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# Paths to power of women legislators in Costa Rica and Nicaragua

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### Abstract

Women are underrepresented in national legislatures, but in recent years the proportion of women in Costa Rica and Nicaragua has increased. Based on in-depth interviews with women representatives in the national legislatures of these two countries, this article explores the factors associated with increased representation for women. The political history of each country, including the development of women's legal rights, certain characteristics of the electoral system, the role of the state as an actor in gender politics, women's political activity, and important international bodies and events were found to influence the number and types of women elected. It appears that there are multiple paths that women may pursue to gain representation in national legislatures.



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