Research Paper Topic Proposal

**Topic:**
I am studying the development and the structure of the Sandinista movement in Nicaragua in order to determine the key reasons that explain why they were able to successfully overthrow the Somoza regime in 1979.

**Research Problem:**
Different historians focus on different elements of the movement and the Nicaraguan context in order to explain the Sandinistas’ success. The most significant debate revolves around the relative importance of structure versus agency, or external conditions versus individual actions in revolutions generally, and specifically of the Sandinistas. Within these broad categories of structure and agency are questions of the importance of military strength for both sides of the conflict and the importance of gaining popular support and allies. There is also debate over the role and effect of ideology in defining the group’s goals, as well as over the effectiveness or the necessity of the use of violence and/or negotiations to achieve those goals.

**Importance**
The Sandinistas were one of the few successful Latin American revolutionary movements of the twentieth century. So I am studying the different explanations for their success, because I want to find out which makes the most sense, in order to help readers understand what separates successful revolutions from failures.