambique doing work in these areas: (1) feminist activist/research organizations; (2) academic feminist organizations; (3) grassroots organizations; (4) entrepreneurial women's organizations.

Feminist Activism in Mozambique and Abroad: Forum Mulher

One of the first and most important explicitly feminist organizations established in the post-revolutionary period in Mozambique is Forum Mulher. Forum Mulher, an umbrella organization created in part by the OMM in 1994, consists of organizational and institutional members of the women's movement in Mozambique: national and international NGO's, some trade unions, and governmental institutions working in Mozambique. Mozambican organizations pay membership dues of 500 meticaïs per year (\$40); international organizations pay \$250 per year. Forum Mulher has a staff of 7 women, including a coordinator, two officers for training and information, one administrative assistant, a secretary, one coordinator of violence against women, one

journalist for violence against women, and other support and security staff. Forum Mulher works in the following four areas: (1) Information dissemination to members; (2) Education and training about gender issues; (3) Lobbying to influence governmental decision-makers; and (4) Follow-up on the Beijing Conference and the NGO Forum of 1995.

When I asked Cédia Montero, Coordinator of Forum Mulher, about gender in Mozambique, she said that theories about gender are important to remind people to discuss all issues not just in relation to men but also with women. For Montero, gender is about analyzing the social relations *between* men and women: "Some of the work done in some areas does not think about the needs of women. It is important to consider the needs of women and the needs of men and the social relations between women and men" (Interview, 6/29/99). The literature of Forum Mulher stands out in Mozambique for its explicit identification of patriarchy with the systemic oppression of women.

For Montero, Forum Mulher is not a 'political' organization because *political* constitutes *partisanship*. Paulina Mateus, OMM Secretary-General, describes the need for the creation of Forum Mulher as twofold: (1) to enable the OMM to work with other women's organizations; and (2) to provide a non-partisan umbrella organization that would not belong to FRELIMO since the OMM was re-established as a partisan organization. The non-partisanship of Forum Mulher was an essential component of its identity in light of the OMM's continued affiliation with the FRELIMO party. According to Mateus, "To fight for women, promote women, we should be together. Small parties deviate our objectives, common objectives, issues we should all discuss" (Interview, 7/5/99). According to Terezinha da Silva, a member of the Board of Forum Mulher, "We fought hard to create Forum Mulher. Men also are members. Not every woman is a member of the OMM. The OMM equals FRELIMO. It is better to be independent, to follow the objective of reaching out to all women. It is better out of the party. There is freedom of choice" (Interview, 7/23/99).

One of the most innovative programs of Forum Mulher has been its three-year program on violence against women from 1996-1999 entitled *All Against Violence*. *All Against Violence* is a program coordinated by Forum Mulher composed of seven women's organizations. The program had the goals of civic education, changing legislation which discriminates against women, including the Family Code and entrepreneurial equity, assisting victims psychologically, medically and legally and investigating the situation of violence against women in Mozambique:

We lobby Parliament, government through our members. We lobby on several subjects: the Labor law, child abuse (there has been an increase in child abuse, which is a big problem in Mozambique). We wrote a letter to Parliament and organized a public debate about this with members of government, political parties last year in March, 1998. Of the people we invited, a majority of them came; we reflected on the situation (Interview, 6/29/99).

Forum Mulher publishes a monthly brochure on the topic of violence against women and holds monthly discussion meetings for its membership on such topics as the internet and gender issues, art in the schools, gender relations, elections, violence against women, women's human rights, and AIDS. They organize courses on gender issues, leadership and how to lobby Parliament using a network of training and consultants with people from various institutes in Holland, the Netherlands, India, and London.

When I asked Montero questions about the OMM, she asked not to speak about the organization: "I prefer to speak only about the Women's Forum. You can talk to OMM about OMM" (Interview, 6/29/99). Her silence revealed to me the possibility of the existence of some tension between the more overtly feminist concerns of Forum Mulher and the ideology of the OMM. It was also interesting for me to discover that before the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women in 1995 in Beijing, it was Forum Mulher and not the long-established and well-known OMM that took a leadership role in the preparatory meetings. Forum Mulher compiled a report from all of the preparatory meetings that were held around the country, and they organized two national meetings, in

1994 and 1995, where women's issues were discussed. According to Montero, these meeting had about 100 people in attendance (Interview, 6/29/99). Forum Mulher also organized panels after Beijing, including a national meeting to disseminate information about the Platform of Action. They also translated the Platform into Portuguese and created a smaller version of it for dissemination in order to reach more people from the provinces.

Feminist Activism and Research on Women's Legal Rights: Economic Development, Violence Against Women and Reproductive Rights

MULEIDE

The most prominent autonomous women's rights organization in Mozambique is MULEIDE (Women, Law and Development organization). MULEIDE, the first post-revolutionary women's organization established in Mozambique in 1991, provides the most pervasive analysis of women's rights within the context of economic and political development. According to Elisa Muianga and Celeste Bango, President and Executive Director of MULEIDE, respectively, MULEIDE was the first organization to question the differential legal treatment of men and women in Mozambique. MULEIDE is a women's organization with different women specialists in history, psychology, law, and economics. The goal of the organization is to give women in suburban and rural areas an 'urban knowledge' of women's rights (Interview, 7/8/99). Muianga and Bango describe the development of MULEIDE:

MULEIDE is the first organization in Mozambique to defend the rights of women in particular. We deal with women's rights. It was the first organization born after the OMM to deal with the promotion of women and women and men's equal rights. We work as a legal organization to defend human rights. We are always involved as an advocacy organization trying to promote good changes for women. We worked to get the Land Law² revised because it is women who mostly work on

² See my discussion of the Land Law in Chapter 6, section 6.4.

the land. We were there to see if the Land Law benefited women (Interview, 7/21/99).

MULEIDE has done studies on domestic violence, child prostitution and abuse, women in the informal sector, police violence, and women and reproductive health, including STDs, and family planning. Officially, abortion is forbidden in Mozambique except in cases of risk to the woman's life. Although abortion is illegal, many people I interviewed confirmed that abortions are performed at the Central Hospital in Maputo: "You must bring a letter from the husband, brother or father. Abortion is illegal. But in practice - bring a letter" (Interview). Despite the fact that abortion is officially forbidden in Mozambique, MULEIDE has no immediate intention to take a stance on legalization: "It is not a deep matter here at MULEIDE. We are trying to find the opinion of people to start to discuss it. We are collecting information" (Interview, 7/21/99).

The information I gathered about abortion during my interviews in Mozambique reveals a range from a lack of interest, to a real sensitivity around even discussing the topic. When I asked Polly Gastor what FRELIMO's position on abortion was, she replied, "We're not the slightest bit interested in abortion. It is not our priority. Anyway, our social and family situations are different" (Interview, 1/13/99). Carla Braga understands this supposed 'lack of interest' in abortion in Mozambique as part of the missing analysis of women's emancipation in the reproductive sphere of the family, impeding the emergence of an intersectional approach to women's body politics:

In terms of policy, issues of the private sphere, and the family, like violence, power-sharing, and reproduction are very touchy. Contraception and women's access to it is a problem. Abortion – who would dare to do it, its still illegal. There is a document signed by the Ministry of Health saying conditions in which abortion can be made, the number of weeks, and you have to have permission

from a male: husband, father, brother, not mother....They fear that free abortion will increase prostitution and encourage young people to use sexuality more freely (Interview, 7/15/99).

Teresa Cruz e Silva identifies the progress that is being made in the area of reproductive rights in Mozambique: "Abortion was illegal; now it is controlled. You need a husband or boyfriend's permission. Although laws are not protecting women, there is an open mind at the Ministry of Health. There are lots of changes linking reproductive rights with the best health program for women" (Interview, 7/1/99). As has been the case around the world, movements for women's reproductive rights are most often initially (and successfully) attached to issues surrounding women's health: "For more than 40 years, so many have been having illegal abortions and dying" (Cruz e Silva Interview, 7/1/99). As MULEIDE gathers information on attitudes about abortion, it will be interesting to see whether the country's premier women's rights organization takes on the issue of women's reproductive rights.

WLSAMAZ

The most important research being done on women's legal rights and discrimination in Mozambique is that of WLSAMAZ, the Women and Law in Southern Africa, Mozambique Research Project. The Women and Law in Southern Africa project analyzes women in seven countries: Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. Since it was established, they have produced the following studies/publications: Women and Maintenance (1992); Women and Inheritance (1996); Families in a Changing Environment (1997); Justice Delivery System: Problems and Constraints in Women's Access to Justice (forthcoming). Since 1996, Eulália Temba has been the National Coordinator of the WLSAMAZ Project. According to Temba, "In

all of our studies, we found that women are in a disadvantaged position in terms of exercising their rights” (Interview, 7/13/99). WLSAMAZ is working on the reform of the Family Law, providing research to the commission: “This is one of our big impacts. Changing the Penal Code on violence. Categorizing different types of violence, and punishments” from a gendered perspective (Interview, 7/13/99).

Carla Braga, who works with WLSAMAZ, discusses the various legal projects she works on at Eduardo Mondlane University, as well as the limitations of such legal change for women. Braga is involved with a group of women from UEM doing activist work on the New Family Law. There is a document already constituted, which is expected to be submitted to Parliament next year. Braga expressed some concerns about how much good the new law would actually do, even if passed: “I’m giving it so much importance. How many women will this actually affect? Most women live by customary law versus written law....There is little knowledge of the law, even among literate people. Statistics say 80% are illiterate, and 20% are literate, knowing how to read and write” (Interview, 7/15/99). As discussed in Chapter 5, legal change can only go so far: cultural and educational change must accompany any legal program for expanding women’s rights in Mozambique.

Generally speaking, neither legal nor cultural change in the area of reproductive and sexual rights have been a priority in Mozambique. However, the 1997 WLSAMAZ report on *Changing Families in Mozambique* makes a very strong statement about the state’s unwillingness to link women’s reproductive and sexual rights to women’s health:

The State and the current normative systems continue to limit the implementation of a health perspective of reproductive rights and of the exercise of women’s sexuality.... The State, while it

has made important advances at the level of intentions, lacks an objective policy which would favor the basic conditions of women, and enable them to exercise their rights. Women are unable to exercise their rights, so long as education and health systems are inadequate, and socio-cultural diversity is not respected" (WLSAMAZ, 1997, 157).

The WLSAMAZ document is one of the few that I have come across that explicitly states that women must have the decision-making power over the number and spacing of their children and that abortion should be legalized for all women to be used without any declaration of support from a man in her family (157). The use of contraception is also a problem. In 1990, 4% of rural women were estimated to use contraception (*Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 1994, 25). According to Teresa Cruz e Silva, "Not all families are prepared to have women using contraception. There is more and more teenage pregnancy....Condoms for free for young people in the rural areas is difficult (Interview, 7/1/99). Eulália Temba comments on men's resistance to contraception:

We need a new model of life, new gender relations. It is not correct to have one side dominant and the other side inferior or subordinate. We should live in equality. Women still have a lot of limitations at the family level. It is not easy for women to decide how many children....In most families, the man decides. Family planning...some men are changing, and thinking contraception is OK. We must educate, particularly the men. Old men will never accept their wife using contraception. God gave women the capacity to have babies. They should bring all of the children into the world (Interview, 7/13/99).

Obviously, more work needs to be done by the new NGOs on women's legal rights in Mozambique to collect data, educate women and men, and change the laws in the area women's bodily integrity.

Academic Women's Organizations: NUMAC

Many other academic entities at Eduardo Mondlane University are a part of the women's movement emerging in Mozambique. The Department of Women's and Gender Studies in the university's Centre of African Studies was created in 1991 "to carry out research and studies on the social relations of men and women in the context of Mozambique's political economy, looking at existing structures in economic and social terms, with the problematic of women's emancipation as a central feature" (*The Situation of Women in Mozambique*, 14). In addition, one of the faculty members at UEM helped establish an organization of academic women, O Nucleo da Mulher Academica (NUMAC), in 1992. Generossa Cossa, President of NUMAC, is currently coordinating two projects: (1) An Internet to the Schools Project including 13 schools (three in Maputo, one in Matola, one in Xai-Xai, one in Beira, two in Inhambane, two in Nampula), training teachers to use computers; putting schools and students in contact with other countries; and (2) Use of computer-based training in math classrooms, software development and research in secondary schools (Interview, 7/14/99).

In addition, the Research Project on Gender of the Land Studies Unit (NET) of Eduardo Mondlane University as well as the Gender Group of the Terra Campanha (Land Campaign), are two of the most important projects conducting gendered research and analyzing gendered access and control over resources on land in Mozambique. The Land Unit is the counterpart to the Land Tenure Center at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The main objectives of the Land Studies Unit are research and training on land and rural development, including projects on land issues in Zambezia, on coconut and cashew nut trees, a training project funded by Ford, and direction of 25 student theses on related issues.

Grassroots Women's Organizations: ADOCA

ADOCA, the Associação Das Donas De Casa, (Association of Housewives), is a small grassroots organization of the developing communities of Matola, a rural suburb outside of Maputo, that works with women and men for the development of their communities. According to Ivete Mboa, coordinator of ADOCA, the organization began in 1991 as a result of communities discussing the need for governmental assistance: "Why don't we organize ourselves instead of waiting for the government to help us? When we began, members had to support the organization. We made and sold cloth to improve the financial conditions of the organization" (Interview, 7/7/99). The monies raised by the organization were put right back into community development projects, building residential houses for people living in the cities, refugees from the provinces: "We made a well, we made a school and we built fifty houses in the suburbs of Matola. We built another school to hold people. We are building a center where the workers will be the people - we will employ the people. Our goal is to produce: to improve the conditions of the people" (Interview, 7/7/99).

Entrepreneurial Women Emerge: ACTIVA

In addition to associations of grassroots women, organizations for entrepreneurial women are also emerging in Mozambique. ACTIVA is one such organization. Founder Palmira Francisco, also a Member of Parliament and Advisor to the Gender Division, describes how organizations of elite women are newly emerging in the context of an expanding civil society:

The OMM, the only organization for women, has been good at mobilization in each province. They taught small courses in sewing and cooking and focused on low-income women. There was hostility and difficulty for other women's organizations to be established. ACTIVA focuses more on economics, business women, the informal sector (Interview, 6/30/99).

As gaps expand between the urban rich and the rural poor in Mozambique, and women have more opportunities to organize outside of the structure of the OMM and FRELIMO, the multiple identities of women emerge as relevant in their organizing capacity. Class and gender commonalities, contradictions, and cross-cutting cleavages may just be beginning to emerge within the growing women's movement in Mozambique.

8.3 The Autonomous Women's and Feminist Movements in Nicaragua

One of the most prominent new movements in civil society in post-Sandinista Nicaragua is the autonomous women's movement. There has been a push for greater gender consciousness and autonomous women's organizing from within the structure of the FSLN and AMNLAE since the mid 1980s, particularly within the women's secretariats of the workers associations (see Chapter 4). The electoral loss of the Sandinistas created the space for autonomous and self-defined feminist organizing in civil society in Nicaragua, and, in that sense, has been positive for the vibrant women's movement that has emerged.

The Birth of the Autonomous Women's and Feminist Movements in Nicaragua

How was the autonomous women's movement born in post-Sandinista Nicaragua? There has been an explosion of women's organizing around a diversity of interests that were not given attention during the revolutionary period, revealing a new era of freedom, egalitarian organizational structures and feminist approaches to human rights and civil society. In the 1990s, there has been a decentralization of the women's movement in Nicaragua, a vast proliferation of women's organizations within the autonomous women's movement, and a declining role for AMNLAE. Today, AMNLAE

as an organization is too aligned with the FSLN to attract members of the autonomous women's movement, yet it is not Sandinista enough to be an organization of party women. Hence, its demise is being constructed. This may foreshadow what will happen to the OMM. However, the importance of AMNLAE (and the OMM) is in the historical specificity of the moment in which it existed and the functions it has served.

Throughout Nicaragua, autonomous organizations for women against violence and women and health emerged in the early 1990s. According to Sofia Montenegro, the trajectory of the Nicaraguan women's movement from AMNLAE to autonomy went through three developmental stages of consciousness: from an anti-dictatorial, to an anti-imperialist and nationalist approach, to finally "the consciousness of women for themselves" (Interview, 1/25/00). Ana Criquillon argues that by 1991 there were four currents in the Nicaraguan Women's Movement: (1) AMNLAE; (2) the Women's Secretariats of the ATC, CST; (3) Women's Secretariats of UNE, CONAPRO, women's centers, houses and NGOs and independent feminist collectives; and (4) many women's groups who did not identify with any of the other three currents, including women's agricultural collectives and women organized around specific themes like religion, disabilities, the environment, etc. (233). As Montenegro summarizes, "Ten years after AMNLAE was hegemonic during the '80s, today is just one movement more within the broad spectrum of the women's movement. The autonomous movement is now about 300 groups organized in the country" (Interview, 1/25/00).

The birth of the autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua, although driven by years of internal dissent within AMNLAE and the FSLN, is traced to two moments of

rebellion³: (1) the “Festival of the 52%” held by women autonomously from the AMNLAE Congress in 1991; and (2) the National Conference, ‘Diverse but United,’ held in 1992. Helen Dixon describes the origin of her organization, Grupo Venancia in Matagalpa, within the context of the “Festival of the 52%” :

We went from 2 crazy women working out of their houses in 1991 to 18 women working full time in 2000! We were born when the lid blew off of the autonomous women's movement. After the election loss in 1990, women's organizations began sprouting up like mushrooms. In March, 1991, there was an AMNLAE Congress. Completely autonomous was the 52%: they said they did not have to get permission of the party, the state or the government any more! This was a declaration of rebellion (Interview, 1/31/00).

Sofia Montenegro credits the birth of the autonomous women's movement from the ‘Diverse but United’ conference in 1992. The reactivation process began by AMNLAE culminated in the Nicaraguan Women's Conference, or feminist encuentro, in 1992 attended by over 800 women. AMNLAE boycotted the meeting, and informed women from AMNLAE that they could not go to the conference and represent AMNLAE. Many feminists from within AMNLAE still attended the conference; they simply made it clear that they were representing *themselves as individuals*, not any particular organization.

Yes, in this whole process during the 1990s, groups of women who were organized at AMNLAE, whose identity was originally AMNLAE, they created autonomous small groups, establishing their own agenda. This is a process that has lasted up until this moment, but officially from the women's movement history, began at the 1992 meeting. 800 women from all over the country came, which was a show of force, from the emerging autonomous movement, because that magnitude of organization can only be done by a huge organization like the party itself. But we were not the Front. This is the birth certificate or the independence declaration of the women's movement in 1992 from AMNLAE (Interview, 1/25/00).

³ See Chapter 4 for the history of AMNLAE's struggle with the FSLN, women's struggles within AMNLAE, and the origin of the path toward autonomy.

The story of Sandra Ramos López, a former member of the FSLN and a founding member of the Central Sandinistas de Trabajadores (CST) from 1979-1993, is one of the best examples of an activist woman who fought for years within the Sandinista Union Movement to incorporate the rights of women, only to decide to seek autonomous organizing outside of the party. Because of difficulties with the incorporation of a gendered analysis of workers and 'work' in the union movement, Ramos López, the first woman elected as a leader in the CST, and other women decided to leave the organization and venture out on their own. Today, Ramos López is the Coordinator of the Movimiento de Mujeres Trabajadoras y Desempleadas - María Elena Cuadra (Movement of Working and Unemployed Women). Her organization was born in 1994 out of "violent confrontation with a group of syndicalists" in the Sandinista union movement in Nicaragua (Interview, 1/10/00). According to Ramos López,

In the syndicate world, the language is pretty sexist, masculinist. The concept of the worker is patriarchal. They don't talk about workers in a feminist sense....So, a group of women decided to leave the organization to fight for the rights of women in this country. The purpose is pretty simple: to work for the rights of working and unemployed women in Nicaragua. We are working for improved quality of life and working conditions for women in Nicaragua. We also work to create equality among workers in Nicaragua - equality at the working place and in the social arena. We promote leadership of women...simply, to change the world! (Interview, 1/10/00).

Sonia Agurto, researcher with FIDEG, confirms that the María Elena Cuadra movement, led by Sandra Ramos, President of the Women's Secretariat of the CST, began with a "huge fight...she almost went to jail.... Women were very concerned with women's rights. They started to struggle. For example, Sandra Ramos....The best women left the CST. Women began breaking off, yes, to form their own organizations" (Interview, 1/10/00). Ramos López describes what her organization focuses on today:

Our movement works with women in poverty. We promote projects and programs to face unemployment. Some amount

of money, to own small businesses, pay back credit. We have scholarships in non-traditional work for women, such as electricians, construction, carpentry, cab-repairing. We cannot say with this program we are going to solve the problems, but we are fighting to help the economic crisis. This institution is pretty worried about the future of labor in Nicaragua. It is criticized that women clean the house, but nobody does anything to change that. It is the same criticism...until when? We need to change that unfair situation (Interview, 1/10/00).

The following section will examine exactly how the autonomous women's movement has developed in Nicaragua in the post-revolutionary period: what problems have arisen, and what decisions have been made.

The Development of the Autonomous Women's and Feminist Movements in Nicaragua

The birth and development of the autonomous women's movement represents a victory for democratization, civil society and feminism in Nicaragua. This does not mean, however, that there have not been problems, flaws and debates which have emerged and ensued throughout the decade of the 1990s. Two main questions have been debated about the autonomous women's movement today: (1) Is it too dispersed, diverse and decentralized to be powerful? and (2) Does it need a more organized representative structure rather than a loose networking structure to be effective in the national policy process?

At the 1992 National 'Diverse But United' Conference, a split took place between Sofia Montenegro, María Teresa Blandon and the Feminist National Committee (CNF) and Ana Criquillon, Vilma Castillo Aramburu and the Puntos de Encuentro faction over issues of organizational strategies and structures. The proposal promoted by the Puntos de Encuentro faction was a horizontal, collectivist structure based on networking around

issues. The Puntos de Encuentro faction wanted to avoid the kind of verticalist structure that they had just fought to exit (AMNLAE, the FSLN). They argued that they should not implement a formal structure too quickly, and instead should identify practical grassroots themes to work on through more informal networks.

The CNF faction wanted the ability to intercede politically with the state and traditional power structures, thus they felt a more formal structure was necessary on the national level. The CNF faction proposed that the women's movement should have an organization that combined representation, participation, and democratically elected leadership, a structure that is "horizontal enough to be democratic and vertical enough to be efficient," avoiding the 'tyranny of structurelessness' in which women leaders emerge within a movement but are not accountable to any constituency because they were not officially elected (Interview, 1/25/00). Montenegro argued that just because women had had "a bad experience with structures with the Front and with AMNLAE," they shouldn't "throw the dirty water out with the baby of the organization inside" (Interview, 1/25/00).

Thus, there were two tendencies, which, although, according to Helen Dixon were "completely complementary," were constructed as oppositional. The main issue raised was the whole problem of representation, and who can represent whom. The women present were very committed to participatory democracy, and were also afraid of replicating the kind of vertical structures they had experienced for over a decade with the party, the government and the state. As a result, at the 1992 National Conference the redes (networks) were born. Seven issue-based networks were formulated to coordinate the work of the autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua (Economy and Environment, Violence, Sexuality, Health, Education, Social Communicators, and

Political Participation). Debates have ensued throughout the decade over the efficacy of the networks, the use of the term 'feminist' (which immediately creates the category of women 'non-feminists'), and the necessity of organizational autonomy for all of the groups within the autonomous women's movement, which calls into question the role of AMNLAE and the union secretariats.

According to Montenegro, the question of how to organize the Nicaraguan women's movement on a national scale has been "the biggest discussion of the whole '90s decade" (Interview, 1/25/00). The issue has been whether or not to continue with issue-based loose associations or networks, or to create some kind of organized representative body elected to fight for feminist policy initiatives on behalf of various Nicaraguan women's interests:

We have not been able to resolve in the whole decade of the '90s this networking crisis. In 1992, we decided that, okay, we won't discuss this thing because there's a bad climate for the discussion of this; we will remain at the level of networking. We will not validate any leadership. Everybody participates horizontally in the networking. We decided to organize loosely eight redes, or networks, of health, sexuality, economy, violence... only two have survived by the year 2000. Only two are still alive as we predicted because the model of organization of networking misses a lot of things and creates new problems we foresaw at that time. We knew it was not sufficient, it was not enough to network, but it would have to be accompanied by something else (Interview, 1/25/00).

Montenegro is most critical of the networking model. She described networking as the "typical American vision of forms of organizing themselves around issues, around themes, of which you provided the possibility to open a space to women to participate very loosely in some issue of their interest" (Interview, 1/25/00).

There are three main problems with networking for Montenegro. First, is the loss of political force. Meeting once every two or three months prevents political efficiency

and the ability to move quickly and powerfully around a gendered issue on the national level. Second, Montenegro argues that networking is an American invention that may not be appropriate to the conditions of Nicaragua: "This is a model that will have to be revised according to Nicaraguan necessity. Networking is a northern invention because they have communication, they have e-mail, they have telephones, they have whatever, but we need to combine many things in order to create a new sort of structure that we need.... (Interview, 1/25/00). The third main problem for Montenegro is that there is no structure or explicit leadership within networks, but there is still power that operates, and that can be very undemocratic:

It is not as democratic as they proclaim for different reasons. Since they have no structure and everybody's equal, in fact there are leaderships de facto, but they are not accountable. It works like hegemony: they work by commissions and these commissions, in the end, they do whatever they want and they're not accountable because they were not officially elected and are not officially accountable, and this is the problem with this position. I think that a brilliant feminist theoretician, Jo Freeman, wrote a book or a paper called, 'the Tyranny of the Lack of Structures,' which we could have been able to prove point by point here in Nicaragua that what she says is true....And therefore some of these feminists are in NGOs that are powerful, and all the networks gravitate there. So, in policy, the NGO that is predominant, whose leadership is predominant in that space, it is the policy of the NGO, not the policy of the women's movement (Interview, 1/25/00).

What Montenegro and the CNF faction want is an organization in which different women representing different specific interests can come together to discuss a political program for the movement, "to make an integral vision and not get ghettoized in a theme" (Interview, 1/25/00). An issue-based approach can serve to ghettoize issues into pre-existent categories, thus preventing the kind of holistic, integrative, intersectional approach to women's material struggles in the spheres of production and reproduction

that many women in Nicaragua are fighting to create. Montenegro describes in detail what this national coordinating representative structure would look like, and how it would fight to prevent the marginalization of women into particular issues without an understanding of how each part fits into the larger political, economic and socio-cultural whole. Each coordinated network (women against violence, network for health, those who work on Beijing issues, the rural women's movement, etc.) should each elect two representatives to a larger organizational structure which would meet monthly to discuss the situation of the country from a gendered perspective, incorporating the diversity of Nicaraguan women's interests. That way, the leadership of the autonomous women's movement would be both elected and accountable.

It has been difficult to reach consensus within the Nicaraguan women's movement on this issue. One reason is that there is a preoccupation with autonomy and independence among some feminists in civil society today given the top-down organizing during the revolutionary period. Sofia Montenegro and the leaders of the CNF faction have been criticized and accused of being vanguardists, undemocratic, and of supporting a feminism that is too abstract. According to Argentina Olivas of the Colectivo de Mujeres in Matagalpa (Women's Collective), "The network way is functioning now. The National Feminist Committee (CNF) existed in the 1990s. It disintegrated in 1995 and re-emerged in 1998 as La Corriente - La Malinche headed by María Teresa Blandon. When they disintegrated, we left" (Interview, 1/31/00). She critiques the work of Montenegro and Blandon for being too theoretical: "The original program of La Corriente is incompatible with ours. We have differences. Practical work with women was not identified. Their feminist platform focused on...it has to come down to reality. We believe

you have to make theory from the practice of hunger and violence, and not make theories in the air” (Interview, 1/31/00). Montenegro and her supporters assert that all they want is an organization with a democratically-elected leadership and a representative structure that can act politically as a powerful force of women and feminists, to take on the state and create an agenda for national policy, not simply for particular issues (Interview, 1/25/00). Time will tell how the Nicaraguan women’s movement will settle this debate. However, at this point, it is important to examine what autonomous women’s organizations are doing today in Nicaragua, and what they have and have not been able to accomplish for women under the present circumstances.

8.4 ‘Democracy in the Country, the House and the Bed’: Body Politics and the Intersection of Practical and Strategic Gender Interests in Nicaragua

Two of the most often ignored areas of women’s emancipation in revolutionary contexts include domestic or family violence and reproductive rights, including contraception and abortion. In fact, the Nicaraguan women I interviewed often cited domestic violence and reproductive health as the areas in which women’s lives needed the most improvement. Both of these issues fall within the parameters of *body politics*, and are typically understood as strategic gender interests in the private, ‘reproductive’ sphere of life. However, a full understanding of family violence and reproductive choice reveals that both issues lie at the intersection of practical and strategic gender interests. Organizing around body politics in the areas of domestic violence and reproductive health represents a new direction for women’s organizing in civil society that was left unaddressed during the Sandinista period. In this section, I would like to address the issues of domestic violence and reproductive rights in Nicaragua, and discuss what

Nicaraguan women are doing today to create an intersectional, feminist approach to body politics.

Domestic Violence

Zoilamérica Narvaez's account of child sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather, Daniel Ortega, brought issues of sexual abuse and domestic violence to the surface in Nicaragua for the first time.⁴ According to Mónica Zalaquett, Executive Director of the Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia, "Zoilamérica is an example of one of the [millions] of cases we have in this country. The case is an example because he is a political leader. It is a bad message for society. After her accusation, there were more accusations, other women were made strong to tell their own stories" (Interview, 1/17/00). Zalaquett goes on to describe the problem of family violence in Nicaragua:

The problem of sexual abuse affects girls and boys. It is extremely frequent. People don't see it as a sin until it is seen; it is simply a family secret. It is so important that she revealed it - at a high price. With the lack of development and poor conditions, many people live in the same room. It is a part of country culture - many men think this - that the first man the daughter should have should be them. It is not the law, it is not public, but it is common. And many mothers approve (Interview, 1/17/00).

Eva María Sam Qui, Director of the Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN, also describes the culture of sexual abuse and family violence that exists in some of the rural areas of Nicaragua: "There is a culture in Nicaragua in the rural areas that fathers abuse their daughters. I am not sure if it comes from indigenous or other beliefs. At 12 years old, she's ready, she's good for something. He's first. It is part of the lack of information,

⁴See my discussion entitled, *A Political Culture of Patriarchal Power*, in Chapter 3, Section 3.9.

communication, and poor condition in which they live. Promiscuity is common in a room where everybody lives. In the country area this is more common" (Interview, 1/17/00). Moreover, according to Lilleana Salinas, Executive Director of The Centro de Mujeres, ISNIN, police statistics from 1997-1998 reveal that domestic violence was the principle motive of crimes against women in Nicaragua (Interview, 1/13/00).

The divide between production and reproduction, practical and strategic gender interests, and the personal and the political is often perpetuated by the public/private dichotomy, itself a fiction. The issue which perhaps best reveals the intersection between the personal and the political, and women's practical and strategic gender interests, is domestic violence. 'Democracy in the Country, the House and the Bed' was the slogan used by the Women Against Violence Network of the Nicaraguan Women's Movement, which successfully drafted, lobbied and secured the unanimous passage of a bill to criminalize domestic violence for the first time in Nicaragua in 1996. The bill was passed just one year after its proposal.⁵ In her recent social movement analysis of the women's movement in Nicaragua, Katherine Isbester (2001) has highlighted the success of the Women Against Violence Network, identifying its innovative approach to male violence:

The women rejected common explanations for men's violence against women: men were inured to it after the war, they were frustrated with the economy, or they did not realize it was wrong. The women instead defined gender inequality as the root of violence against women. Women's oppression is experienced at the fundamental level, through men's discipline and control over the female body....The solution, therefore, required that men respect women's needs and bodies. This demand evolved to include women's reproductive control, women's right to paid

⁵ For a detailed case study of the successful campaign see Katherine Isbester, Still Fighting: The Nicaraguan Women's Movement, 1977-2000, pp. 156-161.

labor, and women's right not to be treated as a financial dependent when not performing paid labor (157).

As discussed in Chapter 2, how women's oppression is explained will determine how the solution is constructed. If gender inequality and a lack of bodily integrity for women is seen as the root cause of women's oppression, then only gender equality and women's bodily autonomy will bring about women's emancipation. If, on the other hand, women's oppression is seen as rooted in class oppression, then the eradication of class inequality will be seen as all that is necessary to achieve women's emancipation. Moreover, this approach epitomizes the intersection between production and reproduction, economics and culture, and practical and strategic gender interests. Women have the right to perform paid 'productive' labor, to be compensated when performing 'reproductive labor', and to have the *practical* and *strategic* power to live free from violence and to control their own bodily, sexual and reproductive choices.

Zoila América Narvaez describes how the women's movement struggle against violence has had to work to overcome these divides. Narvaez argues that the category of the 'personal' tends to include the politics of sex and violence, while the category of the 'political' tends to focus on the politics of economics: "If you are 'against violence,' it is a personal attitude. There is a double standard of many of our leaders. NGOs deal with social issues. Political parties address political and economic issues. We need to introduce the ethical dimension of social, political and economic issues" (Interview, 1/14/00). Particularly in the Marxist-Leninist framework of the Sandinista and FRELIMO revolutions, ethical issues were often reduced to their *economic* dimensions, with little regard for how economics is gendered, or for how oppression manifests itself in non-

economic ways. Contemporary women's organizations in Nicaragua are linking strategic, 'cultural' approaches to freedom, equality and bodily integrity with practical 'material' decisions in such areas of life. I would like to examine some of the organizations in Nicaragua that are adopting just such an integrative approach.

Reyna Isabel Rodriguez left the FSLN and AMNLAE and formed her own organization in Sandino City, just outside of Managua, called the Movement of Autonomous Women, a non-profit organization with 195 members, directed by seven women and a staff of eleven. Her organization began when "a good group of women got together from AMNLAE, working on different projects. We first started organizing people in the barrios and neighborhoods. The problem of women in Ciudad de Sandino was the process of identity, organizing ourselves, working" (Interview, 1/13/00). The Movement of Autonomous Women works in the areas of human development, human rights, and domestic violence, following cases with lawyers, psychologists, social workers, working on the Family and Children's Codes, setting up debates and forums on the topics, training police people and providing treatment for women who have suffered violence. Rodriguez spoke in detail about the connections her organization is trying to make between health, poverty, economic, political, and social development: "Not having a job impacts having the proper food, education and health care for your family. We need an integrated understanding of health. For women, empowerment is about identity, self-esteem, but not without employment and economic alternatives" (Interview, 1/13/00).

Mónica Zalaquett is Director of the Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia. This organization has existed for two years. According to Zalaquett, "We are transforming the situation of violence in twelve barrios in Managua, including social,

street and family violence. Gender and generationally, we must transform ideas and educate people, children and women. We work to make people understand and respect, to transform the family and decrease violence, drug use, etc. There is a coalition for the domestic violence problem to discover new ways of communicating. To teach people to communicate, to improve relations with the self" (Interview, 1/17/00). Zalaquett describes a similarly new, integrated approach to the problem of domestic violence as Rodriguez:

What we are doing is very new, looking at the psychological aspects of society, gender, across generations, with mixed groups, men and women, young and old. We see the problem as integrated and complex. There are multiple factors - school directors, journalists, teachers. We go everyday to neighborhoods. Our two-day workshops are a key of our success. After all my experience with women victims of violence, I also work with men towards the behavior of men to stop violence. To reflect on behaviors acquired and learned. I am working to explain that these are mechanisms of power...to increase their quality of life, to learn the ability to express feelings to their wives and kids (Interview, 1/17/00).

The Colectivo de Mujeres (Women's Collective) in Matagalpa also tries to make these same connections. The Women's Collective is a part of both the National Health Network Against AIDS and the Network of Women Against Violence. The Women's Collective, which has program areas in Organization, Health, and Communication, consists of ten members and thirty-four working staff members. Their main issues include: health, reproductive and sexual rights, violence against women and children, sexuality, STDs, HIV/AIDS. There is no coordinator: "Instead of verticalism, we work in concentric circles - No verticalism" (Interview, 1/31/00). Argentina Olivas, who oversees the Communications Programs, explains how their radio project, Project Radio Mujer in

el Norte, began out of gendered experiences with a men and women's theater group in Matagalpa:

In 1986, we emerged with two programs: radio and theater. These emerged as a necessity: the need to discuss issues and concerns specifically for, by and about women. At that time, because the Sandinistas were in power, the focus was on production. Women's organizations, women in the revolutionary struggle, focused on empowerment in the public sphere. This was important for us because we came from the private to the public. We realized we were invisible as women, and the problems we faced as women. We initiated a theater group entitled, *Xiualampa Nauhaul* - fertile women. At that time, the theater group was mixed. With military service, men went to war, and women continued the theater program from the perspective of gender. When the men came back, they didn't like it. The men wanted to change it, and the women didn't accept it. Do it this way or leave. So, the women left! (Interview, 1/31/00).

Feminist agency emerged for these women in Matagalpa through their activity in the public sphere with other women and the contradictions and conflicts that emerged from the process with men. Moreover, when they got on the radio program in the public sphere, women wanted to talk about their everyday, material (both reproductive and economic), practical gender needs and strategic gender interests in the 'private' sphere, including such issues as violence, pregnancy, and domestic labor.

Today, the women's radio project offers various programs for women, youth and society at large. Specific programming includes the following: a women's program entitled, *Ahora, Yo Tengo La Palabra* (Now, I have the Word), which essentially means I have the right to speak, providing women a place and a space to have a voice to speak and to discuss solutions to problems; *Prohibido Escuchamos* (Forbidden to listen to us), a program for teenagers, young women and men to discuss topics considered taboo, such as sexuality and STDs; *Conversando*, a program for the whole society in which NGOs,

leaders in communities, neighborhoods and from the government are invited to analyze and discuss different topics that effect society, identifying problems and offering solutions; *El Reyno del Reves* (Upside Down Kingdom), which educates children about their rights, challenges an ‘adultist’ way of thinking by asking kids how they live and interpret the world; and *Variadades*, a magazine show which allows for different formats on health, legal issues, the history of women internationally and women of everyday life.

Abortion, Reproductive Rights and Women’s Health

In Nicaragua, Article 165 of the Penal Code allows for ‘therapeutic abortion’ with consent of the partner and a close relative. Today, therapeutic abortions are the only legal abortions in the country. What actually constitutes a ‘therapeutic abortion’ seems to be a decision left up to the doctors. Historically, the position of the FSLN and AMNLAE on abortion has always been difficult: “Abortion is very complicated. AMNLAE has never promoted abortion as a method of family planning...as a way to avoid pregnancy. Nevertheless, we have participated with various groups of women and feminists to reform the Penal Code to allow for therapeutic abortion (Interview, 1/6/00). Angela Rosa Acevedo of the Constitutional Rights Center shares more about the illegality of abortion in Nicaragua:

Abortion is a crime in Nicaragua. There is a constitutional right to protect life. When life starts in the Constitution has been attacked by the Church. The Constitution has a right to life and no death penalty...I am personally working on transformation of the penal code and the criminalization. The Church has tried to make the punishment heavier for women, and equate the crime of murder with the crime of abortion. Currently, the punishment is four to five years. We are requesting that clandestine abortions not be punished. There are an estimated 35,000 per year. The Secretary of Health says there are 15,000, and that they are one of the principle causes of a mother's death (Interview, 1/11/00).

Ana María Pizarro, scholar, activist and formerly with the Ministry of Health, vividly describes her experiences dealing with illegal abortions in Nicaragua and the obstacles women still have to overcome to exercise reproductive freedom:

I began researching about abortion twenty years ago. I published my research in two books. Add to that my experience as a doctor taking care of women in Nicaragua. As a doctor, I provided primary and secondary services of attention. I have had the chance to see women who were pregnant and did not desire it. I have attended to hundreds of women in hospitals, dying because of an abortion, trying to save their lives. When I give an opinion, I didn't read it in feminist books! Women who go looking for abortion represent extreme poverty....there are real, concrete barriers which stop women from using birth control. Economic obstacles...religious obstacles - campaigns against the use of birth control (Interview, 1/21/00).

The post-revolutionary period in Nicaragua has provided more of a space for women and feminists to challenge the legal, cultural and political constraints to reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy. Just as women's organizations like MULEIDE plan to find out public opinion about abortion in Mozambique, AMNLAE recently conducted a very important survey in Nicaragua to assess popular beliefs about the illegality of abortion. According to Angela Rosa Acevedo:

50% said yes abortion should be punished, and 50% said it should not. 80% said abortion should be allowed to protect the mother's life. And that women should decide. Seven out of ten knew someone who had had an abortion. Should the Church decide? No. A reform was proposed to Article 23 of the Constitution which said that life begins at conception and continues until natural death. There was a debate at the National Assembly. It was argued that abortion is already not allowed, so we do not have to make the Constitution more specific (Interview, 1/11/00).

Today, many women's organizations within the Nicaraguan women's movement are attempting to link issues such as abortion, reproductive rights, women's health, sexual autonomy, economic survival and violence against women around the common theme of

bodily integrity. I would like to conclude this section by describing the most prominent feminist health care clinics that have emerged in the 1990s.

Alternative Feminist Health Centers: IXCHEN, ISNIN and SI MUJER

Two of the most important contributions of the autonomous women's movement in Nicaragua are: (1) the establishment of places for women to go to receive very material help in the areas of reproductive health, sexuality, legal issues and domestic violence; and (2) a new integrated way of thinking about these very issues. The largest three alternative feminist health centers in Nicaragua are IXCHEN, ISNIN and SI MUJER.

The Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN was founded on January 9, 1989 by a group of Nicaraguan women led by María Lourdes Bolaños, a leading doctor and now an FSLN MP, and a group of women from England. IXCHEN, "an instrument of struggle," was the first alternative center for women of its kind established in Nicaragua (Bolaños Interview, 2/2/00). In 1988, there was a conflict with the AMNLAE office. María Lourdes Bolaños was expelled from the FSLN because she was promoting abortion (Baltodano Interview, 1/26/00). She subsequently created her own organization: IXCHEN. The center was established as a response to the needs of women and provides services of sexual and reproductive health, attention to victims of domestic violence, language education and training around gender issues. IXCHEN is the goddess of fertility, and sexual and reproductive health in the indigenous language of Nicaragua, Nahuatl. María Lourdes Bolaños Ortega has been defending women's rights for two decades. She has focused on family planning, sexual education, and birth control: "Part of self-esteem and women's liberation has to go with control of our own bodies" (Interview, 2/2/00). Mónica Baltodano even goes so far as to say that the actions of Bolaños and other Sandinista

feminists “promoted the defeat of the election. Some members of AMNLAE went and left because they were not putting up women's flags....After the defeat, they recovered their autonomy....From this core came the principal feminist leaders of Nicaragua...from the most radical, anti-party to some who want to have a woman's party” (Interview, 1/26/00). Clearly, the interests of Nicaraguan feminists, not always compatible with the interests of the Sandinista party, have changed the face of Nicaraguan politics.

Eva María Sam Qui, current director of the IXCHEN Women's Center, addresses the health, religious and economic aspects of abortion and reproductive rights: “Abortion is a public health issue. Women have to die for lack of planning, assistance, medical attention. The Catholic Church is pro-life. It wants to reform the Constitution to say life begins at conception. We are focused on sexual and reproductive health. We defend sexual and reproductive rights” (Interview, 1/17/00). IXCHEN's analysis understands that there are gendered, cultural, religious, educational, and economic factors which shape a woman's decision of when, whether, or how many children to have.

The Centro de Mujeres, ISNIN (Women's Center, ISNIN) is another alternative women's health center. The philosophy behind ISNIN is very much a holistic, integrative approach toward women's economic, sexual, cultural and material needs both in the ‘public’ sphere of society and the ‘private’ sphere of the family. The Centro de Mujeres, ISNIN was founded on January 20, 1990 by a group of women, two from AMNLAE and four with experiences with women's organizations in the FSLN: “We created the Center after making an analysis of women: specifically, the social process of women in the 1980s and the poor development of women. So, we needed a space in which we could work equally for women in the areas of the economy, society, maternity, legal defense of

homes and property, violence and sex” (Interview, 1/13/00). Lilleana Salinas, who has been working at the Center since its founding, has been Coordinator of the Women's Center, ISNIN for six years: “The work that I do here besides coordinating the Center, is the psychological counseling. I am responsible for the mental health aspects. 90% of the problems are due to sexual or institutional violence” (Interview, 1/13/00).

Salinas argues that the demand for abortion rights has been present throughout the 1980s from the perspective of the people, but not from the vantage point of the leaders:

The movement of women for abortion rights began in the 80s. Women talked about it behind closed doors...because AMNLAE had to have the good check from Bayardo,⁶ the real policy maker. This is the people versus the leaders. There's what the people have in their minds, and then what the leaders take on. The political leaders do not want to confront the Catholic Church (Interview, 1/13/00).

Salinas also comments on the difficulty of mobilizing women around an issue that is condemned legally, politically and morally: “In my experience, four out of ten women have practiced an abortion, in women's centers, private clinics, hospitals. Our constitution and criminal law condemns abortion. However, it is an everyday practice....Take it from us....Any woman who has practiced an abortion is not going to come to a march! (Interview, 1/13/00).

SI MUJER is another alternative feminist health care center in Nicaragua. In 1999, SI MUJER provided education and training for 130,000 women, and medical treatment for 21,000. Approximately 1500 women are seen per month for clinical, psychological, or judicial counseling. The psychological counseling is primarily violence survival. SI MUJER also provides medical assistance, judicial consultants, OB/GYN, and

⁶ Refers to Bayardo Arce, member of the National Directorate with oversight over AMNLAE. See Chapter 3, section 3.9.

AIDS/STDs, sexual education: “a whole health program including birth control” (Interview, 1/21/00). Ana María Pizarro, Director of SI MUJER since 1991 and previously with the FSLN Ministry of Health for ten years, is a nationalized Nicaraguan. She is a doctor and a surgeon from Argentina, specializing in OB/GYN. Pizarro has conducted research since 1982 regarding population and health policies in Nicaragua, based mostly on providing integrative attention to women's health: “After doing some research working directly with women's care, I understood that within the health system, it is very difficult to receive human care and attention. The structure of the Health Ministry is both patriarchal and pro-life....My point of view is that the medical profession determines and tries to keep all aspects related to health out of people's control. The structures are preserved to uphold the medical hierarchy – to keep people ignorant” (Interview, 1/21/00).

Many women's organizations within the Nicaraguan women's movement are attempting to link issues such as women's health, reproductive rights, sexual autonomy, economic survival and violence against women around the common theme of bodily integrity. SI MUJER, IXCHEN and ISNIN each provide an integrative approach to women's reproductive health which challenges the dichotomies of economics versus sex/violence/culture, class versus gender, and practical versus strategic gender needs inherent in Western feminist theory. Feminist organizers are using a holistic, intersectional approach to connect issues by centering them around the body. This is an innovative approach from which both Marxist revolutionaries and First World feminists can learn a lot.

8.5 'Partners in the Home, at Work and on the Street': Constructions of Feminism in Mozambique and Nicaragua

Unity Feminism versus Difference Feminism

The Equality/Difference debates within American and European Feminisms did not appear to have the same relevance in Mozambique or Nicaragua. Many of the women that I interviewed identified the concept of feminism with a focus on the *differences* between women and men, or even a kind of machismo toward men. Instead, there has been a focus on *unity* which lends itself to what I will call *unity feminism*, a belief that men and women need to work together to achieve the empowerment and development of each, and of the community as a whole. Unity Feminism as it is being formulated does not appear to be about sameness or difference, but rather about how women and men can work together to achieve a greater quality of life and development politically, economically, culturally and socially in all spheres of everyday life. Unity has played an important role in both revolutionary histories. In Mozambique, there has been a focus on unity since the revolutionary origins of FRELIMO. Eduardo Mondlane's understanding of the value of the anti-colonial revolution was in its ability to create a *Mozambican national identity*, uniting men and women, white and black Mozambicans to use education to build a new society. In Nicaragua, throughout the Contra War in the 1980s, unity was seen as the key to defending the revolution against hostile enemies.

Of all the women activists I interviewed in Mozambique and Nicaragua, those who did not identify with feminism cited three main reasons: (1) feminism is about women, excluding the needs of men and the larger needs of society; (2) feminism is a kind of female machismo against men; and (3) feminism is less relevant in a context in which basic struggles for development are still taking place, yet women's rights and women's work need to be addressed within the context of other systems of oppression. It is important to note that while many people did not identify with the concept of 'feminism' they did proceed to describe a commitment to the fundamental tenets of

'women's emancipation.' Those activists who did identify with feminism cited two main reasons for the importance of the emergence of feminism in their context: (1) there are *differences* in the developing world that need to be acknowledged within the global discourse of women's rights, particularly the need to link theory and practice; and (2) there are sufficient *similarities* in women's oppression globally to require women's organizing around the world to fight for women's empowerment. In addition, many of the feminisms emerging from the developing world also appear to challenge the divide between practical and strategic gender interests, looking for a holistic way to address issues such as violence, health, reproductive rights, education and economic opportunities both inside and outside the home. In pointing out the need for the experiences of Third World women to inform global feminist theories and practices, some Nicaraguan feminists also warned of the danger of 'reifying' the Third World woman. It is important also to note that more women in Nicaragua identified themselves as feminists than in Mozambique, perhaps attributable to both the longer history of women's autonomous organizing and greater institutionalization of a women's movement in Nicaragua as compared to Mozambique.

Feminism: A Movement for Women Only, or for Men and Society As Well?

Despite the fact that Paulina Mateus, Secretary-General of the OMM, describes herself as having been a feminist since she entered the struggle for liberation, she does not conclude that the organization she leads, the OMM, is feminist: "I can't say the OMM is a feminist organization. It is an organization to promote society. The OMM is for the emancipation of women for the whole society, for both men and women" (Interview, 7/5/99). For Mateus, 'feminism' constitutes a movement fighting for gender oppression *for women only*, while the OMM is an organization that fights gender oppression *for the whole society*. Elisa Muianga and Celeste Bango of MULEIDE agree. They critique feminism because they feel it is a movement that leaves men out and makes women think they have to be the *same* as men to be *equal* to men:

Feminism for me is not a fair movement or current. They never put the men in. They just give good things to women, never give good things to men. We must do it together, women and men....Another wrong thing about feminism, is that women want to do everything a man does: the way he talks, dresses, acts. Women can preserve themselves as women. You don't have to be the same as men to want equal rights for women (Interview, 7/21/99).

Ana Rita Sithole, a member of the Permanent Commission of Parliament, said that she is “against feminism” herself because “it is not a good way to develop gender issues.

Feminism is everything women oriented. To take something for women, that is good for women only. This is not the best way to develop each sector of society that needs a space” (Interview, 7/15/99).

These sentiments echo those expressed in Nicaragua. Many women expressed their desire to have men and women *work together* in *mixed* organizations, rather than having women work alone and separately from men. These sentiments also support my notion of ‘Unity Feminism’. In Nicaragua and in Mozambique, there is a strong sense of solidarity of women and men that many women feel precludes them from identifying with feminism, which is understood as being only about women. Moreover, some activist women in Nicaragua see feminism as pitting women against women. According to Thelma Espinoza of AMNLAE:

Feminism should be, in my personal opinion, work or activity encouraging women to analyze their problems and themselves. I think the principle of feminism should be respect and solidarity. We haven't developed that kind of feminism. Some women think they have the right view; they do not respect other views....it can become the empowerment of some women on top of others! (Interview, 1/6/00).

María Lourdes Bolaños, current FSLN member of the National Assembly, Founding Coordinator of AMNLAE's Legal Office and Founder of the Women's Center IXCHEN, is also concerned about some women ‘feminists’ pointing their fingers at other women

'non-feminists: "Feminism - for me, it is to struggle for women's rights and vindications. What I can do is change the laws. Everyone has their...rights of self. Some say I am not feminist because I am in the party, because I say we have to have a position of power, because I stayed married...(Interview, 2/2/00). Palmira Francisco, a Mozambican Member of Parliament and Advisor to the Gender Division of the Minister of the Environment, agrees. When I asked her what she thought about feminism, she replied, "That problem of feminism is nice, but sometimes it is not nice. Women cut other women, keep them down...like a crab. In my opinion, as some women rise up, others pull them back down...feminism is bad. What women must do is fight with both men and women! For women without a husband, it is especially not easy...Woman is a devil" (Interview, 6/30/99). It is clear from these interviews that there is no interest in Mozambique or Nicaragua in a feminism that puts women against women, promotes women above men, or encourages women to be the same as men.

Feminism: Female Machismo Against Men?

Many women I interviewed in both Mozambique and Nicaragua identified feminism as a kind of female machismo, associating feminism with women's domination of men. When I asked Ivete Mboa of ADOCA, a grassroots organization in Matola, if she considered herself a feminist, she responded, "I think I am not an apologist for feminism because this movement wants to fight to have the women have more rights than the men. This would be another social problem" (Interview, 7/7/99). She proceeded to describe a continuum, in which feminism and machismo serve as the two extremities of female and male domination: "If machismo is male domination and feminism is female domination, I am for something in between, which I call 'the Gender Movement'" (Interview, 7/7/99).

When I asked her to define the gender movement, she responded by describing what I would define as feminism: “a movement of equality to see men and women as whole human beings, with the same rights, neither one is superior” (Interview, 7/7/99). In Nicaragua, María Elena Sequeira Rivas of the Women’s Secretariat of the ATC also described that machismo and feminism are two ends of a continuum, and that feminism must be about *gender*, about men and women: “They have to be linked to unify the different spaces that isolate ourselves, combine us all together according to the spaces we all are in” (Interview, 1/27/00). When I asked her to define feminism, she said, “I haven’t finished understanding feminism yet...it is about the role of women and defending women’s rights. Class and gender. Sometimes my appreciation of feminism is that it is extreme” (Interview, 1/27/00).

Nicaraguan activist Marcia Ramírez describes a conception of feminism that does not see *men* as the enemy, but inequality and domination: “I define it as the work of women’s rights, to have equal rights and equal opportunities with men. Nobody has to dominate anybody! I don’t think the principal fight is with men, but rather with oppressive systems, education and culture” (Interview, 1/19/00). Irma Ortega of CIPRES epitomizes this affinity for a feminism that does not value women over men:

I am a woman who is for women. Feminist defines myself. I fight and struggle for women’s rights but at the same time I believe that women have the same values as men, and have the right to participate, I do not believe in a society dominated by men, but a harmony between women and men. When you favor women, you favor men. I don’t favor women over men. But at the same time, supporting the advancement of women is supporting the advancement of society....I worry about ‘feminist’ because there are women in the feminist movement that look at me as very conservative. Sometimes, I don’t have a radical position. (Interview, 1/18/00).

One of the young women I interviewed at Casa Miriam, an organization providing scholarships and housing for women from all over Nicaragua to come to Managua and study in one of the universities, described how the Nicaraguan women's movement has helped her come to identify with feminism after first thinking feminism was about machismo toward men:

I am a feminist. I am a woman equal to a man. Not above, not below. I don't like feminists who say man is our enemy. It is a privilege to be a mother: a woman can raise a man to respect women because he came from one. In terms of boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, if he is bad and does not respect women, throw him away! The bad point of feminism is seeing men as bad.... I remember when my friend came here and asked me, 'Are you a feminist?' 'No,' I said, because the connotation I had was super-feminists - showing machismo toward men. I have changed, developed and seen how feminism has developed in Nicaragua, and how the feminist movement has developed in Nicaragua. It has not left men out - not all men, only machistas! I have had many relations with feminists and the feminist movement here (Interview, 2/3/00).

It is particularly poignant to hear how a young Nicaraguan woman has been so positively affected by the feminist movements in her country. It is also an interesting distinction to hear her make between leaving men and leaving 'machistas' out of the movement.

Many of the women I interviewed in both countries identified only with a feminism that was not divisive and not exclusive of men. Mónica Zalaquett's view of feminism is critical of the difference feminism of the U.S. and Europe. She feels that feminism has a tendency toward difference, and toward *valuing* the differences between men and women as an advantage. She makes a familiar argument that many egalitarian feminists have made that patriarchy also hurts men:

Men are also victims of machismo. The system damages all of us. I have seen many men cry due to the damage of machismo – not to be able to control their violence, expressing caring, sensitivity, emotions, feelings. When men understand they have to develop a feminine side and women understand they have to develop a masculine side, then, things will change (Interview, 1/17/00).

Feminist Without Being 'Feminist'

Many women I interviewed said that they were not 'feminists' but then proceeded to describe themselves, their values and their concerns, in ways that were very consistent with basic understandings of feminism, i.e., the need for gender equality, autonomous women's movements, fighting for women's rights. In the words of Ana Maria Montero: "I don't know if I can say I'm feminist, but I think women need to have more participation in all spheres of activities, and I feel a duty with my country and society to do something about it (Interview, 7/8/99). According to Polly Gastor, the concept of 'feminism' never found much favor with her; however, the ideas she expressed are quite feminist: "defending women's rights, recognizing women's history, taking positive measures to redress wrongs, the ability to be judged on equal terms with men, having control over their own bodies, and society" (Interview, 7/13/99). When I asked Eulália Temba of WLSAMAZ to describe to me what feminism means to her, she proceeded to define it in relation to a women's movement, distinct from what FRELIMO had done for women:

According to my understanding, not a definition from a book...
If I am involved in the women's movement, I want women's human rights, to integrate women into the political and economic agendas, to give freedom to a woman to express what she wants, what she's feeling...It's not to give her, like children, from a father to a husband. FRELIMO played another role like a father or a husband (Interview, 7/13/99).

Similarly, Generossa Cossa, not defining herself as a feminist, speaks on behalf of equal access and equal opportunity, arguing that education is the key to improving the lives of women and men:

Feminism is a word I don't use myself, but I support equality and access, equal opportunities for both men and women. Everyone has to fight to study. We need to create the conditions for men and women to have equal access to the wealth and resources society creates. The division is still not equal. It will be good when it is 50% women/50% men, not 70%/30% in the decision-making bodies.... Women are starving, divorced, separated.

I don't think we will be able to solve that problem soon. But we can give time to women and girls to study. The most important thing you have in life is education. With education you can fight for other things! Men and women are better able to fight (Interview, 7/14/99).

In an interesting discussion of gendered economic power, Hermengilda Thumbo of AMODER (Mozambican Association of Rural Development) expressed some very feminist ideas while distancing herself from a separatist definition of feminism:

Although we are the ones who produce the incomes and the wealth, we are not the ones who dispose of the money, ironically... Women produce, men decide how to use it. The woman needs his permission... I may have a wrong definition of feminist. The way I was told or it was described to me, is that feminists are people who tend to see things in not a complete way: women are the best, women do everything on their own. I don't agree with this. Women need to change their relationships. Women are doing everything alone. That is separatist. Since she's the one producing the income and the wealth, she should have the power to decide (Interview, 7/23/99).

It seems to me that Thumbo hits upon a crucial point within discussions of global feminisms. There can be no universal set of policies on the direction women need to *move* because women are *beginning* from different places and in different contexts. If a woman has been too dependent upon a man, economically and otherwise, then gaining a sense of *independence* may be what she needs. If a woman has been too independent from a man and has held a greater material responsibility for the family, then gaining a sense of *shared responsibility* and *interdependence* with a man may be what she needs. The problem seems to arise when there is an imbalance between rights and responsibilities. The endpoint may be a world in which women and men have shared responsibilities and equal rights, but women around the world will need to move in different directions to make that happen because we are each starting at different locations.

“I’m Not a Feminist, But”: The Relevance of Feminism in the Developing World

Maria Fernanda Farinha works for AUSTRAL, a Mozambican consulting company that acts as an intermediary NGO for capacity-building. The goal is to work

with local NGOs to strengthen their capacity. For Farinha, “feminism assumes and defends the emancipation of women. It has an agenda to address women separately and complementarily. It is not a word we use very much here. It generally has a negative view in society. We’ve been so busy, with the revolution, the war, surviving. We never took much time...We were not paying enough attention to women’s issues, yet women were mostly making the decisions” (Interview, 7/8/99). Sam Barnes agrees, “The word ‘feminism’ is hardly ever used. It is not very relevant here. Feminist means female chauvinist in Mozambique” (Interview, 7/2/99). It seems to me that while the language of ‘feminism’ may not be relevant, the rights of women are very relevant, as women struggle for “equality for women, protection, justice, human rights, improving the conditions of women, the gender biases in education. When girl children drop out, boys stay in school”(Interview, 7/2/99).

Feminist agency⁷ may be taking place without a discursive association with the concept of ‘feminism.’ Terezinha da Silva makes this point very clearly:

Many women in the countryside challenge the way things are without using the word ‘gender’, without ever studying women and men. In Moeda, they ask what do you do in the morning and the afternoon. Women realize nobody gives water to me. I’m tired of giving water to others (Interview, 7/23/99).

Women realize their struggles and fight against oppressive situations whether or not they identify with the concept of ‘feminism.’ Paulina Mateus says it best when she argues, “I don’t think that feminism is not relevant. We should accept that this issue is relevant. Those women who say its not relevant...Even those women who are *doing* feminism. They are confusing feminism (Interview, 7/5/99). Some Nicaraguan women described never identifying with ‘feminism,’ while coming to realize that through their activism, what they were *doing* was feminism all along. Reyna Isabel Rodriguez describes her eye-opening experience around feminism: “I had a very hard experience around feminism. For

⁷ See my discussion, Chapter 2, Section 2.6

me, the feminists were women who had necklaces, earrings, short skirts, make-up. Then, I realized that what I was doing was feminism! I began training with feminists from other places attending the Dominican Republic Conference with seventy other women. Now I defend feminism, and women previously called "lesbian homosexuals" (Interview, 1/13/00). Angela Rosa Acevedo similarly distinguishes between feminism as a political identity and the revolutionary project as a project of social participation: "We were defending ourselves, not being feminist" (Interview, 1/11/00).

However, there were many women who I interviewed who argued against the usefulness of feminism in Mozambique. Célia Diniz of the Africa-America Institute in Maputo says that feminism is a Western concept that has no relevance in Mozambique. "A 'civilized feminism,' covering women's issues and participation on equal terms, is not as relevant in Mozambican society. When you are concerned with day to day life, people don't have the savings or the energy for those liberated concepts" (Interview, 7/1/99). Diniz's sentiments echo the distinctions of Maxine Molyneux⁸: poor women concerned with meeting their practical gender interests are not yet politicized to the point of understanding their strategic gender interests. As was brought up in the feminist encuentros of Latin America, why can't women's struggles and daily survival strategies be *strategic*, and *feminist*? The problem seems to me to be with the truism of imposing an elite, Western model of feminism on third world women and saying it does not fit, rather than creating a model of feminism that *does* fit the local, contextualized and historical struggles of women in the developing world.

For example, when I asked Edda Collier about her understandings of feminism as a UN Gender Specialist in Mozambique, she responded by saying that her definition of feminism was not at all the way Mozambicans see feminism. In Mozambique, she feels that feminism as an activist women's movement for equality is threatening and in fact fundamentally incompatible with African culture. She argues that gender as a concern has

⁸ See my discussion, Chapter 2, Section 2.6.

emerged as a *development strategy*, not as a feminist issue. Similarly, Nina Berg, a lawyer with DANIDA, a Scandinavian NGO in Mozambique, stated that feminism “as we understand it” in the U.S. and Europe is not what occurred in Mozambique:

There was not a feminist movement. There were great changes in women's lives, women's alternatives. Women were defended in their positions, families, workplaces, promoted to work outside the home. Intellectuals in Maputo, subscribe to feminism, yes. But the OMM was not a feminist movement.... There were speeches about women's rights to liberation through work, decision-making, participation in society. The liberation of women was understood through work and active participation in society (Interview, 7/16/99).

I agree that the OMM was not a feminist movement because it was created by FRELIMO and has never had the autonomy to discern its own, gendered understanding of the causes of or solutions to women's oppression. That notwithstanding, I believe that the OMM has served a feminist function by providing access to knowledge, information and education concerning women's legal rights and development in the productive and reproductive spheres of family farming, household maintenance, and childcare. Moreover, women's activism within the OMM has served as a form of feminist agency, as women's contributions have become more recognized in society, and women have come to question the customs, laws and cultural practices in everyday life that treat them as subordinates.

Maria Nita Denga, an agricultural economist with the World Bank, expresses feminist sentiments about the hidden role of women:

We have issues with gender. We have other concerns first. Feminism is not a top priority. I don't even know very well how to define it. The female gender movement has ideas to boost the recognition and role of women in society... What I believe and fight for...it is important to recognize the role of

women....The role of women has always been there! It may be hidden, but it is always there....(Interview, 7/2/99).

One way the role of women has been hidden is in the area of women's work, particularly women's reproductive labor in the home and family. Rachel Waterhouse links the lack of relevance of feminism in Mozambique to the lack of changes in women's and men's roles in the family after the revolution: "Feminism is relevant to a very few, linked to a bad time after independence. *As you said, the women do more work, and the men didn't change their roles, so it was not a very positive experience...*It is difficult to have a conflictual approach. Whoever has more power will keep it. The economic situation people are in doesn't call for taking risks or making demands" [emphasis mine] (Interview, 7/21/99). Once again, a development approach that does not alter the sexual division of labor will not impact women's lives very positively. And yet, Ana Fernandez argues that even though the work load is too much for women, particularly for rural women, women may prefer doing the work in their sphere, the home sphere: "In Mozambique, I don't think it [feminism] has any relevance. Women love to do this kind of work. Many women say, 'I don't want my man coming home and coming in my kitchen.' Women and men do not have to do the same things, but we should have the same rights" (Interview, 6/30/99). Maria Nita Denga reminds us, however, that despite the fact that women in traditional societies are comfortable in the sphere of the home, they may need to conquer more spheres to have equal rights with men: "Women getting themselves organized will have to conquer more space for taking decisions" (Interview, 7/2/99).

Gulamo Taju and Ana Montero describe the complexities of trying to understand gender relations and feminism across culturally diverse modern and traditional societies. Taju and Montero say that feminism is only talked about in Mozambique in academic places. However, "it is the same as if we talk about gender. And in the rural areas, we do discuss and exchange opinions. Gender relations have been respected and women were

always taking places of leadership” (Interview, 7/8/99). For example, Ana shared that when her father died, her aunt became the leader in her family: “She took the place of my father. Seniority and economic power remained as important as gender” (Interview, 7/8/99). Montero argues that there is actually space for more intervention of women in traditional society. In addition to familial kinship relations, she gives an example of who has the authority to be a spiritual leader: “In the Catholic tradition, priests are men only. At the local level, witchdoctors are women, and men accept what she says” (Interview, 7/8/99).

Perhaps Ritha Fletes Zamora, FSLN Member of Parliament in Nicaragua, sums up best how feminisms in the developed world may have different priorities than feminisms emerging from the developing context. Critical of what she calls ‘theoretical feminism’ in the United States, Zamora explains why the issue of development sets feminism in Nicaragua apart:

At the beginning of the revolution, there was less knowledge about gender...while we began to have more positions, and roles inside, we began to know more on theories of feminism and things started changing little by little. I have to tell you, I am against theoretical feminism in the developed world....In Europe and the U.S., the situation is different. They have created the conditions for development. 32% of the population of Nicaragua lives under the line of poverty. So, it is not the same to talk about feminism in Nicaragua or Spain or the Nordic countries because of the differing GNP per cap. **So, I critique some people who are more concerned about finding the G-spot than increasing the GNP!** [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/10/00).

Zamora’s concerns echo the divide many people make between sex/violence feminists and economic feminists, yet another distinction which I don’t feel is particularly helpful for feminism. The key for future feminist struggles globally is to begin to examine the connections and linkages between women’s economic, political, social, cultural and sexual struggles in the productive and reproductive spheres of life.

Feminisms in the Developing World: Linking Theory and Practice, Commonality and Difference

Sofia Montenegro is a Nicaraguan feminist theorist and activist trying to make those very connections. Montenegro describes feminism as a philosophy, a doctrine and a practice. Each of these elements is necessary to elaborate the political movement of feminism to ensure that it does not become either absolutely theoretical and abstract, or absolutely practical and issue-based (Interview, 1/25/00). Toward that end, Montenegro asserts the importance of constructing feminist theory from the perspective of Third World women, and of disseminating that theory through the media:

The necessity is to construct a discourse, an intellectual framework, with the theoretical part from the Third World....Theory, for us, is a necessity of survival. Many feminists from the First World forced us to look for answers not written anywhere....Perhaps my experience as a journalist leads me to believe that activists need to go to the top of the pyramid. Autonomous media is the multiplier of new discourses around gender and feminist positions (Interview, 1/25/00).

Montenegro also expresses concerns about contemporary trends in postmodern feminist theory and the questioning of subjectivity for women in the developing world. She describes vividly some of the limitations of a postmodern perspective for Third World women who want and need to act collectively to effect political change:

Someone brought in the speech, which is this postmodernist shit, that the subject doesn't exist, that nobody can represent anybody, you can only represent yourself and your wants, and therefore, long live the difference. With a world of difference and a world of diversity you have to find common points, otherwise you stand no chance in the political arena or to fight for your proposal or for changing the world. And this has been the debate of the 90s. So some of postmodernist thinking which is demobilizing from my point of view, even though some of the critiques of postmodernism are valuable, but from another point of view for the Third World is quite demobilizing. **I always make the irony or the joke, what a bunch of idiots we are in the Third World? We discover the subject and in the North they declare it's dead!** So what we are talking about now is the construction of the subject, and in this case, women as an actor [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/25/00).

Postmodern notions of 'the death of the subject' are less relevant for identity groups just beginning to organize autonomously and assert their subjectivities around the world. In addition, the focus on difference *at the expense* of commonality divides the kind of solidarity and political power needed to fight larger systems of economic and cultural oppressions that are systemic in nature.

Carla Braga, who works on the Gender Project of the Land Studies Unit of Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, shared many of the same concerns as Montenegro in Nicaragua. Braga was one of the few women I interviewed in Mozambique who self-identified as a feminist. In fact, she told me she left the OMM because it was not feminist *enough* for her. She accurately predicted the difficulty I would have in finding Mozambican women who identified with the term. She attempted to explain to me why, for *strategic* reasons, I would find a resistance to women identifying with 'feminism' in Mozambique:

Feminism is a very touchy issue here. I think you will see that you will not find many women asserting that they are feminists....They want to separate themselves. They do not want to be connected. Even the ones who could say or had no problems in seeing themselves as feminists will doubt the appropriateness of feminism in Mozambique, not in the theoretical sense but in a practical sense...it has a negative stigma. It is not strategically good to use the word. Identifying oneself as a feminist is not good because you get a reaction from people. I have no problem saying I am a feminist. I see myself as a feminist and if I have the opportunity I describe myself that way (Interview, 7/15/99).

Braga went on to describe the development of feminism from a narrow First World discourse to a more diverse global awareness, pointing out the danger of going too far in asserting 'the difference of the Third World woman.' One of Braga's concerns is the current fashion within feminism to search for particularity and difference:

Sometimes we go too far in this search for particularity. In the beginning of Women's Studies, there were abusive

generalizations, because people were not taking into account other countries, the Third World, the periphery. So, the reaction - we are different, yes. We are not saying we are not different, but, women are dominated and discriminated against all over the world. What differs is the degree, the way things are done, how things are implemented. After acknowledging differences, we must also see what we have in common. Desires, dreams, women around the globe share (Interview, 7/15/99).

Sofia Montenegro expressed the same concerns. She worries about the dilution of power to assert a common feminist agenda if there is too much focus on the multiplicity of differences that exist in a diverse, postmodern world.

Challenging the Divide Between Practical and Strategic Gender Interests

Understanding women's unequal relations with men *both inside and outside the home* is a key component of feminism that has not been included in revolutionary or non-revolutionary societies. And yet, feminist agency is often born as women's activism in the public sphere reveals this contradiction. When I asked Fatima Trinta, secretary in the OMM Provincial Office in Nampula, a rural province in the northern region of the country, about women's emancipation in Mozambique, she defined emancipation in terms of the 'practical' issues of freedom of movement both inside and outside the house, as well as the 'strategic' interests in freedom from violence and oppression:

We are completely emancipated. For example, because of the April 7th party: I arrived home at 4:00pm. My husband didn't ask me anything like, "Why did you arrive late?"....I understand my husband, he understands me. We understand each other. This is emancipation. It is the freedom to work without a man asking you what you are doing. Living with freedom without feeling oppressed. Not being beaten by a man (Interview, 7/28/99).

Similarly, for Esperanza Cruz de Cabrera who has worked with the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs, the ability to do activism outside the home is a measure of feminism: "Sometimes I went out of the house, and my husband came home and could not find me. I knew he was going to get mad! We discovered independence. We recognized we were

women, and we had rights also. We are different feminists. For me, it is about human respect. Men have to respect and understand without abuse. Women must occupy and give themselves the place they deserve. There are rights women have in the home” (Interview, 1/31/00). Women’s experiences in the public sphere often reveal women’s inequalities in the home. As Dora Zeledón, National Coordinator of AMNLAE, states, “Feminism is a struggle to change the unjust and unequal relations between women and men. The major objective of AMNLAE [today] is to change and transform power relations in the *public and the private areas of life*” [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/28/00).

One definition of feminism offered in Nicaragua captured the nexus between productive and reproductive labor. Feminism is seen as mothers challenging the sexual division of labor by giving their boy and girl children the same labor to perform in the home:

I think feminism starts from working at home. I say this because I had the opportunity....I think it is a problem of education. Do this for the boy...I think feminism is that you should have the chance to participate, to change things, to leave footprints for women. Women and men should not be competing. We are developing this project with them. One example of feminism is with my mother. Her attitude toward men and women was that she treated them equally. She gave us the same tasks. Women and men can do the same activities together (Rosario Pasquier Interview, 1/6/00).

Giving boys and girls the same work at home and offering them the same education are both fundamental approaches toward changing gendered theories and practices both inside and outside the home. Argentina Olivas of the Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, describes the need both to work with children, and to cover topics as practical and strategic as health, violence, reproductive rights and domestic labor:

Feminism is a process that takes you to recognize the role of us as women - a process of constantly building, recognizing our own contradictions as we realize we have limitations. For us, we see feminism less from a theoretical point of view and more from a practical point of view. We see the reality of how women are always disadvantaged, we try to build respect between women and men.

That's why we work with children. You must start by changing the education of boys and girls. They have to learn pretty young that things are different. All that we do is this logic, continuing with the theater group. Not elites: we show the lives of everyday men and women. The topics of the plays include health, violence, rivalry between women, abortion, domestic work (Interview, 1/31/00).

As women's organizations begin to grapple simultaneously with health, violence, reproductive rights, economic development and education, feminisms will begin to incorporate an understanding of how these issues intersect in the everyday lives of women. Perhaps this will lead to the development of feminist agendas on a larger scale that incorporate the political, economic, social, cultural and personal needs and interests of women located at the intersections of multiple oppressions. As Gilma Yadira Tinoco, of the Comisión Interuniversitaria de Estudios de Género in Nicaragua asserts: "I consider feminism a whole and complete vision of the world that you can apply to different aspects of society. I am convinced that unequal gender relations are related to class and ethnic oppression. All kinds of oppressions are inter-related" (Interview, 1/17/00).

Marxist Feminism versus Revolutionary Feminism: A Question of Power

As this study has intended to reveal through an analysis of women's organizing within socialist revolutions, Marxists and feminists address issues of women's oppression very differently. María Lidia Mejía, founding member of AMPRONAC and AMNLAE and currently AMNLAE Coordinator of the Department of Granada, distinguishes between two different kinds of feminism in making her assessment of the FSLN's 'productivist' analysis of women's oppression:

The FSLN had an analysis of women's oppression but they didn't open the door. Those analyses called for a greater integration of women in the productive sphere, and giving women more opportunities of employment and access to universities.... The

FSLN and AMNLAE: Feminist? No! There is a conservative feminism and a radical feminism. Radical feminism is a struggle of women against men's position. Conservative feminism is when women can go with men and struggle next to men, but it is ridiculous to think of women without men....(Interview, 1/28/00).

Mejia's distinction is an important one that has long been debated in feminist theory. Mejia's notion of 'conservative feminism' is very similar to that of 'liberal feminism' in the U.S. and Europe. Liberal feminism, the belief that women are equal to men and should have all of the same rights and opportunities in the world that men have, still accepts the 'male' standard for those rights and opportunities. Women are given the chance within liberal feminism to prove that they can do the same thing a man can do. Are men ever asked to show that they can do the same things a woman can do? In other words, liberal feminism provides an "equal opportunity" to white heterosexual middle class maleness, but the ruler itself by which we all are measured is not challenged. In many ways, the revolutionary socialist governments of Mozambique and Nicaragua adopted basic liberal feminist notions of women's ability to *produce* and *defend* next to men, without questioning much else. I would argue that this is where their revolutionary analyses failed women.

Marxists and Feminists address issues of power very differently also. I think one thing the revolutionary struggles of women alongside men in Mozambique and Nicaragua has revealed is that *Marxist* Feminism is not the same as *Revolutionary* Feminism. It is a question of the locus of power. What *kinds of power* one is attempting to transform, *where, for whom, and by whom*, are just some of the differences that arise. Lilleana Salinas explains why feminism in Nicaragua today is more than a party position, but rather is a movement of women for women: "We are sure about the situation of women,

our own subordination. We must try to look for solutions/strategies. This allows me to get out of myself and help others....there is a bigger women's movement today because women are the ones who make that movement; we are not defending the rights of the party – but defending our own rights (Interview, 1/13/00). Helen Dixon makes perhaps the best argument for the difference between Marxist Feminism and Revolutionary Feminism by arguing that feminism to her must oppose patriarchy, and fight to create a new political culture: “Feminism is an ideology, a culture, a political practice which is opposed to patriarchy and wants to form a new equality starting with men and women, and questioning the power relations between men and women. Feminism has a series of basic demands. It is easy to fight for rights - we are creating a new political culture” (Interview, 1/31/00).

Creating a new political culture can be very threatening to the existing political culture. While the FRELIMO and Sandinista regimes fought to replace colonial and dictatorial political cultures, respectively, they did not attempt to challenge the *male* political culture of the state, civil society, home or family. Dixon describes the hostility to feminism which existed in Matagalpa in the 1980s, and the assumed disconnect between feminism and revolution:

During the 1980s, political deviation established three evils: lesbianism, chellas (foreigners/blond/white) and traditional intellectuals. They were completely convinced that revolution and feminism were two different paths. They didn't seem at all contradictory to me! There was discrimination of lesbians and a fear of feminism tied to strong homophobia. Space was clandestine. You needed a revolutionary organization to give you a space. With the war going on, and foreign intervention, state security was tight. You had to be careful. In Matagalpa in 1979/1980 there were CONAPRO professionals - Sandinista and Non-Sandinista. Milu Vargas dared to speak about abortion, others

were tentative. Lots of attitudes of men were making fun, stereotyping, telling harrassive jokes. Women had fear and mistrust. I kept asking myself, why the contradictions? (Interview, 1/31/00).

Similarly, Angela Rosa Acevedo of the Center for Constitutional Rights describes how the discourse around feminism in general and the policy around abortion in particular drove a wedge between AMNLAE and the FSLN in the late 80s:

Publicly, there was a disagreement with Ortega during the debate of the Constitution of 1987. Many women wanted the Constitutional principle to make abortion legal in Nicaragua. Ortega called AMNLAE and other organizations 'radical feminists'. They attempted to control how people think, what people do. There is a double standard of the leaders, of the kind of relationship there is to be in a democratic family (Interview, 1/11/00).

Ana Criquillon agrees that a feminist analysis includes an analysis about power which was absent within the traditional Marxist revolutionary analysis:

The difference with that analysis is that the feminist position pointed out the power relations between men and women, in work and other areas. Dominance/subordination power relations have not disappeared....All people recognize differences of power, applied to other people, such as class, ethnicity, and physical capacity, but power is not challenged! They do not see all the other forms of power such as women to women, children...victims reproduce behavior, dominant behavior over others with the other (Interview, 1/20/00).

For Criquillon, "feminism is a struggle for women's autonomy at all levels - physical, economic, cultural, political" (Interview, 1/20/00). The struggle takes place on both the individual and the collective levels. It may not come as a surprise that the concept of autonomy is important to many of the definitions of feminism created by activist Sandinista women who now run organizations in civil society outside of the party structure. Perhaps Eva María Sam Qui, Director of the Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN, provides one of the best all-inclusive definitions of feminism in a developing society,

which includes Marxist understandings and gendered revolutionary visions: “Feminism is the philosophy that looks for transformation to women in society of women in society. Transformation means equality of gender conditions, equality of opportunity and development, the transformation of women and the forces of production, empowerment of leadership, and economic empowerment (Interview, 1/17/00).

I would like to conclude this chapter with a story which I think reveals more than any other the transition from *Marxist* Feminism to *Revolutionary* Feminism which has taken place during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary struggles for women in these contexts. In my travels in Nicaragua, I went to the FSLN party headquarters in Granada, where I was met by Guillermo Galeano Lopez of the FSLN party and Jocqueline Evans of the FSLN Women’s League. Due to the nature of my topic, López had decided to ask his colleague from the Women’s League to participate with him in the interview.

During the course of our discussion, it became evident that López represented a more traditional Marxist approach toward women’s emancipation as women’s participation in the public sphere of life, without acknowledging women’s participation in the private sphere of home and family. He spoke of feminism as allowing women to keep their femininity as they fight to participate equally with men in societal responsibilities: “Women can participate without losing their femininity in all the spheres society allows – to struggle around the world to eliminate machismo and give women and men the same rights.... *I’m tired of men totally doing everything. We need help from women*” [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/28/00). In an interesting exchange, his younger female colleague in the FSLN Women’s League in Granada, Jocqueline Evans, took issue with some of his assertions, particularly the *lack* of help from women:

I think, respecting my *compañero*, I do not have the idea of women substituting for men. Women have the capacity. I always keep a phrase, behind every man is a good woman. I say, next to a man is a good woman because women can substitute for men's work. *Women do the main work for the family. The main structure of the house is kept by women.* Men can move. Women can go next to men and keep their values... Women must see men not as objects but as human beings to be valued also. The legacy we received – the culture, the education - needs to be updated as *partners in the home, at work and on the street* [emphasis mine] (Interview, 1/28/00).

This was a very poignant moment for me. Watching a younger female colleague take issue with her male Sandinista elder over the work women perform for the family, and as such, for society, revealed how far the *revolution of feminism* had come in Nicaragua. I do not believe this conversation would have gone the same way if it had taken place during the 1980s.

8.5 Conclusion

Perhaps the most promising of movements in civil society today, large, autonomous and diverse in Nicaragua and active and growing in Mozambique, are the movements of women. In Nicaragua, feminist voices flourish, debating the best form and substance for the future of their movements. In form, they are working within coordinated networks, discussing if they should try to create a national-level, elected decision-making body to coordinate the movement's positions on national policy. In substance, they are integrating issues previously understood as representing *either* a practical or a strategic nature by using the *body* as the locus of struggle: violence, health, poverty, and reproductive rights all coalesce, theoretically and materially, around women's bodily integrity. In Mozambique, women's legal rights in the family, particularly concerning violence against women, are also receiving particular attention by post-revolutionary feminist and women's rights organizations in civil society. In addition, women's organizations are emerging that cover women's diversities, including grassroots rural women's associations, academic women and entrepreneurial women's groups.

The feminisms that seem to be emerging in Nicaragua and Mozambique are about gender issues, inclusive of women and men, masculinity and femininity. They are not separatist, essentialist, or exclusive of men. They are about development, the economy, education, reproductive rights, health, domestic violence and domestic labor. Many feminists, particularly in Nicaragua, are attempting to construct holistic, intersectional approaches to women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. While autonomous organizing by women is deemed necessary by many as a critical element in the development of feminist consciousness and the exercise of feminist agency, working in mixed groups with men is also seen as a requirement for the development of underdeveloped societies. The struggle for the autonomous women's and feminist movements in both countries will be to channel the energy, diversity and analysis of a decentralized movement into an articulation with other movements against oppression to formulate a national vision and agenda for systemic social, political, cultural and economic change.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

This dissertation is a comparative analysis of women's organizing experiences in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Mozambique and Nicaragua. I have argued that while women were mobilized by the revolutionary parties in each country, FRELIMO and the FSLN, a gendered analysis of women's oppression was absent from the theories and practices of each revolutionary struggle, particularly in understanding the economic, cultural and personal intersections of production and reproduction. This was due to the origin, mobilization strategies, and theories adopted by FRELIMO and the FSLN, and, subsequently, by the national level women's organizations in each country, the Organization of Mozambican Women (OMM) in Mozambique and Association of Nicaraguan Women 'Luisa Amanda Espinosa' (AMNLAE) in Nicaragua. The theories of women's emancipation were flawed, and the organizing practices did not allow women the autonomy to develop a gendered or feminist analysis of their own oppression. While the women's organizations in each country were very active and participatory, they lacked both the *ideological autonomy* to theorize women's oppression and the *organizational autonomy* to make their own decisions.

While the OMM was created explicitly by FRELIMO and, thus, has been a FRELIMO organization from its inception, AMNLAE began as AMPRONAC, a women's organization that had Sandinista origins during the clandestine period of the war against Somoza. AMPRONAC achieved a degree of autonomy before choosing to become an explicitly Sandinista organization after the FSLN victory in 1979. Both the

OMM and AMNLAE were created to mobilize women for the revolution and to seek the emancipation of women as identified within the framework of the success of the socialist revolution. Neither women's organization was created with an explicitly feminist agenda, although AMPRONAC began by seeking a larger restructuring of society within a human rights framework, allowing the organization a degree of autonomy during its early years that the OMM never had.

The decision-making structure of the OMM and AMNLAE was very hierarchical. The *verticalist* leadership structure was led by the revolutionary parties, not by the women's organizational leadership, which was also chosen by the parties. In some cases, a discursive decision-making process emerged between organizational and party leaders. Each organization also had an historical moment (OMM in 1984, AMNLAE in 1985) when women leaders felt they had become too far removed from women at the grassroots level, and, thus, held special meetings and conferences in an attempt to better understand the interests, and to regain the legitimacy, of grassroots women.

The organizing strategies adopted by the two women's organizations reveal the most interesting difference to emerge during the revolutionary periods. In both cases, women were encouraged to participate within revolutionary organizations around general issues connected to the revolution. However, in Nicaragua, women also attempted to integrate a *specific* analysis of *women's* oppression into pre-existing revolutionary organizations. Nicaraguan women created women's secretariats within pre-existing unions, regional organizations and workers' associations, thus creating pockets of autonomy where women's *gendered* interests could emerge. Women's autonomous organizing around a specifically feminist understanding of women's oppression did not

emerge in each country until the post-revolutionary context when: (1) in Nicaragua, after years of squelched dissent and demands for internal democratization within the FSLN, the electoral loss of the Sandinistas in 1990 created the space for the consolidation of an autonomous women's movement which had been emerging from autonomy struggles since the mid-1980s; and (2) in Mozambique, the adoption of a multi-party system in 1990 elicited the *discourse* of women's autonomous organizing, which led to the creation of several new women's organizations. However, the OMM, after a brief experiment with autonomy, returned to FRELIMO within the very different context of an electoral *victory* for the revolutionary party.

In both revolutions, women have made significant gains in political representation and legal protections. However, women's economic status has not improved, as women have continued to carry the burden of reproductive labor while the expectation of productive labor was added during the revolutionary period and today remains a necessity for survival. Marxist-Leninist understandings of women's oppression adopted by FRELIMO and the Sandinistas assumed a class-based, productivist approach which equated women's emancipation with women's participation in the public spheres of military defense and economic production. Women's emancipation in the private, reproductive sphere of the home and family was not addressed by either revolution. Moreover, women's cultural equality in the family and in society has not been significantly challenged in either country, with very real material manifestations in the form of the sexual division of labor, violence against women, and the absence of reproductive rights. The intersections of women's practical gender needs and strategic

gender interests in the productive and reproductive spheres of life were for the most part left unexamined, as were gendered material and cultural power relations in the family.

Since the family is a unit of *(re)production* based on a gendered, political, and cultural economy, only an analysis of gendered political economies locally and globally, and the transformation of the relations of production and reproduction within the family and society, will emancipate women.

The post-revolutionary periods of democratization within Mozambique and Nicaragua have been characterized by decreasing economic democracy, increasing political democracy, and increased autonomous organizing within 'civil society.' This trend toward participation within civil society has led to an increased presence of a diversity of issues in the areas of feminism and women's rights, as feminist voices flourish, debating the best form and substance for the future of their movements. However, civil society appears to be emerging as a weak substitute for a fuller understanding of democracy. In Nicaragua, NGOs constituted by former Sandinistas rise to fill the void of an ever-shrinking state. In Mozambique, the NGO-ization of development leads donor interests to dominate decision-making and financial allotments over local grassroots interests. In both countries, the vision of revolutionary democracy has been replaced with neoliberal, capitalist democracy.

The most interesting differences that have emerged in this process of feminist transformation lie in the way the national women's organizations originated, developed, and articulated their demands within the revolutionary process. There were more opportunities in Nicaragua for women to organize, where women's secretariats of the unions, workers and professional associations were created. In contrast, in Mozambique,

there was only the OMM. The existence, or lack thereof, of other regional workers associations and revolutionary organizations, and the relationship AMNLAE and the OMM had with them, directly impacted the nature and extent of the mobilization of women in each country. Moreover, the post-revolutionary electoral losses of the FSLN in Nicaragua as opposed to the electoral victories of FRELIMO in Mozambique provide very different frameworks for the development of contemporary women's organizing. While the OMM remains a part of the FRELIMO structure, approximately fifty autonomous women's organizations have come into existence in Mozambique. AMNLAE, however, is one of over three hundred women's organizations within the autonomous and feminist movements in Nicaragua.

The similarities of the *revolutionary limitations* for women in Mozambique and Nicaragua are striking: the fact that two recent revolutions, on two different continents, with two different cultural histories, can produce the same disregard for women's gendered interests reveals the common oppression of women that persists around the world, even within emancipatory frameworks like Marxism. However, the post-revolutionary organizing and constructions of feminism that have emerged provide new strategies, new successes and new hopes for the future of global feminist organizing. For example, the body politics which has emerged in Nicaragua, identifying democracy in the home with an integrated vision of freedom from violence, access to health care, economic opportunities and women's reproductive rights, offers much to global feminisms in terms of theory and practice. Furthermore, the focus of Mozambican women's organizations on violence against women, education, economic development, and women's legal status reminds us how important these issues are in any feminist agenda. The constructions of

'feminism' that have emerged in both countries, which focus on integrating women's diversities, unifying women and men, and articulating the intersections of economics, body politics and culture, all reveal a commonality in the feminisms of the developing world that has much to offer to First World feminisms.

In conclusion, women's emancipation in the family must be understood as an extension of economic, political and cultural democracy. We must focus on family democracy and family economics, and extend the values of democracy into the private sphere of the home and family in order for democracy in the state and the market to have any legitimacy. The super-exploitation of women's unpaid labor around the world is the root of women's oppression, and thus the cause of the perpetuation of women's subordinate status globally. As long as men's work is work for pay, and women's work is work for free, women's oppression will persist, and democracy will remain a myth.

My vision of an anti-oppression politics advocates use of a 'reproductivist approach' and a 'standpoint of intersectionality' to envision and to implement an emancipatory agenda which attempts to fight oppression as such, in each of its racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized manifestations. Adopting a reproductivist approach forces us to focus on *all* of the emotional and material labor required to reproduce the relationships of everyday life in the spheres of the family, the market, the state and civil society. Adopting a standpoint of intersectionality asks us to look at the world from the perspective of women located at the intersections of multiple oppressions, and thus is necessary for the creation of emancipatory ideologies and movements of social change aimed at the eradication of such oppressions.

Marxism, Feminism, and Black Nationalism have all been incomplete theories of liberation precisely because the predominant voices within each have claimed that *either* class, gender or racial oppression, respectively, is original, primary, or fundamental, and therefore explains the emergence of all other forms of oppression. Theorizing and conducting research from a standpoint of intersectionality requires focusing on the ways systems of oppression *construct* and are *constructed by* one another. I contend that scholar-activists must focus on the interactive causes and effects of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, colonialism, and imperialism if we want to work toward a coalitional politics that will ultimately fight oppression *as such*, and not simply an identity politics which fights for a better place for a particular oppressed group within the pre-existing power structures of a hierarchical society. It is my assertion that we will continue to create false universals and unsound generalizations as long as we continue to analyze one standpoint at a time rather than grapple with the difficult realities of intersectionality.

For me, the driving question of this dissertation was *how* can a revolutionary movement be articulated which incorporates the need to fight all systems of oppression -- whether based on gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity or other subject position -- which perpetuate relationships of domination and subordination within the state, the market, civil society and the family? By examining *what went wrong* for women, and the emergence of feminist agency that followed, in two state-run socialisms in the Third World that were able to make significant achievements in the areas of education, literacy, health care, and women's political representation, this dissertation brings us closer to an answer.

Appendix

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES - MOZAMBIQUE - June 29 - July 30, 1999

Alvero, Maria Olívia. Provincial Secretary OMM, Nampula, July 28, 1999

André de Castro, Luciano. 1st Secretary Comitê Provincial da FRELIMO em Nampula, Nampula, Mozambique, July 27, 1999

Baloi, Obede. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), July 23, 1999

Bango, Celeste. Executive Director, Women, Law and Development Organization (MULEIDE), July 21, 1999

Barnes, Sam. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), ONUMOZ, OXFAM Belgium, July 2, 1999

Berg, Nina. Lawyer, DANIDA, July 16, 1999

Braga, Carla. Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), Campanha Terra/Former OMM, July 15, 1999

Capelão, Luisa. USAID, July 8, 1999

Cardoso, Carlos. Journalist, July 9, 1999

Cizela, Sandra. Beira - July 26, 1999

Collier, Edda. Gender Specialist, Ministry of Social Action/UN - July 30, 1999

Cossa, Celina. President, Union of General Cooperatives (UGC), July 19, 1999

Cossa, Generossa. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), President of NUMAC, O Núcleo da Mulher Acadêmica, July 14, 1999

Cruz e Silva, Teresa. Director, Centro Estudos Africanos, Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), July 1, 1999

da Silva, Terezinha. Director of Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) - July 23, 1999

Denga, Maria Nita. Africa-America Institute (AAI) Alumnus, World Bank Economist, July 2, 1999

Diniz, Célia. Africa-America Institute (AAI) Country Representative, Mozambique, July 1, 1999

Fernanda Farinha, Maria. Africa-America Institute (AAI) Alumnus, AUSTRAL, July 8, 1999

Fernandes, Ana. Technial Director/Plant Manager of Rio Pele Textile Factory, June 30, 1999

Francisca, Palmira. MP, Advisor to Gender Division, Ministry of Environment, Founder of ACTIVA, June 30, 1999

Gamilo, Carmen. OMM, Beira, July 26, 1999

Garvey, Jennifer. Lawyer, July 15, 1999

Gastor, Polly. Centro Informática, Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), July 13, 1999

Humberto, Tina. Beira, July 26, 1999

Magaia, Américo. General Manager of Mozambican International Trade Fair (FACIM), Former Ministry of Commerce/Freedom-Fighter, July 24, 1999

Magaia, Lina. Member of Parliament/Writer/Founding Member of African Women's Peace Federation/Freedom Fighter, July 6, 1999

Manuel, Sandra. Student/Interpreter, July 12, 1999

Marcelino, Angélica. Beira - July 26, 1999

Matania, Elisa. Organization of Liberal Women (OML), July 6, 1999

Mateus, Paulina. Secretary-General, OMM/Member of Destacamento Feminino/ Ex-Combatant, July 5, 1999

Mboa, Ivete. Associação Das Donas De Casa (ADOCA), Matola, July 7, 1999

McGuire, Harriet. Director, United States Information Service (USIS), Maputo, July 16, 1999

Mondlane, Janet. Eduardo Mondlane Foundation, July 29, 1999

Montero, Ana Maria. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), NGO Development Project, July 8, 1999

Montero, Cédia. Executive Director, Forum Mulher, June 29, 1999

Muianga, Elisa. President, Women, Law and Development Organization (MULIEDE), July 21, 1999

Mutemba, Octávio. FRELIMO, Tete, July 20, 1999

Negrão, José. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), Campanha Terra (Land Campaign), July 6, 1999

Nguenya, Alcido. FRELIMO/MP/Member of Permanent Commission of Parliament, July 21, 1999

Paunde, Felipe. First Secretary Comitê Provincial da FRELIMO em Sofala, Beira, July 26, 1999

Santos, Sabina. Director, OMM National Training Center, Machava, July 20, 1999

Sithole, Ana Rita. MP/Permanent Commission of Parliament/FRELIMO/OMM, July 15, 1999

Taju, Gulamo. Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) NGO Development Project, July 8, 1999

Temba, Eulália. WLSAMUZ, Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), July 13, 1999

Thumbo, Hermengilda. Director of Credit Division, Mozambican Association of Rural Development (AMODER), Africa-America Institute (AAI) Alumnus, July 23, 1999

Tomé, Manuel. Secretary-General of FRELIMO, July 29, 1999

Trinta, Fatima. OMM Provincial Sec Office, Nampula, July 28, 1999

Victorino, Gertrudes. OMM/Freedom Fighter, July 14, 1999

Viera, Sérgio. FRELIMO Founder/Leader/Freedom Fighter/MP, July 15, 1999

Waterhouse. Rachel, Coordinator of Program on Land Rights and Gender Equity, ACTION AID, July 21, 1999

West, Harry. Fulbright Scholar, Mozambique, July 20, 1999

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES - NICARAGUA: Jan 3 - Feb 5, 2000

Acevedo, Angela Rosa. Centro de Derechos Constitucionales, FSLN, AMNLAE, Jan 11, 2000

Agurto, Sonia. FIDEG, Jan 10, 2000

Baltodano, Mónica. FSLN National Assembly, Freedom-Fighter, Jan 26, 2000

Bolaños, María Lourdes. FSLN National Assembly, Former Coordinator, AMNLAE Oficina Legal de la Mujer, Founder, IXCHEN, Feb 2, 2000

Casa de Mujeres Indígenas, León. Roundtable Discussion, Feb 4, 2000

Aramburu, Vilma Castillo. Executive Director, Puntos de Encuentro, Jan 20, 2000

Caffarena, Leonardo Centeno. Centro de Educación para Democracia, Jan 13, 2000

Cortez, Priska. Domestic Worker, Managua, Jan 20, 2000

Criquillon, Ana. ATC, FSLN, Puntos de Encuentro, Jan 20, 2000

Cruz de Cabrera, Esperanza. Comité de Madres de Héroes y Mártires, MRS, Jan 31, 2000

Davila, Irma. FSLN Department Secretary General, Matagalpa, Jan 31, 2000

Dixon, Helen. Grupo Venancia, Matagalpa, Jan 31, 2000

Espinoza, Thelma. Vice-Coordinator, AMNLAE, Jan 6, 2000

Evans, Jocqueline M. FSLN Women's League, Granada, Jan 28, 2000

Ferrey, Asusena. FUNIC MUJER, Christian Democrat, Contra, Jan 20, 2000

Fletes Zamora, Ritha. FSLN National Assembly, AMNLAE, Jan 10, 2000

Giacomán, Yalile. CAPRI, FSLN Member, Jan 12, 2000

Granera, Violeta. FUNDEMOS, Anti-Sandinista, Jan 14, 2000

Lazo, Javier Matus. CENADE, Jan 19, 2000

Liebl, Justiniano. CAPRI, Jan 7, 2000

López, Concepción. AMNLAE and FSLN, Leon, Feb 4, 2000

López, Guillermo Galeano. FSLN, Granada, Jan 28, 2000

Mejía, María Lidia. AMNLAE Granada, Jan 28, 2000

Mesa, Auxiliadora. Lawyer, Professor, UCA, Centro de Mujer y Familia, Jan 24, 2000

***Miriam Casa*, Seven Women Students, Roundtable Discussion, Feb 3, 2000**

Montenegro, Sofía. Feminist Theorist/Activist, Comité Nacional Feminista, Former FSLN, AMNLAE, Barricada Journalist, CINCO, Jan 25, 2000

Narvaez, Zoilamérica. CEI, Sandinista, (Step-Daughter of Daniel Ortega) Jan 14, 2000

Núñez de Escorcía, Vilma. CENIDH, FSLN, Former Vice-President of Supreme Court, Commission for Human Rights, Feb 2, 2000

Olivas, Argentina. Colectivo de Mujeres de Matagalpa, Jan 31, 2000

Ortega, Irma. CIPRES, Former Ministry of Agriculture, FSLN, Jan 18, 2000

Pasquier, Rosario. Director, Asociación de Padres de Familia Doris María Morales Tijerino, Jan 6, 2000

Pizarro, Ana María. SI MUJER, FSLN, Former Ministry of Health, Jan 21, 2000

Ramírez, Marcía. CANDERA, Former FSLN, (Sister of Sergio Ramírez, former VP and founder of MRS) Jan 19, 2000

Ramos López, Sandra. Executive Director, Movimiento de Mujeres Trabajadoras y Desempleadas, Former FSLN, AMNLAE, CST, Jan 10, 2000

Renzi, María Rosa. UNDP Gender Representative, Jan 24, 2000

Rodriguez, Reyna Isabel. Movimiento de Mujeres Autonomas, Ciudad de Sandino, former FSLN, AMNLAE, Jan 13, 2000

Rostrán, Federico. Lic Political Science, Journalism, Interpreter, Feb 4, 2000

Salinas, Lilleana. Executive Director, Centro de Mujeres, ISNIN, Jan 13, 2000

Sam Qui, Eva María. Centro de Mujeres, IXCHEN, Former Department of the Interior, FSLN, Jan 17, 2000

Sequeira Rivas, María Elena. Secretariat Nacional de la Mujer, ATC, Jan 27, 2000

Suárez García, Xanthis. Centro de Mujer y Familia, Former FSLN, AMNLAE, Jan 21, 2000

Silva, Noé. Waiter, Mansion Teodolinda, Jan 27, 2000

Tellez Palacios, Alberto. UCA Bachelor's Student, Feb 2, 2000

Tijerino, Doris. FSLN, Former National Assembly, National Directorate, AMNLAE Coordinator, Police Chief, Jan 27, 2000

Tijerino, Sara. FSLN Municipal Secretary General, Matagalpa, Jan 31, 2000

Tinoco, Gilma Yadira. Comisión Interuniversitaria de Estudios de Género, Jan 17, 2000

Tinoco, Victor Hugo. FSLN National Directorate, National Assembly, Jan 26, 2000

Wheelock, Jaime. Former FSLN National Directorate, Minister of Agriculture, Jan 24, 2000

Zalaquett, Mónica. Asociación Centro de Prevención de la Violencia, Sandinista, Jan 17, 2000

Zeledón, Dora. National Coordinator, AMNLAE, National Assembly, FSLN, Jan 28, 2000

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Arnfred, Signe. "Reflections on Family Forms and Gender Policy in Mozambique," Centros Estudos Africanos, Universidade de Eduardo Mondlane, #118 A.

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