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**Revisiting Regional Integration Theory:
The State and Normative Elites in Central American
Regionalisation**

by

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Studies

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List of Abbreviations

AC	Andean Community
ANDI	Asociación Nacional de Industriales de Honduras
ANEP	Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada El Salvador
ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista, El Salvador
BA	Bureaucratic Authoritarianism
BCIE	Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica
CACIF	Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras, Guatemala
CACM	Central American Common Market
CAFTA-DR	Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement
CAMARASAL	Cámara de Comercio e Industria de El Salvador
CET	Common External Tariff
CIG	Cámara de la Industria Guatemalteca
COHEP	Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada
COMIECO	Consejo de Ministros de Economía, SICA
COSEP	Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada, Nicaragua
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FECAICA	Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones Industriales de Centroamérica Federación de Cámaras de Comercio del Istmo
FECAMCO	Centroamericano
FEDEPRICAP	Federación de Entidades Privadas de Centroamérica y Panamá
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, El Salvador
FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, Nicaragua
FTAA	Free Trade Agreement of the Americas
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
FUSADES	Fundación Salvadoreña Para el Desarrollo Económico y Social
ID	Ideational Drive Model of Socialisation
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation Strategy
LAFTA	Latin American Free Trade Association
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NBOs	National Business Organisations
ODECA	Organización de Estados Centro Americanos
PARLACEN	Parlamento Centroamericano
RBOs	Regional Business Organisations
SICA	Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana
UN	United Nations
US	United States

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Dedication

For the stolen time, unpaid attention, missed dinners, unattended social gatherings ... I dedicate this thesis to Elena and Andrea

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that the material included in this dissertation is the result of new research. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree in another university.

Abstract

The thesis develops a Central Americanised model of regional integration by building on neofunctionalist concepts through the use of a constructivist approach. Distortions, strategic modification and stagnation phases of integration in that region are conventionally attributed, often implicitly, to the “unwillingness” of the governments. The problem with this approach, however, is that it neglects the role of what I identify as *Normative Elites* in the process. In order to overcome this limitation, the thesis formulates the concept of *Social Will*, conceptualised as the interplay of the ideas, identity and interest of the Central American normative elites—and it refers to the predisposition or disinclination of these elites to support the integration process. The formulation of social will leads the analysis to re-conceptualise the interaction between the state and normative elites. This reconsideration necessitates the elaboration of modified models of socialisation and norm diffusion—which I label *Ideational Drive* and *Circumscribed-Statist* respectively—to reflect certain Central American specificities.

Empirically, the thesis assesses the existence and role of both political will and social will in Central America by using discourse analysis of a series of interviews and detailed readings of published position documents. Regarding political will, it identifies a latent integrative strategy and a significant ideational convergence among the participants in the study. It concludes that indeed in that region there is a fair degree of political will. This conclusion is partially supported by the uncovering of *Constitutional Regionalism*, or the constitutional bestowals of special citizenship status on nationals of other Central American countries, and the inclusion of specific constitutional provisions conducive to integration.

The thesis contemplates the existence of social will at two points: the reactivation of the Central American integration process during the 1990s, and in the 2005-08 period. In the first instance, the thesis identifies the leading role that normative elites, through economic groups, played in the reactivation of the process. In that sense, it argues that at that time there existed a degree of social will. In the second instance, the thesis identifies discursive differences among normative elites. One discourse conceives of the region from a *Central Americanist* view striving for the development of the region and crucially, its people. The other discourse is *Instrumentalist* aiming at improving the region’s competitive positioning in the global economy. This ideational incongruence signals a limited degree of social will. The thesis concludes by arguing that partial social will delimits and imposes meaning on the spaces wherein the political will could thrive. Hence the process experiences distortions, strategic modifications and stagnant phases.

Introduction

This thesis is about regional integration in Central America.¹ It aims at advancing our understanding of regionalism in that area.² The thesis is, in addition, about regionalisation³ because that region, despite failed attempts and disruptions to the process, seems reluctant to refrain from following integrative impulses. These impulses have a long history: there have been more than 30 failed unionist initiatives in 188 years of independent history. During this period the ideal of union has remained as a recurrent theme experiencing a process of metamorphosis from the political idealism of the nineteenth century (e.g. the Greater Republic of Central America, 1895-1898) to the economic pragmatism of the second half of the twentieth century exemplified by the Central American Common Market, CACM. (See appendix I for a complete list of integrative attempts). While the current initiative, the *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana* (SICA),⁴ has produced a limited increase in intra-regional trade, there is little progress toward integration. SICA includes a comprehensive regional institutional framework—including a regional parliament and court of justice. Regional decision making, nevertheless, remains at the national level allowing the participant states to protect their local interests rather than advance regional interests. How might we understand the cyclical “decline,” reactivation,

¹ Central America refers to the countries that traditionally constitute the sub-region: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Under the Spanish empire, these countries were administered as a unit, the General Captaincy of Guatemala or the Kingdom of Guatemala (which also included the province of Chiapas now a Mexican state). Following independence (1821), and after a brief annexation by Mexico, these countries (with the exception of Chiapas) remained as a unit under the United Provinces of Central America (1823-1838). In recent integrationist schemes in the area other countries have begun to participate; for example, Dominican Republic and Panama.

² To avoid redundancy I use the terms regional integration and regionalism interchangeably.

³ Regionalisation refers to the process of regional construction through interactions among actors. On regionalisation see Hettne (2005).

⁴ The Central American Integration System.

distortions and strategic shifts experienced by the Central American integrative process?

I argue that the nature of Central American regionalism can best be understood by analysing the role of what I label “normative elites networks” and the exercise of their power through “Social Will.” These elite groups are built around family and kinship, and function as platforms from which members can exchange economic, political and ideological power. This exchange produces a fair degree of “normative” power⁵ which in turn enables the elites to establish intersubjective elements (e.g. norms and rules) that determine what constitutes the region. In order to reach such intersubjective congruence, social will is essential: the ideas, identity and interests of the elites must converge favourably around the integrative process. If a high degree of social will exists, then the regional process is likely to be further advanced. Conversely, if social will is minimal, integration is likely to experience a stagnation phase or a strategic alteration. This argument requires revisiting the interactions between the state and elites in order, first, to theorise about the existence of normative elite networks, and second, to theoretically elaborate the social will concept. The aim of these tasks is to “localise” regional integration theory to better reflect the Central American context.

Trends in the Study of Central America

It is important to note that currently only a few studies (Bull, 2002, 2004; Grugel and Payne, 2000) on regional integration in Central America adopt a critical⁶

⁵ On normative power, see Adler (2005: 178-179), Guzzini (2005), and Manners (2002) and (2006).

⁶ By “critical studies” I mean studies that engage the underlying assumptions of conventional analyses. For example, studies that question and/or elaborate on assumptions such as “constraints

approach to their subject. Some studies remain “a-theoretical” and confine themselves to identifying multi-level governance trends in the region.⁷ Others take an approach that presupposes a fair degree of economic determinism that is overly concerned with integration as a mechanism for economic development or for exploiting regional advantages.⁸ By doing so, these studies neglect the role of elites in the process and remain focused on the role of the state because, in their conceptualisation of regionalism, what is required for the advancement of the process are successful governmental policies. Throughout I refer to this understanding of the process as “statist view” or simply as the conventional view.

Such an approach may be misleading because it portrays integration as merely tantamount to economic integration and does not fully capture the existing “unionist” foundation: Integration is conceived of as an “economic construction” rather than as a subtler and deeper “social construction.” Thus, regional integration has a supply and demand “logic” (Mattli, 1999) and, in order to be successful, requires the implementation of economic policies that lead to structural reforms and macroeconomic stability and at the same time reduce sectoral deficiencies which hinder economic growth (Shams, 2003: 13). If regional integration is to greatly benefit the participant countries then it is logical that the process advances to higher levels. What this analysis misses, however, are the intersubjective dynamics among the different social actors within the

on power,” “retrain by social relations” and “real sources of power” which current analyses of the Central American region incorporate; also, studies that question and/or elaborate the “modernisation” premises that permeate notions of the state (e.g. corporatism) and regional integration in general (e.g. pluralist societies) which tend to “upload” a specific image onto Central American regionalism.

⁷ Centeno and López-Alves (2001) note a similar trend. In Latin American studies in general there is a tendency towards the study of “non-elites and social theory” seeking comprehensive “social knowledge of the poor and marginalized” and by confining themselves to such studies neglect “those who, for better or for worse, make decisions, [those] organizations that define policies, and those who implement them” (Centeno and López-Alves, 2001: 16).

⁸ See for instance Bulmer-Thomas (1996, 1998, 2000, 2001), Bouzas and Ros (1994), Caldentey del Pozo (1998), Gauhar (1985), Rodas-Martini (1998, 2000) and Sanahuja Perales (1997, 2007).

process; and how these dynamics construct integration and thus the region. Therefore, the analyst is forced to lump social relations into supply and demand logic neglecting what is behind the economic interests of those making the demands and what it is that hinders the ability of the supplier to meet such demands.

The underlying economic determinism of the statist view of the process is evident when studies explicitly state that regional integration is an “economic endeavour” (Malamud and de Sousa, 2007: 108). This view effectively disregards cultural factors apparently disconnected or minimally employed in the rational economic space by, for example, emphatically denying a driving role to the formation of a common identity in favour of “the convergence of interests” as driver (Malamud and Schmitter, 2007: 9). When regionalising demands do emerge from ideational factors beyond the economic they are dismissed as “cognitive dissonances” expressing the wishful thinking of the speaker (Malamud, 2005a: 422-423). Even observers who study the role of “ideas” in the region conceive of the process in economic terms.⁹ The downplaying of ideational factors originates in an ontological position wherein regional integration functions merely within the economic realm from which ideas other than economic ones cannot be articulated and thus become meaningless. If the ontology of regional integration is conceptualised within the social realm, then identity and ideas matter just as much as interests. In such conceptualisation, for example, it is possible to contend that Central America exists because there is a

⁹ For example, while tracing the historical interactions between Latin America and the US within the regionalist efforts and the “ideas” behind those efforts, Fawcett (2005: 42; emphasis added) argues that the current integration initiatives are united by “a broad commitment to open as opposed to closed regionalism, and a concomitant consensus regarding economic and political objectives. None of this implies homogeneity... Rather it represents a continuing effort to *maximize relative advantage*.”

fair proportion of Central American actors who search for the region's identity and, in doing so, become "identical" or share the identity from which Central America comes into existence (Ramírez, 2000: 117).

The purely economic position of conventional Central American integration studies leads the observer into a conundrum. If the process is mainly economic, and socio-economic groups are by nature rationalistic in their demands, how can we understand the very apparent shortcomings of economic integration in Central America? From the statist view, the key to understanding this phenomenon is in the analysis of the supply side of the process: in the role and power of presidents (Malamud, forthcoming); in the preferences of governments (Sánchez, 2003b); in the efforts of the political elites to gain legitimacy for particular policies and to rearrange the role that the private sector plays in their national economies (Perales, 2003); in the opportunistic behaviour of the political elites in opting for integration whenever they foresee economic gains (Genna and Hiroi, 2004); or in the convergence of the strategic interests of the regional partners although, admittedly, the socialisation of executive officials play a partial role (Gomez Mera, 2005). While it is recognised that the power of the presidents or political elites is restrained by "the hidden" and "real sources of power" (Malamud and Schmitter, 2007: 25) or by "their political economy" (Sánchez, 2003b: 31), these sources, nevertheless, are scarcely—if at all—analysed.

This tendency, I argue, is the result of an underlying set of assumptions originating in modernisation theory. Despite an apparent consensus on the overrating of modernisation theory, the premises of that theory are nevertheless employed as organising principles (Knight, 2007: 104). Indeed, those observers

who question “modernisation” (e.g. Whitehead, 2006) appear to see the need to “force” the evidence in order to reconcile it with that theory. In this sense, the conventional view of the Central American process is underpinned by assumptions about the rationalisation of the state. Political elites are conceived of as isolated from the rest of society and other elites are split into functional groups in ways that weaken the power of those elites vis-à-vis the state. Elites are also conceived of as performing a pluralist task: they become pressure groups and thus are assumed to be constraints on the power of the state. Power, therefore, is assumed to be widely diffused in society and hence it is possible to search for multilevel governance tendencies in that region. If elites become more prominent in state matters, then it is argued that the state is being privatised. Elements of the political culture that could allow those elites to influence the state directly are thus neglected.

Few Central American integration studies venture into the analytical terrain of questioning the social interactions from which the “sources of power” that constrain the states emerge: the terrain of those who make the decisions. Observers who undertake such a task struggle to reconcile the underlying assumptions about modernisation and cultural continuities. Bull (2004), for example, recognises that at the Latin American level, the state presents modern and post-colonial characteristics, and that in the regional process personalistic and clientelistic relations through policy networks play a determining role. For Bull (2004: 12), “corporatism is weakened” in Latin America but the “technocrat [sic] logic clearly coexists with personalistic relations between business and state representatives.” Bull (2004) indicates that market reforms have given certain

social segments privileged access to policy makers. Hence, the state has been recently privatised (Bull, 2002).¹⁰

The implication of such an argument is that market reforms originated in the state which, in turn, grants policy influence to elites. The power of those elites to originate policy, however, should not be underestimated. For example, while historicising the Latin American economies Montecinos and Markoff (2001: 107-108) have noted that “the relevant economic ideas” of the post-great depression reforms (e.g. import substitution industrialisation-¹¹ISI) originated not “in the ideas of politicians nor economists” but primarily in those of “businessmen, including export-oriented landowners who pragmatically seized the available opportunities.” What makes the market liberalisation reforms of the 1980s-1990s different from those of the 1930s? It seems to me that an underlying modernising logic is at play: oligarchic states have disappeared and have been replaced by “modernising” states (Whitehead, 2006: 114). Hence the power of non-state elites to dictate policy has been minimised, if not completely eradicated. When confronted with non-modern tendencies, the analysis brackets out those tendencies by merely recognising that there are personalistic and clientelistic relations involved in political processes and moves onto “modern” spaces of analysis.

This modernising tendency drives the efforts of adventurous observers to link the region’s elites to an emergent “transnational managerial class” (Bull, 2004: 12). This analytical concern to embed elites within the globalisation

¹⁰ Similarly, while analysing market liberalisation reforms at the Latin American level, Teichman (2001) identifies the role of “policy networks” and their influence in political processes through their interactions with the state. For Teichman (2001: 9) market reforms although originated by state actors have given powerful members of the private sector direct access to policy elites.

¹¹ ISI refers to the establishment of national industries behind protectionist measures (i.e. tariffs and quotas).

process leads observers to neglect the embeddedness in family and kinship networks of the social interactions they correctly identify. The analysis focuses on the role that technocrats play in linking the region's private sector and states with international institutions through personalistic and clientelistic relations based on friendship, trust and loyalty. The analysis thus becomes "modernising" because it divides the elites into functional groups and assumes that technocratic elites are a new breed that have first expropriated the state from the bureaucracy and second, personalised the society-state relations. What are the sources of the technocrats' power? How are they able to achieve such tremendous power?

The study of Central American regionalism, in other words, is somewhat predisposed to engage in rationalistic and modernising attempts at explaining the process. Such efforts rely upon a series of what Lustick (1997: 176) refers to as "negative heuristics," or questions which scholars opt "not to be able to ask." Rosamond (2006: 518) has commented that "bounded knowledge" (i.e. disciplines) tends to "reify their objects" and at the same time reify "themselves to the extent that their internal criteria for the judgment of rigour and excellence became dynamic contributors to their reproduction regardless of whether or how their objects of study are changing." Moreover and importantly, in some "aggressive" instances disciplines upload or "normalise" a given "image of the ontology" of their object of study into the conventional or mainstream disciplinary literature (Rosamond, 2006: 518). This appears to be the case in regionalism studies in Central America. Negative heuristics lead the observer to accommodate a presupposed set of assumptions (e.g. elites can be neatly categorised functionally) about the integrative process which in turn imbues regional integration with a particular nature (e.g. multilevel governance,

pluralism) disregarding along the way factors such as cultural continuities that may help us further our understanding of the process.

For supporters of the conventional view of Central American regionalism, the inclusion, or even mention, of family and kinship networks as I propose in this study, may seem anachronistic. Those networks are conceived of as something historical (i.e. belonging to the past) and hence their importance for the present is greatly underestimated.¹² And yet, there seem to be cultural continuities in the region: kinship relations play an important role in policy development (Bull, 2004; Teichman, 2001). In addition, it could be the case that bringing these networks to the fore creates methodological difficulties. How can we assess their influence? How can we establish kinship relations among, say, the president of a country and a bank director? Those difficulties are exacerbated by a lack of quantitative means to assess the power of oligarchic groups and the sources and nature of that power (Dosal, 1995: 4). The lack of reliable data necessary to deploy sophisticated quantitative models and techniques which allow for rigorous theory testing contribute to what seems to some an atheoretical trend in the study of the region (Centeno and López-Alves, 2001: 14). The study of family and kinship, thus, may be perceived as a compounding problem.

Yet, one notices that a shopping plaza built by one of the most powerful Salvadoran and Central American business families (Roble Group, Poma family) was inaugurated by El Salvador's former President Saca, and those who attended

¹² Others have thoroughly discussed and critiqued Weber's ideas underlying the exclusion or "privatization" of the family from modernization/the modern state (Yanagisako, 2007; Farrell, 1993; Sabeen and Teuscher, 2007). In this sense, Yanagisako (2007: 45) indicates that in the European context, the decline in the thesis of kinship may be better understood as discursive practices through which elements perceived to be signs of the decline or otherwise of the social significance of kinship, are selectively identified and decontextualised from the complex set of ideas and practices: kinship analysis is a "selective process." I argue that the role of family and kinship networks is thus historicised.

the ceremony included another three of the country's former presidents,¹³ and also the president of the Supreme Court and the president of the National Assembly (EDH, 2004). Current studies, seemingly, simplify such an issue by assuming that these relations are constraints on presidential power. However, there is a need to theorise such relations beyond the economic power involved in them, and beyond the personalistic/patron-client (or anti-modern) line of thinking. Simply put, there is a need to theorise the “normative power” dimension that those relations implicate.

The underlying obsession of regionalism studies with a modernising economic rationale could be overcome by opening up these studies to the “wider social sciences” (Rosamond, 2007: 38). In this sense and by analytical necessity, the study of regional integration in Central America developed in this thesis becomes an inter-disciplinary endeavour building on the theoretical formulations of history, sociology, political psychology and cultural studies, among other disciplines. I propose to build just such multi-disciplinarity at the junction of regional integration studies, more specifically neofunctionalism and constructivism. The former identified a series of cognitive and ideational factors that were essential for its model (Rosamond, 2005), but that, as a result of methodological restrictions and ontological assumptions discussed in detail in chapter one, it was not able fully to apprehend. The latter offers insights which enable us to identify the origins of social constructs and to reveal the socially constructed nature of normative structures that are conceived of as given (Barnett, 2002: 101). Based on this junction, in what follows I strive to contribute to theory building within the study of regional integration in Central America.

¹³ Former presidents Cristiani, Calderon Sol and Flores.

With this aim, I question certain basic negative heuristics assumed by regional integration studies: the concentration of power in the presidents' hands, the theoretical "capitulation" of traditional oligarchic groups through an analysis that conceives of the region's elites in functional terms and their analytically neglected role in integrative processes.

I argue, in this context, that regional integration presupposes a process of social elaboration. The meaning of what constitutes the region guides the actions of regionalising actors. Thus, discursive practices, by communicating collective meaning, define and constitute a given region. Within such practices, ideas and interests interact to influence the regional discourse. In the process, the latter constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs regional identity. Region and identity, however, are mutually constitutive: the territorialisation of identity embeds the region in the collective meaning; at the same time, identity constructs the boundaries that establish the region. It becomes first, a quasi-nationalistic discourse that enables actors to *imagine their community*; and second, a social reality. Central America is, then, a social construction wherein the interplay of ideas and identity leads social forces to constantly reproduce the region. Interpreting the region in this way enables us to go beyond "cognitive dissonances" and to understand why the idea of integration has been so persistent in the region's history, indeed has functioned as the centripetal force of its politics.

Objectives, Main Argument, Key Concepts and Contributions

There are two interrelated objectives in this study. The first is to "localise" regional integration theory. Regionalism studies approach Central America

normatively. The old regionalism—specifically for this thesis, neofunctionalism—imposes on that region a largely Euro-centric model in part by assuming the ontology of the process to be pluralistic. Despite emerging as a school to overcome such “flaws” present in the old studies, new regionalism studies upload meaning to the region through a series of multilevel governance assumptions that imply a pluralistic structure and which only partially, at best, reflect the Central American socio-political context. In this study, I strive to avoid such imposition through the “Central-Americanisation” of integration theory by remaining attentive to specificities or area specific conditions, and incorporating these specificities into the integration model I develop.

The second objective of the thesis is to revisit and adapt neofunctionalism to the Central American context.¹⁴ The original models of neofunctionalism identified a series of ideational elements that seemed fundamental for the study of integration as a socio-political process. However, the models assumed an ontological position incompatible with those elements. Despite the fact that values were argued to play an influential role in the formation of regional preferences —and by arguing thus neofunctionalists endogenised interests— regional integration remained an interest-driven process. This incompatibility led to methodological concerns and limitations: neofunctionalists found it difficult to operationalise the ideational elements they had themselves identified. Another issue for neofunctionalism was its reliance on pluralism: the process was thought to be dependent on the role of a plurality of pressure groups which did not fully fit regions beyond Europe. Later, efforts were made to reduce the role of pluralism (Rosamond, 2005: 241). Nevertheless, the latest attempts of the

¹⁴ Others have underlined the current relevance of neofunctionalism for the study of integration; see e.g. Rosamond (2005) and Schmitter (2005).

neofunctionalists (Haas, 2004; Schmitter, 2004) make regional identity dependent on socio-political pluralism. In assuming such pluralism, elites are split into functional groups, thus diminishing their power in relation to that of the state. This is an issue in the Central American context because, as I attempt to show, elites in that region converge in normative networks.

These aims lead me to several interrelated theoretical contributions. First, I localise regional integration theory by revisiting the interactions between the state and elites. I attempt to reinsert and better account for the neglected, if not downplayed, role of Central American elites in the process through the formulation of two concepts: normative elite networks and social will. I elaborate my proposition of the existence of normative networks by revisiting the interactions between the state and elites. I conceptualise social will based on the premises of neofunctionalism—specifically on Haas’ “community sentiment” (1958) and Schmitter’s “elite value complementarity” (1971b)—through a constructivist approach. The Central Americanisation of integration theory also directs this study to question and modify current socialisation models and norm diffusion mechanisms as those models seem unable to fully apprehend the interactions between the state and elites which I identified through the normative networks concept. Just as in regionalism studies, those models are underpinned by modernisation or pluralist assumptions. They presuppose the state to be “relatively” independent from its social context. Norm socialisation, for example, depends on the pressure that the activist puts on political elites. Building on existing models I elaborate, therefore, a model of norm socialisation and a norm diffusion mechanism which I label “ideational drive” and “circumscribed-statist mechanisms” respectively. These models allow for the incorporation of the

normative elite networks' role through the exercise of social will within the integrative process. The aim of these theoretical contributions is to produce a richer understanding of the socio-political processes implicated in the Central American regional integration process.

There are, in addition, methodological and empirical contributions in this study. Methodologically, I attempt to overcome the limitations of neofunctionalism by utilising a constructivist framework that employs discourse analysis. For example, conventional integration models¹⁵ assume that political elites promote regionalism because of self-interest and, hence, that their support for the process may be limited. However, the methodology I employ allows me to identify a latent ideational integrative strategy among members of the political elites interviewed. Finally, constructivist approaches often neglect the role of economic agents and understate their impact in social processes (Klotz, 2001). By focusing of the role of economic elites within normative networks in the construction of the Central American region, I attempt to provide a way to begin addressing this trend.

My main argument is that the understanding of the limited successes, disruptions, and strategic shifts experienced by the Central American process can be furthered through the analytical inclusion of the existence and role of a background condition, what I label social will. I define social will as the predisposition or disinclination among normative elites to support the advancement of an integrative process. Social will emerges from the convergence of the ideas, identity and interests of the elites. If at a particular moment there is a high degree of social will, then regionalism is likely to

¹⁵ See e.g. Genna and Hiroi (2004), and Perales (2003).

advance. Conversely, when social will is minimal, the process is likely to experience disruptions, stagnation and strategic shifts.

This proposition requires several definitions. First, I understand regional integration as the inclination of a group of states to delegate political authority to a regional centre. Second, I understand an elite as a societal group that “devotes a comparatively high proportion of its assets to guiding a process and leading other units to support it” (Etzioni, 1965: 26). By doing so, elites provide continuity to the social order (Keller, 1963; quoted in Kadushin, 1968: 688). Elites are normative when they possess a fair degree, albeit to varying levels, of the three sources of social power: political, material (i.e. economic) and ideological. Third, elites converge through family and kinship networks wherein they are able to “exchange” one type of power for another. Such an exchange allows the elites to accumulate the necessary power to generate or render legitimate certain norms or both. Possessing only one dimension of power may limit such normative ability; having material power, for example, does not necessarily translate into the ability to generate rules that affect the majority of society. That power is normative because it results in subjective changes (e.g. what is considered as the region) and ultimately leads to social outcomes (e.g. the advancement of regionalism). Fourth, differing from the conventional view and accounting for Central American cultural continuities, I conceive the business, political, technocratic and bureaucratic and traditional landed elites to be embedded in normative networks.¹⁶ From this structure, the state and state politics are enmeshed by a network of informal relations wherein normative power is exercised. The

¹⁶ However, because of the pervading functional division of elites in the literature, wherever necessary for conceptual clarity, I employ the term “social” or “normative” to differentiate those members of normative elite networks who are not members of the state from those who are; that is, from political elites. I further discuss this issue in the caveat section of this chapter.

predisposition among normative elites towards integration (i.e. social will) emerges as their ideas, identity and interests converge around regionalism whether in favour of it or otherwise.

This is not to argue that the region's elites are fixed or lack dynamism as networks allow them to revitalise themselves by incorporating new members. Neither is it to argue that the Central American elites are a cohesive whole. Rather, it is to conceive of the region's elites as interconnected in a web of relations that allows them to converge upon and, subsequently, normatively influence state policies. By doing so, I question the conventional view's negative heuristics, which leads me to elaborate the ideational drive of norm socialisation and the circumscribed-statist diffusion mechanism. The former proposes that norms need not be "nice" and, thus, the moral pressure that societal actors exert on political elites in existing models—and the implicit shaming if norms are not adopted—is not essential for the construction of regional integration. Socialisation, I argue, occurs through an ideational "struggle" articulated in a "consultation" process among members of normative elite networks; norm adoption may be the result of pressures exercised by social elites on political elites. Conversely, norm adoption could be the result of proposals originated among political elites which, nevertheless, would be empowered by social elites. The state seems thus delimited by normative elites because those elites play a determinant role in the empowerment of particular norms. In this respect, I conceive of the state as a dual structure: first, as an institutional (for lack of a better term) space in which *de jure* power or that obtained through electoral means is exercised; second, as a socially constructed space wherein normative

power is articulated through a web of social networks and from which the state emerges enmeshed.

Why Central America? Case Study Selection and Methodology

There is evidence to suggest that the statist view of the regional process is too simplistic. Seemingly, Central America's long record of integration, its struggle for unification, shared history and culture yields a binary identity (i.e. national/regional).¹⁷ The idea of union, in other words, is to a great extent embedded in the ideational structure of the region's political culture and Central America as an all encompassing identity remains as a centripetal force. This binary identity has, first, allowed integration ideals to survive and evolve in different forms (e.g. economic and political); and second, contributed to the persistence of integration and to the patchy and hectic nature that characterises Central American regionalism. Evidence of this binary identity may be found in what I label Constitutional Regionalism, or the constitutional bestowments of special citizenship status on nationals of other Central American countries, and the inclusion of specific constitutional provisions conducive to integration.

The national constitutions of El Salvador (ALES, 1983: art. 90), Guatemala (CCRG, 1985 [2002]: art. 145) and Nicaragua (ANN, 1987 [1995]: art. 17) establish that all nationals born in other Central American countries are their citizens by birth or origin.¹⁸ In addition, the constitutions of the majority of

¹⁷ Waisman (1998: 149) similarly discusses what he labels accumulated collective identity: past predominant identities could be "buried" in the general consciousness but they do not completely disappear. When dominant identities lose legitimacy, their "buried" counterparts are combined with new elements and are "resurrected."

¹⁸ To obtain citizenship Central Americans are required only to reside in these countries (no time specified). In Honduras, Central Americans can acquire citizenship by naturalisation after one

Central American countries make reference to reunification. The Constitution of Honduras states its “faith” in the “restoration of the Central American union” (ANRH, 1982: Preamble). Similarly, article 150 of the Guatemalan Constitution establishes that the country “must adopt measures” that lead to the “partial or total, political and economic union of Central America” (CCRG, 1985 [2002]). Likewise, El Salvador “favours the reconstruction partial or total of the Republic of Central America,” be this integration in “unitary, federal or confederate” form; to this end, it shall “encourage and promote the human, economic, social and cultural integration” of the region (ALES, 1983: art. 89). Correspondingly, Nicaragua “privileges regional integration and advocates the reconstruction of the Grand Central American Patria” (ANN, 1987 [1995]: art. 5).¹⁹ This constitutional regionalism is reflected in the treaties that established SICA. For example, article 4:d of the Tegucigalpa Protocol (SICA, 1991) declares that one of “the fundamental principles” guiding regionalism is “Central American solidarity as an expression of the region’s interdependence, and common origin and destiny.” Seemingly, thus, it is appropriate to argue that embedded in the ideational structure of the region is the objective of achieving reunification. More importantly, in the ideational structure of these countries, the region is not in question: Central America is capable of acting as unit. Constitutional regionalism also brings into question the hypothesis (Sánchez, 2003b) that what is lacking for the advancement of regionalism is the willingness of the region’s governments (that is, political will) because the inclusion or maintenance of such integrative

year of residence (ANRH, 1982: art. 24.21); in Costa Rica, the time requirement for naturalisation is five years (ALRCR, 1949 [2007]: art. 14.12).

¹⁹ Constitutional regionalism is also present in the constitutions of the Central American “newcomer” countries, Dominican Republic and Panama. The constitution of Panama states that the country supports Latin American integration (ALRP, 1972 [1994]), and that of Dominican Republic advocates the “economic solidarity” of the region (ANRD, 2002).

elements in the constitutions requires a fair degree of willingness among political actors.²⁰

Constitutional regionalism could indeed be a powerful mechanism to advance the process. And yet, when compared with the regionalist record, it seems that its impact has been minimal. These incoherent trends open analytical spaces for conceptual elaboration and theoretical development. Central America, in short, provides us with “fertile grounds” to further develop regional integration theory as arguably, other factors have overpowered the intersubjectivities that these countries share.

I have indicated that these overpowering factors are best conceived of as social will: the normative elites’ predisposition, or disinclination, to support regionalism which emerges from the convergence, or divergence, of their ideas, identity and interests. This implies that integration in Central America can be best understood by the analysis of the interplay of the social and the political within normative networks; by extension, a struggle in which the former discursively superimposes itself on the latter. How could these dimensions be empirically assessed? Disposition implicates a degree of willingness to support or advance the process; hence my use of the label “will.” The interplay can thus be analysed through two dimensions: political will and social will. This division may seem counterintuitive because my main argument rests largely on the premise that elites, political and social, are intertwined in normative networks. The division may also be interpreted as incorporating the functional division of the elites I am striving to critique. However, to empirically split them in a

²⁰ Critics may argue that constitutional regionalism is nothing more than a historical “souvenir” from the colonial and immediate post-colonial period. However, it is intriguing that in almost two centuries of independent history such powerful constitutional articles have survived constitutional reforms and regime changes, not to mention coup d’états and revolutions; and leftist and rightist regimes.

counterfactual exercise grants this study analytical leverage to “test” different “explanations” of the process.

This exercise is designed to reinforce my argument by allowing for the appraisal in the current context of Haas’ (1967: 341) dictum that what is lacking in the region is an integrative strategy and the political will to sustain it. Also, the exercise enables this study to assess the hypotheses that the “unwillingness” of governments delimits integration (Sánchez, 2003b), and that governments impose their vision on the integrative process (Sánchez, 2003a). The counterfactual exercise, in short, allows for the assessment of the commonly held statist view of the process and makes it possible to “test” my conception of a process underpinned by social will. First the exercise enables me to assess the comparability between the political elites’ discursive practices and the trends established in the process. Does the process reflect the ideas projected by the political elites? If the conventionally statist view has significant weight for our understanding of regionalism, then we should find that the members of the political elites participating in this study offer opinions and ideas parallel to the current nature of the process: the insertion of the region into the globalised economy and the exploitation of its competitive advantages. If, on the contrary, we find that political actors assume a discourse that contravenes such position, then perhaps other factors are determinant for the process. Second, the counterfactual exercise also allows me to “test” my proposition that the state is delimited by normative elites through social will. If the political elites advance ideas, or if their identity reflects, integrative impulses not so dominant in the process, and simultaneously, social elites present discursive practices that reflect

the current integrative trends, then, it is the latter elites' "normativeness" that impacts regional strategies.

Identification of Elites

The identification of Central American political elites is relatively straightforward because one can study the role and attitudes of those state actors directly involved in the process and of members of political parties in general. The "sample" for the analysis of political will, thus, includes members of political institutions (national and regional) such as National Assemblies, the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN, in its Spanish acronym), and leading political parties of the countries members of SICA. (I discuss the sample in more detail in the introduction to chapter four).

To identify the normative elites, or their representatives, capable of exercising such a complex construct as social will, or such prerogative over regionalism, is more difficult. In this respect other observers, neofunctionalists and proponents of new regionalism studies, have asserted the business groups' fundamental role in integration.²¹ Torres Rivas (1993: 103) in the context of CACM, identifies "the coalitions" between the "business sector elite" and the "public service elite." Grugel and Payne (2000: 205) argue that Costa Rican business groups have developed a strategy of "interpenetration with the governments" through which they influence regional policies and even "use the state" to advance their interests. Similarly, Bull (2004) contemplates the role regional business organisations (RBOs) play in the integration process. While

²¹ See for example Haas (1958) and Mattli (1999). See also Schneider (2001).

Miller (1999) identifies the historical significance of business associations for the exercise of elite influence on government policy.

In the same way, in chapter two I identify a close relationship between family and kinship networks and the business sector. There is evidence which suggests that regional business associations play an important role in the exercise of the elites' normative power, as the former facilitates the participation in the integrative process of the latter. For example, the reactivation of the integration process during the early 1990s followed models developed by RBOs. (I present evidence to support this argument in chapter five). In addition, I have identified a fundamental trend: six of Central America's presidents in the period between 1997 and 2008 have held positions in, or are members of, RBOs. For example El Salvador's former President Saca was president of the Federation of Private Enterprises of Central America and Panama (FEDEPRICAP),²² and Honduras' President Zelaya was a member of the board of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) affiliated to FEDEPRICAP. (See table 2.1 for a complete list).²³ It thus seems appropriate to study the role of the business elite as a faction of the normative network in the process. The "sample" for the assessment of social will, then, will include members of the following RBOs: FEDEPRICAP, the Federation of Central American Industrial Chambers and Associations (FECAICA),²⁴ and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the Central American Isthmus (FECAMCO),²⁵ which are the largest RBOs. In addition, I

²² Federación de Entidades Privadas de Centroamérica y Panamá, FEDEPRICAP.

²³ There are other presidents from the region with possible links to RBOs but the available evidence is not clear. In Guatemala, Óscar Berger Perdomo (2004-2008) and Álvaro Arzú Yrigoyen (1996-2000). In El Salvador, Alfredo Cristiani Burkard (1989-1994) and Armando Calderón Sol (1994-1999). In Honduras, Ricardo Maduro Joest (2002-2006). And in Nicaragua, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro (1990-1997).

²⁴ Federación de Cámaras y Asociaciones Industriales de Centroamérica, FECAICA.

²⁵ Federación de Cámaras de Comercio del Istmo Centroamericano, FECAMCO.

assess social will through a detailed reading of regional strategy papers and reports published by regional and national business associations. (I discuss the “sample” in more detail in chapter five).

Method: Discourse Analysis and Interviews

The methodology I employ to carry out that assessment is based on discourse analysis. In the practical sense, discourse is the set of ideas and values presented in written, spoken, or other text forms and which are used by actors to persuade others of the legitimacy and appropriateness of their policy programs (Schmidt, 2002a: 169, 2002b: 210). Discourse enables individuals to think, to communicate and to act (Hunt and Purvis, 1993: 485). Discourse, however, has a more fundamental function for the present study. My argument suggests that Central American elites are capable of accumulating and exercising normative power over the regional process. Normative power, in turn, implies the ability to influence the behaviour of actors through norms (Diez, 2005: 616). Such influence leads to the emergence of new meanings conceived of collectively and discursively: new meanings result in values and attitudinal shifts which are articulated through discourse. I thus understand discourse to be constructive and consequential (Potter and Wetherell, 2002). Through discourse actors produce and simultaneously experience reality as “solid and real” (Phillips and Hardy, 2002: 1-2), and are able to maintain, sustain and modify “social borders, hierarchies, institutional formations and habituated patterns of behaviour” (Lincoln, 1989: 3). Specifically, discourse, via language, enables actors to construct, describe and explain social processes; to express beliefs and attitudes towards such processes, and to make sense of their experiences within those

processes thereby assigning meaning to social reality. In short, discourse empowers actors to position themselves in the social world, and to articulate new norms and values relevant to the historical process in whose construction they are actively involved. Considering such an essential role of discursive practices in the construction of social phenomena, it seems that the use of discourse analysis imbues this study with a powerful hermeneutical toolkit to further our understanding of the social construction of Central American regionalism.

The discourse analysis I propose is designed to identify, through a two-stage approach, the manner in which actors assign meaning to, and perceive their role within, social processes such as regional integration. The initial stage is based on a tri-dimensional perceptual model proposed by Fairclough (2001: 244). The first dimension is that of the *representational*, or the manner in which individuals represent the processes and institutions; do regionalising actors perceive Central America and its regional institutions as capable of action? The second dimension, *valuing*, refers to the characterisation of regionalism in the actors' narrative; do they perceive integration as imperative for the region? The final dimension, *identifying*, captures the construction of the self and the other; do actors consider themselves Central Americans?

Personal narratives are the fundamental "meaning-making" units of discursive practices (Reissman, 2003: 341). Thus the second stage of the analysis is composed of two further phases that concentrate on the actors' narrative. The first phase is that of a *syntagmatic* analysis which focuses on the structure of the narrative: how the narrative is told (e.g. its complications and turning points) and how these structural elements lead to the re-imagination and reordering of events and experiences (Candida Smith, 2003: 357-360). The second phase of this stage

is that of the *paradigmatic* analysis. The latter traces recurrent discursive motifs or themes such as points of view, ethical evaluations, and self-representations (Candida Smith, 2003: 357-360). On the one hand, my aim in the *syntagmatic* analysis is to identify “key events” in the narrative of the participants and by doing so uncover the existence of regional “myths.” Such identification is important as those myths serve as “reassurance” for the identity dimension of our analysis. For example, a recurrent reference to actors historically considered as “unionist” may help us assess the depth of a shared identity. On the other hand, with the *paradigmatic* analysis, I aim at identifying and examining discursive regularities across different narratives as it is from these patterns that the collective meaning of social phenomena, and thus its construction, materialises. Regularities in narratives delimit what is socially possible and permissible. More importantly, they reflect the adoption of new, or the transformation of current, norms by a given society, and the subsequent, ideational and value shifts in the predisposition toward a particular social phenomenon. For example, political elites may constantly and systematically include in their narrative a particular discursive regularity such as “we believe that integration will alleviate social and economic inequality.” If this is the case, perhaps political elites are attempting to make the integrative process attractive to the general population thereby gaining some leverage over rival normative elite factions. The following table summarises the discourse analysis I employ in this study.

Table 0.1. Summary of Discourse Analysis

Panel A: First Phase

Representational	Representations of the processes and institutions
Valuing	Characterizations of regionalism
Identifying	Construction of self and "other"

Panel B: Second Phase

Syntagmatic	Analysis of the narrative's complications, key elements, events and turning points and how these structural elements lead to the re-imagination and reordering of events and experiences.
Paradigmatic	Assessment of discursive regularities across the narratives as it reflects the adoption of new, or the transformation of current, norms by a given society, and the subsequent, ideational and value shifts in the predisposition toward a particular social phenomenon

Source: first phase, Fairclough (2001); and second phase, Candida Smith (2003).

The discourse analysis employed enables this study to deal successfully with the methodological shortcomings encountered by neofunctionalism. It enables this thesis to operationalise the intersubjective elements identified by neofunctionalism but which those models could not fully capture.

Interviews are entry points into an individual's narrative (Candida Smith, 2003: 349). Furthermore, they provide a semantic space in which the intersection of socio-historical processes and personal experiences open up the possibility for a greater understanding of the subjective basis of, and changing preconditions (e.g. norm adoption) for, social phenomena. In this study, I conduct a series of interviews that attempt to "uncover" in the participants' narrative their regional ideas, identity and interests, and how the interplay of these factors shape their willingness to proactively participate in the integration process and thus affect its outcomes. Interviews are in depth and unstructured: they are conducted in an informal and conversational manner in order to create and maintain an environment that stimulates respondents to reflect upon the larger historical and

social meaning of integration, and to share their experiences and perceptions of the regional process. In the participants' discourse: do they consider integration indispensable for their interests? Do they assign certain powers to regional institutions in order to advance or protect their interests? Do participants advocate particular ideas or concepts that are compatible with integration (e.g. regional projects)? Do they transmit the idea of a regional community by creating an "other"? Do they utilize regional symbols in their discourse? Such are the questions that guide the interviews. Whenever in-person interviews are not possible, I distribute a "questionnaire," that is, a set of open questions among participants. Of course, for the sake of consistency, this questionnaire is guided by the same questions as the interviews. Through those questions I attempt to entice the "questionnaire" participants to voice their underlying vision, opinions and perceptions regarding regional integration.

Interviews for this study are carried out under conditions of confidentiality and for this reason I omit the participants' names. (I discuss this issue further in chapters four and five). The interviews are held in Spanish and as such the textual citations included in the empirical chapters are my translations. A caveat in this matter: I strive to remain "truthful" to the opinions of the participants and thus not to interpose meanings to their narratives.²⁶ Consequently, for the most part I attempt to avoid including long textual citations and to cite textually only keywords, key terms or short expressions that seem fundamental for the successful uncovering of the discursive dynamics through

²⁶ I am concerned with what in translation studies is identified as "equivalence:" the translated text presents identical sense/meaning in both languages. Equivalence occurs at different levels which include linguistic, grammar and the stylistic. My concern is that the larger the segment of narrative translated, the greater the possibilities to err against equivalence. On the problems of equivalence in translation, see Lederer (2003) and Bassnett (2002).

which the interviewees construct the Central American region. I present, however, excerpts of the interviews (in Spanish) in appendices VII and IX.

The “data” collected through the proposed research design will facilitate the systematic assessment of the ideas, identity and interests that constantly interplay in order to construct the intersubjective structure that leads to the willingness to empower the regional integrative process.

General Caveats

Before proceeding, three clarifications seem pertinent. First, throughout this thesis, as may be by now apparent to the reader, I draw on literature about Latin America as a region and, in the case of the regionalism material, on literature discussing other regional initiatives in that region (e.g. MERCOSUR). There are two reasons for employing such a strategy. First, currently only a handful of observers attempt to theorise the Central American regionalism (e.g. Bull, 2002, 2004; Grugel and Payne, 2000; Sánchez, 2003b). Most studies undertake an economic approach to the process (e.g. Nicholls, 1998; Rodas-Martini, 1998; Rodlauer and Schipke, 2005); precisely the trend I am striving to critique. With regard to that, the literature in Spanish that I draw on may seem limited to the reader. This is because most literature written in Spanish is overly focused on integration as a mechanism to achieve economic development, or institutional reform or strengthening; in this respect it suffices to browse the *Revista de la Integración y el Desarrollo de Centroamérica*²⁷ (BCIE; any issue) to determine that literature’s underlying economic determinism. (See also e.g. Caldentey del

²⁷ Journal of Integration and Development of Central America is published by BCIE, Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica (the Central American Bank of Economic Integration).

Pozo, 2001, 1998; Chamorro Marín, 1998; Herrero Acosta, 2004; Rodas-Martini, 2000; Sanahuja Perales, 1997). The deterministic aspect of the “Central American” literature represents a limitation for this study because it restrains the space for innovation through which to attain the necessary critical engagement which will in turn lead to conceptual elaboration and theoretical development. In short, critical studies solely focussed on Central America are limited, at best. Hence the need to broaden the sources used to include “external” literature.

The risk of generalisation is involved in such analytical strategy.²⁸ This is not my intention. I am attentive to the risks involved but strongly argue that there are clear advantages in employing such a strategy. Critically engaging the Latin American literature allows me to incorporate more, and more relevant, available theoretical work which will open up spaces for elaboration of the concepts and theory building seemingly necessary for furthering the understanding of Central American regionalism. My use of Latin American²⁹ literature could also be justified by indicating that Central America is part of Latin America geographically (Phillips, 2004), and in other dimensions such as intra-regional cooperation and interactions, and in perceptions of it by “outsiders” through policies such as those of the UN.³⁰ Also, it is undeniable that Central America

²⁸ Critics could point to the “distinct national histories” of the region’s states (Mallon, 2002: 20). Or, the “different “natural endowments, levels of development,” in addition to differences in “institution building and regime formation” (López-Alves, 2000: 2).

²⁹ The term Latin America is used to include the British ex-colonies and current dependencies in the region; the French ex-colonies and overseas departments (i.e. French Guiana, Guadeloupe, and Martinique); the Dutch former colonies (i.e. Suriname, Netherlands Antilles, Aruba); and the US dependent territories (i.e. Puerto Rico and Virgin Island). To this list, Knight (2007: en. 3) adds parts of the southwest of the US and Whitehead (2006: 9) adds Miami. Others seem to equate Latin America solely to South America as they differentiate “Latin and Central America” in their discussion; see e.g. Serrano (2005), Hurrell (1992) and Lievesley (1999: 163). They do so despite the fact that historically Central America has been considered part of Latin America. For a thorough discussion of the geographic demarcation and competing classifications of Latin America see Atkins (1999: 28-31) and Phillips (2004: 29, 32-33).

³⁰ For the importance of such dimensions in determining what constitutes Latin America see Atkins (1977: 10-13, 1999: 32-33). For an assessment of the characteristics of what constitutes a region see Thompson (1973).

and the rest of Spanish speaking countries of Latin America share a colonial history and culture from which emerged intersubjectivities such as elements of a common identity³¹ which are the fundamental objects of study for this thesis.

The second caveat refers to the “Normative Elite Networks” concept in relation to functional elite labels commonly used. Central to the main argument of this thesis is the proposition that the functional division of elites manifests a set of assumptions originating in modernisation theory and in dominant paradigms such as pluralism and corporatism. I contend that such categorisation neglects the overlapping membership among elites and the existence of normative elite networks in Central America. Functional terms such as “oligarchy” “private sector” or “business elites” are widely used in the literature and by the participants (interviewees) in this study. It is thus difficult, at points, not to employ functional labels. This practice may seem to go against my critique of the use of functional terms. And yet, their use seems “inescapable” when reviewing the literature. In the empirical chapters (four and five) I deem that the use of functional elite labels is to an extent necessary in order to “respect” the discursive practices of the participants as they use those terms recurrently. In a sense, the widespread use of functional identity sheds light on the embeddedness of the modernisation/pluralism discourse I am striving to question. Throughout this thesis, therefore, I strive to use functional terms only when reviewing others’—observers’ and interviewees’—arguments and statements.

While the most accurate descriptors of the phenomenon I am attempting to identify are “normative elite networks” redundancy leads me to employ variations of the concepts: normative elites or normative networks. The revisiting

³¹ For Blakemore and Smith (1976: 569-570) affinities among these countries are such that “comparisons between them are more revealing than contrasts.” Latin America, they argue, is an instance of “diversity within a general unity.” See also Atkins (1977: 12).

of elite interactions that shape state options and ultimately policies is also a core component of the thesis. I am thus led to isolate—although they converge in networks—political elites from normative elites and hence occasionally I use the term “social elites” to refer to elites not belonging to political elites. The following table presents several of the functional terms commonly used in the literature and the normative elite networks label and its synonyms.

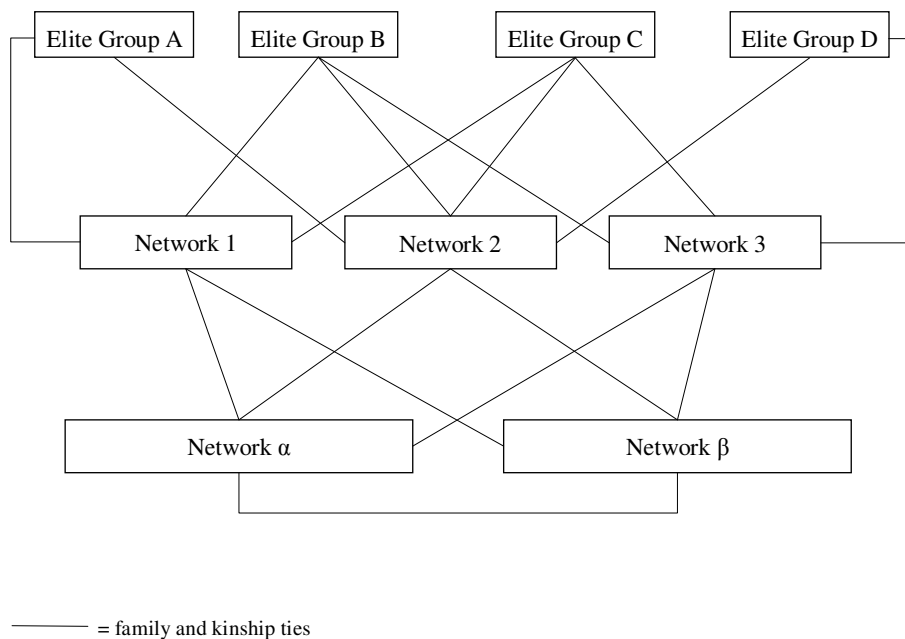
Table 0.2. Commonly Used Elite Labels and “Normative Elite Network” Descriptor

Elite (Functional) Designations Widely Used in the Literature	Descriptors in this thesis
Oligarchy Dominant elite or sectors Landed elite Private sector Economic elite Business elite Industrial elite Commercial elite Political elite State elite Government elite Bureaucratic elite Technocratic elite	Normative elite networks and its variations: normative elites/ normative networks; social elites to refer to groups not including political elites

I must clarify a related and crucial point in my understanding of Central American normative elites: I do not purport that there is a single coherent elite in the isthmus. It is evident that particular groups dominate or control particular social spaces and that they possess different power sources. I do argue that these groups *converge* within networks formed along the lines of family and kinship. The convergence is synergistic and allows elites to find a degree of coherence regarding a particular policy-issue. For example, elite A possesses a particular

power resource that can be exchanged for another kind of resource controlled by elite B. This convergence leads to the formation of normative elite network 1. Elite groups C and D can begin a similar power exchange leading to the formation of network 2. The need to pursue a particular policy option may lead both networks 1 and 2 to converge in a greater network α . When other policy-issues are at stake, networks may reform through iterations among elite groups resulting in network β . Networks, to put it simply, are liquid but allow elites to construct and present a coherent policy position. The following figure offers a glimpse of the complexity of normative networks.

Figure 0.1. Depiction of a Normative Network



The normative networks concept attempts to overcome the shortcomings of elite “denominationalism” prevalent in the literature: the neat division of the Central American elites into functional groups and the parallel neglect of the links that bind those groups. Normative networks allow for the theorisation of

those networks as mechanisms in which elites concatenate synergistically different resources thereby attaining normative power. While converging in networks, for example, elites are able to exchange political and ideological resources. Such exchange allows them to shape policy formation by limiting or expanding the norms that eventually are embedded in policies.

The third caveat is that my argument may be interpreted as proposing that regional integration is a monocausal process; that is, social will is *the explanatory variable* for all aspects of integration in Central America. This is not my argument; I do not attempt to carry a “monomaniacal search for a master causal variable” (Barnett, 2002: 102). Rather, as pointed out previously, it is to assess social will as a background condition and as such it may be the case that its impact on regionalism depends on its conjunction with other factors (e.g. convergence of ideas with a hegemonic state). Such a multivariate analysis, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter one reviews the regional integration literature; chapters two and three contribute towards the theorisation of regionalism in Central America by elaborating the core elements of the Central Americanised model of integration; while chapters four and five provide, through a counterfactual exercise, the empirical basis for the proposed argument.

Chapter one assesses the implications of regionalism literature for the study of Central America. It argues that both old and new regionalisms converge around their understanding of their subject. On the one hand, I contend that the old regionalism, specifically neofunctionalism, identified several cognitive

factors that later were to become relevant for “newer” paradigms but that due to methodological restraints and assumptions about the ontology of integration, it was unable to fully explore these factors. On the other hand, I approach the more “recent” literature by organising it through the different meanings and perspectives of “new regionalism” studies, and assess what that literature leads us to conclude are the catalytic factors for integration. I observe that new regionalism proposes a somewhat narrow view of the process. First, and in disregard of their *raison d'etre* (e.g. to overcome the old regionalism’s state-centrism), studies within the quantitative and qualitative meanings and within the exogenous perspective offer a state-centric view of regionalism. Central American integration is the result of the US hegemony in the region. And second, the endogenous perspective assumed by other new regionalism analysis searches for an effective multilevel governance that in the hierarchical tendencies that permeate the political culture of the region is hard to find. Hence, this perspective is left with the state as the main catalyst for regionalism. I conclude that this narrow understanding results from the under-theorisation of the cognitive elements of the process. I propose, then, that such shortcomings can be overcome by building on the cognitive factors emphasised by neofunctionalism through a framework based on constructivist premises.

Chapter two revisits the nature of the Central American state mainly through the corporatist literature because, I argue, these studies seem to underline the functional division of the elites presupposed by integration studies. I assess how family and kinship networks are conceptualised within that nature. I indicate that the role of these networks has been overlooked because of the modernity assumption underpinning the analysis of the state: the premises of “modernity”

dictate that the family role in society diminishes as the state becomes “modern.” This allows for the analytical split of elites into functional groups. In the study of Central American integration elites are thus assessed as technocratic, business, industrial and the often forgotten and barely considered, landed elite. By doing so, the power of the elites is “weakened” vis-à-vis the state. I thus attempt to re-examine the role of elites through family and kinship networks and theorise about their function within the Central American political culture. In this context, I argue that family and kinship networks have imbued the region’s elites with an intersubjective framework within which first, they achieve a degree of cohesion by converging around particular policy issues; second, they are enabled to accumulate different sources of power; and third, they are allowed to articulate their normative power. The elite, in turn, projects their “reality” as a guiding framework for society’s reality. This means that normative elites by constructing norms and rules are able to maintain or shift the direction of a particular policy, and set and influence public debates. In short, an enmeshed state structure open to elite normative influences is ingrained in the political culture of the region.

Regional integration is a set of policies underpinned by institutionalised norms. For this reason, chapter three theorises the interplay of normative and political elites within the normative structure. Specifically, as current models seem unequal to the task of studying Central American integration, this chapter rethinks the models of socialisation and the mechanisms of norm diffusion. It does so by aiming at identifying and conceptualising the structures through which social will works. The chapter then elaborates on the concept of social will.

Chapter four analyses the opinions of 56 members of the Central American political elite. Through such a counterfactual exercise, I uncovered

evidence that challenges the prevailing statist view of the process. I uncover a latent integrative strategy among state actors which first, goes beyond the self-interest motivation implied by conventional studies of the process, and second, seems incompatible with the trends discernable in the process. The evidence I present first, indicates that the region “exists” in the ideational structure of the region’s political elites as their ideas, identity and interests interplay positively in relation to regionalism (i.e. there is a fair degree of political will). And second, it seems to corroborate my conceptualisation of the interplay between political elites and normative networks, and the mechanisms (i.e. norm diffusion and socialisation) wherein that interplay occurs. I conclude, thus, that the conventional view is a case of social misconstruction underlined by misread evidence that has been accepted as “real.”³² By doing so, that view overlooks the underlying integrative fabric of the political elites’ ideational structure.

Chapter five assesses social will in Central America. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section analyses the role of social will in the reactivation of regional integration during the early 1990s through a detailed reading of regional strategy papers and reports published by regional and national business associations. In the second section, I assess the role of social will during the 2005-08 period through questionnaire responses, interviews and telephone conversations with sixteen members of the region’s regional business organisations or their affiliates. In the first section, I argue that the levels of social will at the time were high: the region’s normative elites seem to have shared, in the first instance, interests underlined by a common economic core (e.g. economic efficiency) aiming at country and region growth. In the second

³² On the concept of social misconstruction see Hamilton (1996).

instance ideas (e.g. integration is equivalent to economic development) articulated through a neo-liberal model; and thirdly, an awareness of a Central American “self”. Thus the national and regional are inextricably linked. In the second section, I identify the existence of two opposing regionalist discourses: one that emphasises the “external market” conceiving the region as a mechanism to integrate the internal competing “comparative advantages” with a view to the “global market;” and one that is constructed around the “intra-regional market” as the organising economic structure and that considers as an end product the “region.” Based on this evidence, I argue that in the 2005-08 period, the level of social will in Central America was low. The “external market” discourse seems to be in “command.” Therefore, the focus of the regional project is, as noted by the participants in chapter four, “a purely economic dialogue” which follows the logic of “comparative advantage,” generating along the way competition among the countries which make up the region. As a result, the process has shifted from the region to external matters (i.e. free trade agreements with other countries or regions). The socio-political spaces opened during the reactivation period have been reduced and the comprehensive regional institutional framework established in that period has become “lethargic” without a “real presence” in regional issues.

In the conclusion, I review comparatively the empirical findings from both levels of analysis; namely, political and social will. I do so aiming at corroborating my proposed main argument reflecting on the interplay between the political discourses and an imposed social discourse. I then go on to identify the appropriateness of my main theoretical and methodological contributions. In this light, I revisit the negative heuristics that I strive to challenge throughout this study and identify how my theoretical contributions help in overcoming the

analytical rigidity that those heuristics impose on our understanding of integration in that region. I subsequently conclude by contemplating the possibilities of reaching a degree of conceptual generalisation of my main findings and contributions within comparative integration studies.

Chapter 1. The Study of Regional Integration: Implications for the Analysis of Central American Regionalism

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on regionalism in Central America. In an attempt to identify spaces to theorise the Central American process, it also engages with relevant Latin American integration literature. Integration literature is generally divided into two schools. The first, known as “old regionalism” interprets integration as a logical process: a continuum in which economic cooperation leads to economic union and eventually to political union. The process is approached from two understandings: one intergovernmental and another driven by transnational actors.³³ The second school, “new regionalism,” conceptualises the process beyond intergovernmentalism as a constructed multilayered space in which different regionalising actors struggle to impose their discourse on the regional agenda.³⁴ New regionalism rejects its old counterpart (e.g. neofunctionalism) on the grounds that it is “too rationalistic”

³³ It is not my objective to rehearse a review or critique of old regionalism; those theories have been comprehensively reviewed by others, for example, by O'Neill (1996), Pentland (1973) and Rosamond (2000). My focus is on neofunctionalism and on finding elements that could facilitate continuities between neofunctionalism and constructivism, and on studies assuming new regionalism's meanings and perspectives and their implications for the analysis of Central American integration. On the different approaches of the old regionalism see: on Federalism, Monnet (1963), Burgess (1996, 2004), Loughlin (1996), Pinder (1986), and for a review of Monnet's ideas, Holland (1994, chapter one); on the Community (also referred to as Pluralistic and Transactionalist) approach see Deutsch et al. (1957); on Functionalism see Mitrany (1965, 1966, 1975); and on Intergovernmentalism, Hoffmann (1964, 1995) and Moravcsik (1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2005). For an old regionalism approach to Central America, and Latin America in general, see the volumes by Bulmer-Thomas (2001), Bouzas and Ros (1994), Gauhar (1985), and Wionczek (1964).

³⁴ Proposals have been advanced to abolish the old/new divide in regionalism studies. Arguably both are parts of the same whole; they are sub-fields of the same paradigm, while they differ in terminology, both pursue an understanding of the same phenomenon (Warleigh, 2004). For Hettne (2005: 543) the “great divide” is useful as a mere “pedagogical device” to emphasize the assumed nature of integration and the methodological strategy for its study. See also Warleigh (2006) and Breslin (2008).

(Warleigh, 2007: 563). While the old is euro-centric, or designed mainly on, and to explain, European regionalism (Laursen, 2003: 3; Rosamond, 2000: 23), new regionalism is a reaction against its predecessor's "original sin," namely, "state-centrism" (Hettne, 2003: 22). In the Central American context, logically, this reaction leads the analyst to search for the multilayered structure from which, it is assumed, regionalism emerges.

The objective of this chapter is to argue first, that despite purported differences, both regionalisms converge in that Central American regionalism is a state-led process. Second, in the same manner that the old—through its Euro-centrism—imposes a pluralistic ontology onto Central America, certain new regionalism studies "upload" multilevel governance assumptions onto that region's process. The chapter proposes that this converging tendency is the result of the modernisation premises that underpin these studies and which lead to the under-theorisation of Central American integration. The chapter proposes—following up Rosamond's and Warleigh's (2006: 8 and 10) suggestion that there is sufficient grounds for "a re-inspection, if not full scale intellectual recovery" of old regionalism—that the limited theorisation of that process can be overcome by identifying certain neofunctionalist elements which can be employed through a constructivist approach as the basis for a more comprehensive model of Central American integration.

The first section assesses the neofunctionalist literature underlining its pluralistic inclinations and how those tendencies led its proponents into methodological difficulties which, in turn, limited the analytical leverage of their theories. The second section reviews those studies that assume new regionalism's meanings and perspectives, and their implications for the study of Central

America. The focus is on what are considered as the catalytic factors for regionalism and how the state's role in the process is conceived. I conclude by identifying certain cognitive dimensions of the neofunctionalist model and by proposing that those elements would help us fill the analytical void generated by the under-theorisation of Central American integration.

Neo-Functionalism: A Reappraisal in the Central American Context

This section argues first, that neofunctionalism's conceptualisation of integration assigned a pluralistic ontology to the process. This position led the study of Central American integration to under-analyse the social elite's normative role in the process and redirected its focus to divide the role of those elites functionally instead. Second, the section argues that neofunctionalism's "rational" ontology delimited its epistemological toolkit leading analysts to experience some methodological uncertainty.³⁵

Neofunctionalism conceptualises integration as a process *beyond the nation-state* wherein interest groups and technocrats are the leading integrationist actors. These actors pressure their governments to establish regional organisations which, depending on the governments' original commitment, increase integrative tendencies and the number of participating societal groups thus leading the latter to gradually refocus their activities from the national to the regional level (Nye, 1971a: 195). The fundamental condition for groups to become regionalising actors is their capability of acting regionally independently of national constraints (Schmitter, 2005: 258), and to represent and promote some or all of "the interests of classes, sectors, professions, and causes"

³⁵ For an early critique of neofunctionalism, see Hansen (1969).

(Schmitter, 2004: 62). The process also requires “conditions of symmetry between the national units, social pluralism, high transaction flows, and elite complementarity” (Nye, 1971a: 195). From this conceptualisation emerges a pluralist ontology of integration.³⁶

The existence of what I label “normative elites” in Central America makes the application of this conceptualisation extremely difficult. Of course, neofunctionalists were aware of the region’s hierarchical nature. Haas (1964: 50) indicates that at the time of his writing, oligarchies ruled at the Latin American level. However, he quickly points to pluralising trends in the region (e.g. political mass mobilisation). Oligarchies were thus harmful for the integrative process when they controlled a government ruling “tranquil and [politically] unmobilized people.” Yet, Haas assumes that non-oligarchic elites were fundamental integrative agents. According to Haas (1964: 45-46), integration emerges from the “common sentiments” shared by “small articulated elite groups whose expectations of a fruitful life are associated with the creation of specific conditions conducive to the attainment of that life,” at the forefront of those groups were economic elites. To put it differently, for Haas, in a given society there are certain groups with the power to redefine or create rules and norms that set the context for a specific reality. However, those normative actors are beyond “society” or the “state;” they are “groups with specific interests, whether associational or institutional, motivated by the desire for profit or the drive to improve the services they are called upon to administer.” Two characteristics of “acceptable” elites emerge from Haas’ understanding: they must be functional

³⁶ Rosamond (2005: 241) indicates that neofunctionalism is a “pluralist theory.” Pluralism led the neofunctionalists to argue that “the propensity to integrate is greater among societies that are characterized by pluralist complexity;” this “built-in recognition [was] later teased out” of the neofunctionalist model.

and supranational. These characteristics had deep repercussions on the study of integration in Central America. The analytical separation of functional elites from society and state meant that the technocratic elite could be conceptualised apart from the oligarchic groups identified by Haas as ruling the region's society. This separation delimited the space of neofunctionalist analyses in which the Central American normative elites could be incorporated—it could not go beyond the recognition of the determinant power that certain elite groups possessed. Neofunctionalism, because of its assumed pluralist ontology of integration, could not contemplate the existence of networks in which the elites converge.

In his analysis of CACM,³⁷ Nye (1967) strives to deal with the relationship between political elite and oligarchy by locating pluralistic tendencies in the region. The supranational/pluralistic ontology of his analysis thus leads Nye to “pluralise” Central America by searching for elements of pluralism in the region's “reality.” Nye (1967: 25) indicates that “party politics and appeals to broader participation complicate oligarchical descriptions of Central American politics.” The political party system until then fully controlled by oligarchies was being undermined, according to Nye, by “inexpensive transistor radios [which] have begun to nullify illiteracy as a factor permitting” such control (Nye, 1967: 25). Thus, for Nye oligarchic characterisation of Central America would fail to account for the mobilised and urbanised masses (Nye, 1967: 24). Admittedly, in some countries “the military was the ultimate base of power” which in the past had run the countries for the oligarchy (Nye, 1967: 25). Nevertheless, Central America no longer fitted the oligarchical

³⁷ For an excellent review of CACM in the 1960s, see Schmitter (1971a), Wionczek (1970), Fagan (1970), and Cline and Delgado (1978). For a comparative analysis of Central American and European dynamics, see McCall (1976).

description (Nye, 1967: 23). Remarkably, over 40 years later, the region's party and electoral system continues to be controlled by a small group of elites who persistently exercise their power through the system (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006). The region's current "democratic" structure is at best "restricted and controlled," and tellingly, the ideological premises of the elites have minimally changed (Paige, 1993: 38). In a sense, those oligarchic elites have outlived the mass mobilization highlighted by Nye.

In the same manner that Haas analytically separates the functional/technocratic elites from society and the state, Nye (1967: 23-31) de-links the Central American technocrats from the oligarchies, and the latter from the military, the political and the business elites. Traditional oligarchical groups are assumed to be on the fringes of power, and therefore Nye's treatment of the relationship among the different elite groups is at best superficial. As a result of his original assumption that the power of oligarchies was in decline, their relation to the all important technocrats is mentioned only implicitly. Moreover, there is no mentioning of the relationship between traditional oligarchies and business elites despite the fact that, as one of Nye's contemporaries asserts, business elites are "spin-offs" from the old oligarchy or at least shared their "traditional political values" (Scott, 1967: 123-124). Nye's analytical position effectively disregards the probability that elites—technocratic, political, landed and business—were embedded in networks. Nye's conceptualisation of social relations results from the pluralist "necessity" to give an "equal" footing to the different societal groupings. For instance, at one point, Nye (1967: 33) classifies the "traditionally powerful" landed elite as a mere "agricultural interest group," despite the fact

that landed elites were considered to have greater political power than that assigned by the mere pressure group label.

Whenever neofunctionalists recognised that “influential elites” could block the integrative process, then those elites were seen as “mediators” between governments and the general public. Influential elites functioned as preference and value transmitters between an unorganised public and decision-makers, and in that role they could halt the process (Inglehart, 1971: 164-166, fn. 111). In a pluralist view, thus, Central American elites could only be assessed in terms of their power as the preferences and values carriers of the mass public. As such those elites’ normative power was “exorcised” out of the analysis. Therefore, everything in Nye’s (1967: 30-31) analysis indicates that the power of the region’s oligarchies was dissipating; or that they were mere pressure groups. Pluralist conceptualisations of the region thus opened analytical spaces for the crucial role the technocrats played in the process.

With traditional elites waning in the neofunctionalist models, integration was left to the *técnicos* (i.e. technocrats); or a type of expert-politicians technically trained usually in economics (Nye, 1967: 27). They were essential for the process because “successful integration will remain a matter of power through information—of tedious detailed studies more than flag-raisings” (Nye, 1967: 62). Analysis of integration was, therefore, to concentrate on the role of the *técnicos*. Haas, for instance, focused his analysis of Latin America on the views of members of the United Nations’ ECLAC (Mattli, 2005: 341). Similarly, Nye (1967: 51-52) assigned ECLAC’s technocrats a great “power of intellectual appeal” in the context of Central America.

For Nye (1967: 27, 62-63), the successes achieved by CACM were due to the technocrats' isolation from the mainstream political debate, and the low cost that acceding to the *técnicos*' "whims" meant for political leaders. It follows that when integration was halted or experienced distortions, it was the state that delimited the process. What was lacking in the region thus was "an integrative strategy and the common political will to carry it out" (Haas, 1967: 341). Political will amounted to the political actors' attitude of refraining from attacking integration because of the "existing symbols and myths," those who supported regional integration did so because it was "fashionable and profitable in terms of reputation" (Nye, 1967: 20). This consideration seems to undermine the importance of those symbols and myths for a regional identity. It thus fails to consider that perhaps political actors' identities were underpinned by those symbols and myths; and that perhaps their discourse had been stripped of any "real" power by overpowering interconnections of the political elites with social elites who circumscribed the integrative spaces available.

The *técnicos*' power, admittedly, was limited for two reasons. First, technocrats were "marginal members of the elite" and their power experienced generational decline; that is, the first generation of *técnicos* based its power on its "technical reputation" while the second generation was not fully able to convert "technical proficiency into power" (Nye, 1967: 27, fn. 42). The second reason, one implicitly recognised, and perhaps the cause of the technocrats' generational problem, was that the *técnicos* had to accommodate "the impatient and distrustful" elites whose interests had to be protected (Haas and Schmitter, 1964: 729). Despite such realisation, Haas and Schmitter (1964: 731) conclude that the *técnicos*' "social role and political power" could function as an equivalent to the

“the symmetrical interaction of pluralist groups” observed in Europe. Yet, this was unlikely because, as Scott (1967: 141) indicates for Latin America as a whole, functional elites (including technocrats) are “particularistic” and strongly linked to the “stratified class system” of the region which limits its ability to fostering “constructive” reforms. Technocrats are linked to elite networks based on kinship and family relations. As a result, the process remained embedded in “a complex network of particularistic relationships” (Haas and Schmitter, 1964: 731). This trend, in turn, negatively affected the process because the technocrats could not count on independent creative spaces for providing solutions to issues that may have led to spillovers³⁸ (Haas and Schmitter, 1964: 730).

In contrast to the European experience, the technocrats’ power in Central America, neofunctionalists conclude, ended at the ideational level: they did not hold effective power to diffuse norms at the mass level. Oddly, considering the importance that subjectivities have in neofunctionalist models, these constraints on technocratic power are barely tackled in the analysis. Of course, neofunctionalists were aware of the differences among integrative contexts (e.g. Haas, 1961: 382). However, the assumed ontology of the process led the analysis to search for European-like pluralistic tendencies: ideas and norms generated at the technocratic level required the mobilisation of interests groups, if not mass mobilisation, in order to be socially diffused and thus internalised (see Haas, 1958: xv); or the technocrats becoming pluralising agents. A pluralist state

³⁸ Spillover was the “basic [neo-]functionalist proposition” and it indicated that “tensions from the global environment and/or contradictions generated by past performance give rise to unexpected performance in the pursuit of agreed-upon common objectives” which were “likely to result in the search for alternative means for reaching the same goals, i.e. to induce actors to revise their respective strategies vis-à-vis the scope and level of regional decision making” (Schmitter, 1971b: 243).

structure which offered possibilities for such mobilisation was fundamental for the integrative process.

Here it is important to look at how neofunctionalism conceptualises the state. For Haas (1964: 45-46), the state is “an abstraction” constituted by bureaucrats and other civil servants all of whom, because of the pluralistic nature of the system, have an input into political processes. Neofunctionalism, in other words, was equipped to assess the state through its formal dimension wherein conflict resolution mechanisms function (e.g. public sector bureaucracies). The other, as outlined in the introductory chapter, the socially constructed state structure, or the intersubjective dimension which articulates socio-political power relations could not be fully incorporated through an analysis that, as Haas (2001: 23) indicates, employs “the assumptions of democratic pluralism.”

For neofunctionalists, integration as a norm emanating from the ideas produced by technocratic elites must be socialised. Political elites must “learn” integration and subsequently diffuse it throughout society. In a pluralistic context, the state is a mediator of the various societal interests articulated by pressure groups and as such it must look for a balance among various social forces. For neofunctionalists thus “political leaders must find constant ways to feed the flame of integrationist sentiment, to make it attractive to the poor and induce the wealthy to make the major sacrifices in the meantime” (Haas, 1967: 343). This analysis was “destined” to underemphasise the role of the Central American normative elite networks; or perhaps, just as Nye did explicitly, to categorise those elites as pressure groups. Normative elites, as I propose, exercise their power within the socially constructed dimension of the state. Consequently,

neofunctionalism could not do more than admit the existence of powerful groups and, in some cases, mention their relation to technocrats and other political actors.

Despite the foregoing critique, however, it is important to note that neofunctionalism identified elements that could help us understand the articulation of the normative networks' power through the constructed dimension of the state. Decision-makers' norms and perceptions were determinant for neofunctionalist conceptualisations of the process. In the models, for example, political elites assess public interest through their "internalized values and perceptions" (Inglehart, 1971: 162). In other words, values define the political actors' preferences (Haas, 2001: 23). Values, in turn, partially depend on the norms that actors internalise through learning; this points to the importance of norm empowerment (or the incorporation of new norms into the political debate) and diffusion, and socialisation mechanisms for the study of integration in Central America. According to Checkel (1999b: 88-90) there are four such mechanisms. In this chapter, however, I will briefly focus on one of these mechanisms, the corporatist.³⁹ (I discuss further the four mechanisms in chapter three). In that mechanism, state and society are connected through policy networks. Empowerment in this structure occurs in a two-step process: first "societal pressure," and second, political elite learning. Once empowerment takes place norms are diffused throughout society. Seemingly, neofunctionalist models fit this norm diffusion mechanism. As, arguably, once pressure groups have converged in their regional preferences, they will put pressure on the state to advance integration. In this scenario, integrative processes stagnate, are disrupted

³⁹ The other mechanisms are the liberal, the statist and the state-above-society.

or experience strategic modifications because the political elites are reluctant to internalise new norms and/or to diffuse them.

To reiterate, this mechanism focuses on the formal state structure. If one reorients attention to the socially constructed state structure, then perhaps, there are societal groups with normative power who could block norm empowerment and norm diffusion processes. Normative elites could initiate disintegrative processes by blocking norm diffusion or produce outright self-favourable norms. They could induce the mass of society into disintegrative behaviours. In short, normative elites possess the ability to generate social heterogeneity through the construction of new discourses despite the presence of otherwise homogenising meanings and understandings. This may help us understand why—borrowing Haas’ (1967: 333) commentary about Latin America in general—Central America is “united merely by language and religion,” yet, “for automatic integration this is not enough” as the historical record shows.

Neofunctionalism deems learning essential for regional integration. For Haas (1976: 186-187) integration means the adoption of new policies that lead to a “new regional order.” Learning consists of a “redefinition of an earlier conception of self-interest” as a result of actors becoming exposed to a new or different situation, and is based on the actors’ perceived self-interests (Haas, 1964: 48). The learning process results from access to new knowledge (generated by technocratic elites). New knowledge, however, requires “progressive audiences” open to “intellectual innovation” (Haas and Haas, 2002: 592). In the case of Central America, neofunctionalist analysis indicated that technocrats generated new knowledge but political elites were not progressive audiences and, as a result, the process of norm internalisation became stagnant. Thus at this

point learning turned problematic for neofunctionalists: the ontological fixation on the pluralistic working of the state in which political elites must listen to societal groups made the understanding of learning (or its lack) difficult to dissect. Why were political elites not progressive listeners? Was it, as neofunctionalism implied, because the cost of the process was too high for political elites? Ontologically, this is the logical answer as it was assumed that technocratic groups performed the necessary pluralistic functions and thus political elites were the last link in the chain. Consider, however, the following: what if both political and technocratic groups were normatively constrained by their embeddeness in elite networks?

Thus far, in this section I have argued that the pluralist ontology of integration assumed by neofunctionalism did not enable its models to accommodate the role of what I label Central American normative elite networks, thereby limiting our understanding of integration in that region. In addition to this shortcoming, neofunctionalism experienced methodological “discomfort” in the study of Central America. Neofunctionalism comprised a built-in conceptualisation of “cognitive change” within its framework of “loyalties, persuasion, the evolution of expectations and interests” (Rosamond, 2005: 6) but its methodology focused on the rational aspects of the process. There are indications that neofunctionalists were aware and concerned about their methods’ limitations and “reliability” in terms of fully capturing the cognitive dimension they had identified.

For example, Schmitter (1971b: 234) indicates that neofunctionalism “often scored actor perceptions of facts rather than the facts themselves” which improved the theory’s “capacity to observe process relations, such as learning.”

The successful operationalisation of those facts demanded “techniques of direct observation to measure not only what happened but also how relevant actors perceived what was happening.” Yet, these techniques did not fully enable neofunctionalists to conceptualise those variables. The issue is evident when Haas and Schmitter (1964: 714) state that “The exclusion of the conceptually difficult ‘social learning’ process would certainly simplify the task of analysis.” Barrera and Haas (1969: 159) also wonder how to assess elite complementarity, and propose to do so through the opinions and values held by interest groups and political parties “provided these are overtly expressed.” Yet, they go on to employ “rating by experts” signalling their hesitation about the overtly expressed nature of opinions. Similarly, Nye (1968: 871-873) questions measurement of attitudes and suggests that one could use “elite interviews, content analysis of periodicals or statements by leaders, and public opinion polls.” However, the difficulty, according to Nye, was that “reliable opinion polls” were scarce; when found, they were by nature inadequate. Thus, Nye concluded that there may be potential gaps between “attitudes and actions” and that to address this issue we should observe “behaviour, rather than just cost-free verbal statements.”

Elsewhere, Nye (1967: 46-47) seems “apologetic” for his framework’s methodological limitations and data quality. He writes that “In the absence of reliable opinion polls, statements about changes of attitudes must be impressionistic” and also that the best evidence that could be obtained was “fragmentary.” Participants in his study were “chosen on the basis of their present or potential influence.” Attitudes were then measured by questions about CAMC’s effect on increased working hours, investment, new techniques, profit loss, access to loans, and membership in business associations. Ten participants

claimed to support the complete capitulation of their country's sovereignty. "About twenty" were willing to support a partial loss of sovereignty while "only two" opposed any sovereignty limitation. The issue here is the adequacy of the question asked for assessing values, attitudes and learning. Questions were designed around economic matters and did not tap, for example, into the role of myths and flag-raising behaviour in attitude and value formation. Indeed the importance of those intersubjectivities had been disregarded by the models' original assumptions. In such analysis, the importance of discourse as a reflection of social learning is overlooked, or to use Checkel's (2001: 25) expression, it reduces discourse to "cheap talk" among "agents with fixed identities and interests." This tendency could be reduced by employing a constructivist approach through a methodology based on discourse analysis. Such analysis would enable, for example, the assessment of the uses of myths and flag-raising as discursive acts attempting to elaborate or redefine a regional identity; that is, well beyond the mere expression of self-interested agents. I develop further this proposition in the final section of this chapter.

In this section, my intention has not been to impose a "presentist reading" on neofunctionalism (Rosamond, 2005: 3). Nevertheless, in a retrospective exercise such as this, the risk of doing so remains latent. Rather, my intention has been to underline the shortcomings of neofunctionalism in analysing Central American regionalism, in order to highlight analytical openings wherein is possible to elaborate elements of neofunctionalism's conceptual toolkit which are still valid for the analysis of integration in that region.

“New Regionalism” Studies: Under-theorising the Central American

Regional Integration

Breslin (2006: 29) has commented on the difficulties of identifying “a single understanding” of new regionalism: the non-existence of a schematic pursuit of a single explanation for regionalism does not allow for a generalised understanding of new regionalism. In the context of Central America, I argue that this tendency leads new regionalism studies back to the state as the main regional actor. Other observers point to two underlying themes of new regionalism studies. First, the understanding that “all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested” (Hurrell, 1995b: 38-39). Second, the realisation that the process is highly complex: fluid, multidimensional, multi-actor, and multilevel (Söderbaum, 2003: 1). From this multidimensional conceptualisation De Lombaerde (2003) identifies four meanings of new regionalism. First, it indicates the quantitative increase of regional schemes during the 1980s and 1990s. Second, new regionalism refers to the qualitative differences characterising those schemes (e.g. focus on non-trade matters). Third, it alludes to the elaboration of new theories (e.g. theories of regionalism and globalisation). Fourth, new regionalism also denotes methodological developments such as the re-emergence of comparative studies. Beyond these meanings, Hettne (2003: 26) indicates that new regionalism must be approached from a dual perspective. First, the “exogenous” perspective sees regionalism and globalisation as “intertwined articulations, contradictory as well as complementary.” The second perspective, the “endogenous,” is characterized by regionalism’s assessment as a process shaped by a multitude of actors. With this in mind, in this section I organise my review of the recent Central American, and the relevant Latin American,

regionalism literature through new regionalism's different meanings and perspectives. I do not intend to offer a critique of new regionalism's theories *per se* but instead use its meanings and perspectives as organising principles for my reading of that region's literature. The aim in doing so is to highlight the convergence of that literature with the old regionalism studies' state and European centrism and how this tendency greatly contributes to the under theorisation of the Central American process. At the outset, for example, it is important to note that most studies on Central American integration do not take on the theoretical and methodological meanings of new regionalism and thus remain focused on the quantitative and qualitative understandings. On the latter meaning, in addition, scholars have elaborated three generational categories (which I will subsequently discuss)⁴⁰ two of which they indicate are applicable to the European experience only. Nevertheless, a considerable number of new regionalism studies on Central America presuppose some of the assumptions implicated in these categories.

New Regionalism Meanings

New regionalism's first meaning, the proliferation of schemes, produces a highly confusing picture in which Central American integration⁴¹ is underlined by a web of schemes: for example, El Salvador and Panama reached a bilateral agreement in 2002 while both were members of SICA. Presumably, the process in that region follows a "loose and open" but "meandering course" to which the

⁴⁰ See also fn. 42 below.

⁴¹ At the Latin American level the proliferation understanding of the process notes a web of schemes with 17 intraregional free-trade/custom union agreements completed during 1991-2002 and another six in process during the same period, not to mention several bilateral agreements (Devlin and Estevadeordal, 2002: 25-26).

orderliness and uni-linearity of economic integration theory is not applicable (Van Klaveren, 2000: 140 and 153). Such an overlapping web of bilateral and regional agreements has been conceptualized as an “alphabet soup” (Hurrell, 1995a: 280), or a “spaghetti bowl” (De Lombaerde and Garay, 2006: 10). This conceptualisation overlooks the existence in Central America of a binary identity discussed in the introductory chapter: a national and regional identity in which the latter is activated once national problems cannot be dealt with domestically. Such identity may have direct effects on the patchy nature of integration and also on the persistence of regionalism in the area. For instance, the inability of a country to find solutions to an issue at the national level may trigger the regional identity and thus lead it to search for answers at the bilateral or regional level. If there is complementarity of ideas and interests between two or more countries, a regional agreement (e.g. involving economic, security and political aspects) is reached. Thus country A may have a regional agreement with countries B and C; but country B may have a completely different agreement with country C and D but not with A. Yet, A, B, C and D could be members of scheme Z. In this complex context, regionalism seems *ad hoc* but pervasive nevertheless. Continuing with the spaghetti analogy, by adopting a quantitative approach the analyst is able to see the entangled spaghetti but neglects to see the bowl holding the spaghetti in place.

New regionalism’s second meaning, that of the qualitative differences between regionalisms, distinguishes the new from the old in terms of generational processes, or occurring in “waves” (Söderbaum, 2003: 3). For Van Langenhove, Torta, and Costea (2006: 3-5), the first generation “is based upon the idea of a linear process of economic integration” among states; it is thus

roughly equivalent to the old regionalism. Although this generation is mainly concerned with economic processes, its original intentions could have been political. This political dimension engenders the second generation or new regionalism, which proposes that trade and economy cannot be separated from society. The process thus incorporates non-economic issues (i.e. justice and security). This generation is a limited phenomenon of which the EU is the best example.⁴² At the Latin American level old regionalism was imported from the European experience (Söderbaum, 2003: 4); and the new wave originated in the US attitudinal change toward the region (Gamble and Payne, 2003: 54). This implies that Central America remains in the first generation of the process; what changed was the engine and drivers of integration.

In this interpretation, at the Latin American level, integration starts from a point of “low economic interdependence,” a condition worsened by the different levels of development of the region’s countries, and also by geographical and infrastructure elements (Van Klaveren, 2000: 141). These initial assumptions effectively bracket out the intersubjective dimensions that underpin the regional process, and the analysis is limited to economic variables that overpower other dimensions such as regional identity. In addition, analysing Central American integration through “generations” delimits or confines our understanding of the process because it does not fully accommodate the historical lens which is so important for the analysis. Failing to do so, for example, does not allow us to assess the pre-1940s (i.e. pre-old regionalism)

⁴² Van Langenhove, Torta, and Costea (2006: 3-5) argue that there is a third generation of which the EU shows some characteristics. First, in it “the institutional environment for dealing with ‘out of area’ consequences of regional policies are more present;” this trend is illustrated by the European Constitution. Second, the region becomes “proactive engaging in interregional arrangements and agreements.” Third regions “actively engaged at the UN level.”

integration record in the region; nor does it allow us to make sense of the recurrent integrationist efforts in that region.

To be sure, I am not denying the importance of the hegemonic role of the US. Yet, assigning it almost complete credit for the regionalist experiences in Central America seems somewhat short-sighted. While the importance of identity and historical interactions among the region's countries have been stressed by new regionalism scholars,⁴³ the depth with which these factors are treated analytically seems inadequate. In addition, the economistic nature of the studies⁴⁴ does not enable us to conceive of these factors in greater depth. Instead, assuming an economistic ontology leads observers to disregard variables that are apparently disconnected from economic matters; for example, to emphatically state that regional integration is merely the "convergence of interests" and downplay the importance of identity as a driving force for the process (see e.g. Malamud and Schmitter, 2007: 9).

When regional discourse incorporates elements that are beyond the economic space (e.g. when it proposes objectives other than economic ones) it is simply regarded as a case of "cognitive dissonance" reflecting the expectations of the actors rather than the reality (Malamud, 2005a: 422-423). Demands for integration that are not economic, in other words, become empty words. This understanding is the result of the dismissal of cognitive variables through which those demands can be conceived of as reflecting ideas beyond economic matters. In any event, when the demands for integration are economic then they reflect "a clear understanding of the nature, limitations and potential" of a regional scheme

⁴³ See for example Fawcett (2005) and Sunkel (2000).

⁴⁴ See e.g. Bulmer-Thomas (2000, 1998, 1996), Caldentey del Pozo (2001, 1998), CEPAL (2001), Chamorro Marín (1998), Herrero Acosta (2004), Rodas-Martini (2000, 1998), Rodlauer and Schipke (2005), and Sanahuja Perales (1997).

(Malamud, 2005a: 425). When the demands are of a different nature, they are not demands at all, but are dissonances that transform, for example in the case of MERCOSUR, the regional project into “a symbol for leftist political activism and national liberation ideologies.” Regional integration thus becomes “the dazzling dream” of those actors “who stand for progressive, developmental, anti-imperialistic or nationalistic ideas” leading to a regionalism “fiction syndrome” (Malamud, 2005a: 425 and 434).

New Regionalism Dual Perspectives

Beyond the different meanings, Hettne’s (2003: 26) dual perspective, the “exogenous” and “endogenous” views of new regionalism, seems unhelpful in terms of furthering the study of Central America’s regionalism.

The exogenous view directs the analysis first, to incorporate an economic rationale; and second, to the role of the US as the main regionalising engine. For Grugel and Hout (1999: 11-13), new regionalism is a conscious “attempt by the state” and “social coalitions” to impact “globalisation within the regional” space. Similarly, Grugel (2004b: 605) argues that new regionalism “is best understood as a state strategy designed to minimise risks in the uncertain conditions of economic globalization.” In this context, the re-emergence of regionalism at the Latin American level is the result of the US strategic planning which “sought economic re-engagement” with the hemisphere in order to deal with global economic tensions and new security issues (Grugel, 2004b: 605-606). Similarly, for Grugel and Payne (2000: 199) current regionalism occurs within the US sphere of influence and is qualitatively different in that it is open-market oriented and private sector led. Regionalism in the hemisphere is best described by the

concept of “political co-operation” through which the US attempts to “reposition itself globally,” this requires “the strategic calculations and policy decisions of states” involved in the process (Grugel and Payne, 2000: 200). Drivers of regionalism are, therefore, US hegemony and its responses to globalisation, and the need on the part of Latin American countries to enter the global economy (Grugel, 2004b: 606).

Other observers offer an ambivalent view while attempting to accommodate US power within the integrationist tendencies at the Latin American level. Fawcett (2005: 46-47) opposes the proposition that current regionalising schemes represent the “North Americanization” of Latin America through a “US-driven neoliberal logic” because, she argues, of the “continuing salience of regional ideas expressed by a range of different actors, and their ability to influence outcome.” For Fawcett (2005: 42), then, new regionalism in the American continent demonstrates “an emerging normative consensus” between the US and Latin America with “significant” input from the latter. However, globalisation implies complementarity between the regional and global processes and thus the region is under pressure to engage US interests-driven initiatives (Fawcett, 2005: 44). In turn, the Latin American search for regionalist ideas becomes “redundant” as “all roads lead to Rome” because ultimately it is the US power that “calls the tune” (Fawcett, 2005: 44-45). Similarly, for Phillips (2003: 330; emphasis in original) the meaning of regionalism in the Americas cannot be captured exclusively by “the *immediate* interest of the US.” And yet, “hemispheric regionalism” is a strategy to establish “a political economy ideologically hospitable to the rules of the liberal game.” The “driving force” in this process is the US government and its aim is to entrench its hegemony.

Simply put, regionalism is based on US power which to a large extent defines the regional agenda (Phillips, 2005: 3 and 22). For the exogenous approach the US is, then, the main trigger of integration and other countries become mere reactive units.

Ironically, this perspective reaches parallel conclusions to those of the old regionalism's "original sin" (i.e. state-centrism). For the sake of comparison, let us review some of the arguments proposed by scholars inclined to employ "old" regionalism's premises. For Pendersen (2002: 677), regionalism is best analysed through a "theory of co-operative hegemony" based on the interests and strategy of the region's hegemon. In the case of Latin America, for example, the region is partially driven towards deeper integration by the US policy initiatives (Haggard, 1997: 39). This theory argues that integration is a "grand strategy and, to the extent that it is successful, a type of regional order" (Pendersen, 2002: 683). In this context, integration has failed in instances in which "a hegemon has normally been lacking" (Pendersen, 2002: 678). This is a similar argument to that of Mattli (1999: 146-150): in the 1960s, some Latin American schemes failed (i.e. Andean Pact and LAFTA) because they lacked a "regional leader." More importantly, where successful (as in the case of Central America) it was due to the US willingness to act as an "adopted regional leader" by "easing distributional problems and assisting policy coordination." A successful regional scheme thus requires a hegemon willing to cost the integration process.

This argument, however, does not help us understand why the US rallied Central America behind the process and, at the same time, failed to do so elsewhere in Latin America—despite evidence that, at the time, the US within

the Alliance for Progress⁴⁵ was willing to act as regional leader and bear the economic and political costs of Latin American integration in general (see OAS, 1961a, 1961b). The quick answer to this “riddle” is to argue, as Hurrell (1995a: 280) does, that in Central America, US “interests are most directly engaged.” Nevertheless, this argument neglects internal factors that facilitate the adoption of regional norms. Although hegemonic cooperation is important for the process there must be certain conditions that enable the hegemon to persuade the region’s states to enter a given scheme. As Nye (1967: 57), while writing at the time of CACM’s success asserted, external elements such as the role of the US were a “necessary condition” for CACM’s achievements—but necessary did not mean sufficient. More importantly, lacking a Central American initiative, those external variables would have been devoid of importance.

Studies adopting an exogenous approach lead to the conclusion that the states’ rational strategic behaviour, in this case the hegemon’s,⁴⁶ is the most appropriate level of analysis. By doing so, this perspective delimits our understanding of integration in Central America. State behaviour is only one variable in the analysis of political processes: analytical state-centrism produces “narrow and one-sided” studies (Gamble and Payne, 2003: 50). Old regionalism’s “original sin” is a sin because it erroneously confines our understanding of regionalism to the states’ rational behaviour. Representative of such misleading conclusions is that of Fawcett’s⁴⁷ (2004: 444): “All regional activity in the Americas, whether bandwagoning in NAFTA or balancing in

⁴⁵ The Alliance was designed to reinforce the hemispheric Food for Peace program, and technical training programs. Militarily, it sought to protect the region’s countries from threats, specifically, from communist revolutions. For a comprehensive review of the Alliance see Levinson and Onis (1972).

⁴⁶ When the US is absent as a hegemon, some studies look for a type of sub-regional hegemony or, in Phillips’s (2001: 579) words, “a subregional hub state.”

⁴⁷ Elsewhere, Fawcett (2005) gives credit to regionalist ideas emanating from Latin America.

Mercosur, is predicated on the dominant role of the United States. The Monroe Doctrine has long legitimized and conditioned the US special sphere of interest on the American continent.”⁴⁸ This conclusion overlooks, for example, the ideal of Union in Central America which pre-dates the Monroe Doctrine, and the fact that while President Monroe was developing his doctrine the region was already struggling to maintain the “unity” it enjoyed under the Spanish Empire. Also, can US hegemony help us understand the existence of constitutional regionalism in Central America which arguably reflects an embedded unionism? By largely overlooking intersubjective elements involved in the process, the exogenous perspective leads the analysts to attribute the successes as well as the failures of integration in Central America solely to the power and role of the US.

Studies pursuing an endogenous perspective of new regionalism direct the analysis towards the search for multilevel societal processes in which several actors, besides the state, interact in the region’s construction. In this perspective, regionalism is a collaborative process among different societal groups that share—perhaps equally—the power to construct the region. Yet, in a region historically characterized by a highly hierarchical structure, such a search becomes a spiral that leads the observer directly to a state-centric understanding of the process. This perspective thus leaves the observer searching for an effective multilevel participation in Central American regionalism that is difficult, if not actually impossible, to find. Limited multilevel participation in the process is recognised by some new regionalism studies such as that of De Lombaerde

⁴⁸ This doctrine was developed by US President Monroe in 1823. In it he established that the Americas “are henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power,” European involvement would be considered as a “manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States” (quoted in Smith, 1996: 20). The aim was to eliminate or prevent European powers from challenging the US expansionist behaviour (e.g. in Florida) and to construct an “uncontested” sphere of influence in the hemisphere (Smith, 1996: 6).

and Garay (2006: 18-19) and Gamble and Payne (2003: 52). However, it is Bull (1999: 957) who succinctly asserts that “the dynamism and pluralism” implied by new regionalism “are hard to detect” in Central America. Interestingly, Bull’s assumed ontology of the process and her conclusion parallel those of neofunctionalists: the process requires a pluralist society.

It is worthwhile, nevertheless, to look at how endogenous studies deal with the absence of a multilevel dimension; and in the case of Bull, despite her awareness of the problems regarding multidimensionality. For example, according to Bull and Bøås (2003: 258), the construction of a region “is a political act committed by regionalising actors who seek to promote their vision and approach on to the regional agenda.” Multiple visions thus simultaneously “move” the region in several directions; and “they are best viewed as different layers superimposed on top of each other.” This approach “reveals other aspects and dimensions of regional practices and discourses than approaches which only see these as state-led processes implanted on objective units delimited in space and time by geography, culture and history.” Bull and Bøås conclude that their approach “makes it easier to give voice to the multitude of actors involved in the practice and discourse of regionalism.” Yet, by doing so, the observer uploads meaning onto the process: the approach opens up the necessary spaces for the required pluralist structure.

The power relations implied in the process of superimposing visions (or discourses) are not problematised. Discursive practices are “social power” spaces wherein “power relations” make and sustain some discourses as dominant, which define and constitute the world (Weldes et al., 1999:17-18). In the context of integration, then, as indicated in the previous section, some regionalising actors

have greater powers than others. To obtain a deeper understanding of regional integration in Central America it is therefore essential to revisit the interplay between the state and elites and how those interactions are currently reflected within integrative efforts. It is necessary to consider how colonial institutions were used by elites to embed the then new state structure with their norms—a structure that they, the elites, came to quickly dominate—and the cultural continuities that have perpetuated such state configuration.⁴⁹ It is, to put it differently, essential to “localise” or “Central Americanise” regional integration theory in order to accommodate the region’s idiosyncrasies which lead to a particular set of interactions between the state and social elites. This is not to delimit integration in “culture and time” but to admit that culture and history have a greater “saying” about state structures and power relations than is generally assumed.

Elsewhere, Bull (2002)⁵⁰ hints at the relationship between the state and elites in the region. She indicates that it is important to provide a “realist approach to regionalisation with a theory of the state.” The state is seen as interlocutor that can encourage different “integrated business projects.” Nevertheless, for Bull, the state is unsuited to articulate the different political projects which construct the region. It seems, then, that Bull struggles to identify pluralistic spaces in the region’s state structure. When the search is unsuccessful, it is logical to deduce that the state is ill-equipped for the task. Indeed, for Bull (2002: 2), the region’s states have undergone a “privatization of politics” since the 1990s. This privatisation takes place as “political elites are increasingly recruited from the business elites” granting them greater access to policy-making

⁴⁹ I revise the Central American state structure in chapter two.

⁵⁰ See also Bull (2004); in that paper, however, Bull seems more concerned with the transnationalisation of the state through its link with the private sector.

which, in turn, has modified the nature of the links binding the state and the private sector (Bull, 2002: 4-5). Bull indicates that the region's states exhibit certain similarities with the post-colonial states in that they are dominated by limited elites. These elites held such power over the state by controlling the means of production (Bull, 2002: 4). Here we find another point of convergence between Bull's analysis and that of neofunctionalists: the functional division of the region's elites.

Despite identifying the links between elites and the state, Bull detaches the issue from culture and history and reorients attention to matters considered "modern" (such as free trade and anti-development agendas) converging in integration and attempts to find their "voices." Bull does not problematise the links between the state and elites and how these links led to the privatisation of politics. Bull's analysis remains a hint at the issue: her focus on the different agendas forces her to lump those agendas into voices superimposed on each other within a socially constructed space in which the state is a static interlocutor. In doing so, Bull uploads a set of multilevel assumptions onto the process. The endogenous perspective of new regionalism thus enters the search for the hard-to-find multilevel participation. This perspective ultimately leaves the analyst with the state as the only adequate explanation for the nature of Central American integration where in fact the state is an inadequate interlocutor for the many voices struggling within the process. The discursive power of those voices is scarcely examined⁵¹ rendering an analysis in need of deeper theorisation.

I argue that the very binding links that Bull identifies render the states an unsuited regional interlocutor. The privatisation of the state is not new. The

⁵¹ See for example Grugel (2004a).

Central American states were “enmeshed” by design. As the Central American states emerged, the region’s elites captured political, military, material and ideological resources.⁵² Over the years, as new members were incorporated into the elites power became fragmented. This process led to the formation of networks based on kinship and family relations in which elites are able to exchange one kind of resource for another thus achieving normative power. Such concentration of power has enabled the elite to “enmesh” the state in such a manner that the latter reflects the normative power of the former. This historical process has further enabled the elites to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the region when their identity, interests and/or ideology are threatened by regionalism.⁵³

Table 1.1 summarises the general tendencies of the literature that undertakes new regionalism’s different meanings and perspective.

⁵² This is what Mann (1992: 7) refers to as the “substantive sources of social power.”

⁵³ In the Mercosur context, Duina’s work has moved in this historically problematising direction. In his comparative analysis of the EU, Mercosur and NAFTA, Duina (2004) focuses on the impact of the legal origins of the countries participating in a regional scheme and how the legal structure impacts market formation. Apparently, a shared legal tradition within a region facilitates a successful integration process. If so, in regions such as Central America where civil law tradition is prevalent, the legal structure should expedite, or at the very least, simplify the process; yet, considering the integrationist record, that does not seem to be the case. Another issue in Duina’s analysis is that he considers the legal framework as a supporting structure in the market construction process (Duina, 2005: 10). Thus, it seems that the market remains above all aspects of society. This position does not allow for the incorporation of the state nature and its impact on market construction into the analytical framework. Neither does it allow for the assessment of the preference formation of the powerful social actors so important for his analysis. Seemingly, it is the legal system (Duina, 2005: 7) that produces and/or changes the actors’ preferences. However, to the extent that actors influence the legal structure, there must be other factors that construct their preferences. For example, as identity and ideas interplay with interests they impact on an actor’s preferences. Duina, also, argues that different civil society associations and business groups greatly influence the regional market construction. This position effectively leads Duina to situate his analysis within the new regionalism’s endogenous perspective and assume a degree of multilevel governance. See also Duina and Breznau (2002), and Duina (2006).

Table 1.1. New Regionalism’s Meanings and Perspectives: Implications for the Study of Central American Integration

	Quantitative	Qualitative	Exogenous	Endogenous
Focus	Schemes' proliferation	Generation/waves	Complimentarity of globalization & regionalism	Multilevel societal processes
Identifies	Highly confusing picture → web of schemes	Open vs. close regionalism	Economic rationale/US economic re-engagement	State unsuited interlocutor for many voices
	“Alphabet soup”	1st generation imported from EU	US role → regionalizing engine	States recently privatized
	“Spaghetti bowl”	2nd wave from US attitudinal change	US strategic planning	Business elites/state link
	“Meandering course” → “blurred subregional design”		Rational behaviour → most appropriate level of analysis	State → adequate explanation for integration's nature
Hardly incorporated	Binary identity	Historical lens	Domestic factors in non-hegemonic countries enable hegemon to persuade those countries	Historical oligarchic control
	Integration's persistence	Pre-1940s assessment Integration's persistence		Scarce Multilevel participation Some actors → greater normative power

There is another strand of regionalism studies that cannot be easily situated in new regionalism’s meanings and perspectives. Those studies, although to some extent dealing with globalisation, are endogenously oriented, not in the sense of emphasising the analysis of the region’s multilevel governance. Rather, they focus specifically on the role of governments in the process. In this respect, they resemble old regionalism’s intergovernmental strand. Perales (2003: 75), for example, argues that international institutions such as common markets, are created by politicians “based on common rules and sanctioning procedures” in order to attain policy goals that would be impossible to reach without the international institution.

Sánchez (2003b: 36) argues that regionalism is the reflection of governments’ preferences “constrained by domestic and external pressures.” The re-building of integration in the 1990s was a reaction of the governments

concerned with the region's exclusion from the global world and the implications of that trend for the consolidation of peace and democracy (Sánchez, 2003b: 36). By that time, integration became a market-enlarging mechanism to ensure the survival of small economies and it is for this reason that Central American governments accelerated the revival and institutional reform of the process (Sánchez, 2003b: 46). Sánchez (2003b: 39) argues that the intergovernmental hypothesis⁵⁴ explains the institutional building that took place during the reactivation phase. Yet, he (2003b: 39) indicates that those institutions have become secretariats of presidential summits and ministerial meetings. For Sánchez (2003b: 39) this trend reflects the governments' "unwillingness" to delegate sovereignty to regional institutions, and the "divergent interest" among those governments regarding the desired "level of regionness." The integration system thus articulates "the preferences and interests" of the region's governments (Sánchez, 2003b: 47).

Similarly, for Malamud (forthcoming) the key to understanding the successes and limitations of integration is not in the analysis of the "demand" but in that of "supply." In MERCOSUR, for example, presidentialism defines the "microeconomic implementation" of regionalism: national businesses, if necessary, address issues directly with "the core of the decision-making power" (i.e. the presidents) rather than using other institutional mechanisms (Malamud, 2003: 64). Decisions needed by regional "transactors" are perceived to be more efficiently made by the presidents (Malamud, 2005b: 139). The executives are able to override the veto power of other political actors (e.g. congresses) in such

⁵⁴ i.e. "...that governments create institutions in order to ease the intergovernmental bargaining and co-operation as well as to increase their leverage and autonomy vis-à-vis domestic groups which may not be supporters of integration and other governmental policies" (Sánchez, 2003b: 39).

a manner that the presidents become “policy crafters and dispute settlers” (Malamud, 2005b: 140). The presidents, in short, exercise significant influence in the policy-making process obtaining specific outcomes (Malamud, 2003: 67). Regional integration is thus fostered by “presidential diplomacy”⁵⁵ or the “informal presidential intervention” (Malamud, 2004: 147, 149-150). Hence, for Malamud (2003: 64), power becomes “personalised” and the regional process becomes, paraphrasing O’Donnell (1994), a “delegative integration.” The basis of such an argument is that states are not agents of domestic social actors (Malamud, 2005b: 140). Admittedly, the president does not possess absolute power over the regional process (Malamud, 2004: 149). Presidential power may be institutionally restrained (Malamud, forthcoming) and “the real sources of power” remain in the background away from treaties and protocols (Malamud and Schmitter, 2007: 25).

Malamud (2003: fn. 10) recognises that in Central American integration presidential diplomacy has had a limited role. Hence, he indicates that presidentialism is not effective for every regional integration process (Malamud, 2003: 69). Yet, Malamud does not address why this is the case; or why it is that presidentialism “works” in MERCOSUR and does not in Central America? It is here that the concept of normative elite networks and the role of social will in shaping the “preferences” of political elites becomes important in furthering our understanding of what Phillips (2002: 390) calls the “constituent bases of regionalist projects (policy ideas and state interests).” Social will, for example, evolves through elite interactions within networks, and when achieved—by the convergence of the ideas, identity and interests of elites—it articulates the

⁵⁵ On presidentialism in MERCOSUR, see also Carranza (2003).

normative power of those elites. In turn, social will limits or expands the policy options available for the pursuit of regionalism.

To summarise, an examination of new regionalism's meanings and perspectives when applied to the context of Central America, reveals that important aspects for the study of the region's integrative processes have been barely incorporated into their analytical framework. While such studies give us valuable insight into the nature of integration, their analytical scope seems narrow. Analytical narrowness leads new regionalism studies to somewhat preordained conclusions shared by the old regionalism from which, ironically, since its inception it has striven to distance itself. Thus, the conception of Central American integration remains merely of an intergovernmental process and its engine a structure of cooperative hegemony led by the US.

Intersecting Neofunctionalism and Constructivism

This section identifies elements of neofunctionalist models that could be elaborated through a constructivist approach in order to overcome the shortcomings of neofunctionalism. The objective is to trace continuities between neofunctionalism and constructivism. While neofunctionalism "has been misunderstood, caricatured, pilloried, proven wrong, and rejected" (Schmitter, 2004: 45), it nevertheless elaborated conceptual elements that became key components for other approaches (Schmitter, 2005: 258-259). Its assumptions and concepts are still valuable and relevant (Schmitter, 2004: 46). Objections may be raised, however, as to the ontological compatibility of neofunctionalism

and constructivism.⁵⁶ Yet, proposals have been advanced regarding the ability of constructivism to “seize the middle ground” and by doing so “bridge” the ontological gap between rational and critical theories. The “divide” is, in short, “real—but surmountable” (Jupille, Caporaso, and Checkel, 2003). Bridging it is possible because constructivism sheds light on analytical dimensions that in traditional political science were “enigmatic” (Adler, 1997b: 323).⁵⁷

Haas (2001: 22) indicates that neofunctionalism and constructivism both emphasize the importance of “ideas and values as explanations of behaviour” and it is this emphasis which establishes a direct link between neofunctionalism and one of the constructivist schools, the “soft rationalist school.”⁵⁸ He maintains that these approaches share their beliefs that individuals act on “their perceived interests.” Actors’ interests shift when “ideas and values inspiring them undergo alteration” (Haas, 2001: 27). Nevertheless, to propose the search for continuities does not mean that my departure point (the ontology of regional integration) is that of neofunctionalism. I argue that integration is a social structure and as such is constructed through social interactions in which cognitive and ideational dimensions underpin the structure. Similar dimensions were evidently fundamental for the neofunctionalist model (Rosamond, 2005: 14). And yet, because of its initial pluralistic premises and the resulting troublesome operationalisation of variables, those dimensions were treated by assumption,

⁵⁶ To be sure, I do not plan to engage in or rehearse the ontology/epistemology, rational/critical, or the institutionalisms debates. Others have done so comprehensively. See e.g. Aspinwall and Schneider (2001), Dessler (1999), Wind (1997) and Wæver (1996).

⁵⁷ Jupille, Caporaso and Checkel (2003: 8) argue that the meta-theoretical debate that limited the possibilities of surmounting the gap has “run its course;” and that it “must now give way to theoretical, methodological and carefully structured empirical dialogue.” See also Checkel (2000, 1997), and Patomäki and Wight (2000).

⁵⁸ For Haas, the other constructivist schools are: first, the “systemic school” which argues that actors’ interests are defined by their identities which are in turn shaped by the role they, the actors, play in the global system; second, the “norms and culture school” which maintain that actors’ interests are defined by the cultural context in which they live (Haas, 2001: 26). On the relation between neofunctionalism and constructivism, see also Haas (2004) and Diez (2001: 9).

were discounted, or simply could not be fully apprehended by the models. As such, while neofunctionalism largely emphasised the rational aspects of the process, the theoretical integrative models its proponents developed (e.g. Nye (1971b) and Lindberg (1971)) were loaded with variables that emerged from collective interactions.

Neofunctionalism strove to elaborate hypotheses to foster and guide the further study of integration (Rosamond, 2000: 50). Its relentless pursuit of integration dynamics led it to uncover intersubjectivities that later other approaches (e.g. constructivism) would consider essential for our understanding of the process. In Schmitter's (1971b: 247-248) model, "elite value complementarity" or "the distribution of expectations and evaluations (pro and con) vis-à-vis regional integration across national participant political groups" became a key variable. Elite complementarity was underpinned by the constitutive role of the elites' ideas and interests in the definition of expectations and evaluations. Haas' (1958) conditions for "community sentiment" incorporated a similar set of intersubjective variables. Haas (1958: 9; emphasis added) writes:

1. Interest groups and political parties at the national level *endorse* supranational action in preference to action by their national government, or if they are divided among themselves on this issue....
2. Interest groups and political parties ... define their *interests* in terms larger than those of the separate national state from which they originate.
3. Interest groups and political parties, in their efforts at supranational organisation, *coalesce* on the basis of a common *ideology*, surpassing those prominent at the national level.
4. Interest groups and political parties, in confronting each other at the supranational level succeed in evolving a body of doctrine common to all, or a new *nationalism* (i.e., "supranationalism")...

In these conditions we can identify certain intersubjective elements that could be elaborated through a constructivist approach in order to develop a more

comprehensive model of Central American integration. First, Haas' *endorsement* indicates a change in preferences whose locus moves from the national to the supranational space. Preferences depend on values; the latter are influenced by *interest* (Haas' second point). Moreover, interests interplay with ideas (i.e. assigned meanings), and in general with *ideology* (Haas' third point) as a set of *ideas* that articulate a given society's political and social aims. *Nationalism* presupposes the existence of a common (regional) identity. A common identity could lead to the formation of pro-integrationist attitudes among "social classes and corporate groups" (Schmitter, 2004: 63). At the same time, social classes and groups must *coalesce* around those attitudes; coalition in this sense implies complementarity.

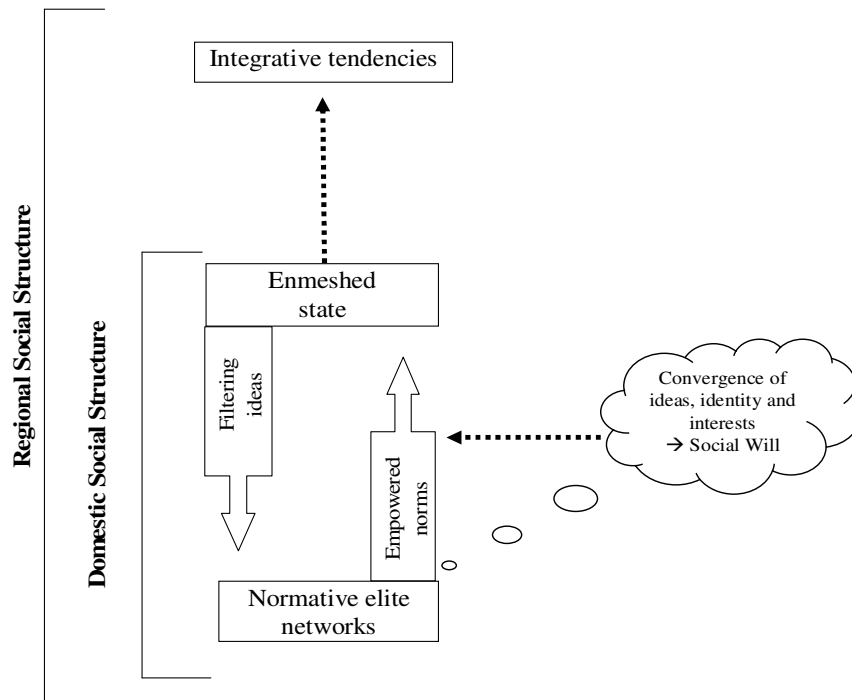
I argue that complementarity refers first, to the congruence of interests regarding integration among elite groups. Second, to the extent that ideas and identity influence the value system of an individual, complementarity encompasses the convergence of ideas and identity with the actors' interests. In the absence of complementarity there may emerge social groups with negative outlooks on regionalism who could generate disruptions to the process. These disturbances or "internal noise" lead to disruptive behaviour that inhibits the capacity of governments to react to regional demands resulting in a stagnation phase or disintegrative tendencies (Nye, 1971b: 90). Complementarity produces predisposition to support or oppose (if negative complementarity arises) the integration process among the normative elite groups that exist in the region. It follows that when there is a degree of elite complementarity, arguably a degree of willingness to advance the process exists. This willingness, I label "social

will:” the convergence of the ideas, identity and interests of the elites leading to a constitutive role of those intersubjectivities in the integrative process.

Social will can be operationalised through a constructivist approach. Such an approach provides us with a hermeneutical methodology that enables us to go “deep” into the political actors’ narrative. Through discourse analysis, constructivism looks further than “overtly expressed” opinions. Constructivism could thus help us overcome neofunctionalists’ concerns about “cost-free verbal statements.” Constructivism enables us to capture social learning encompassing a process wherein actors, through discursive interactions acquire new interests and preferences (Checkel, 2001: 25). Normative elite networks exercise their power discursively. In this sense, a constructivist framework, through the analysis of cognitive dimensions identified by neofunctionalism, could enable the study of Central American integration to accommodate those networks’ role in the integrative process. It is hoped that the intersection of neofunctionalist elements and a constructivist approach in the social will concept could lead us to what Haas and Haas (2002: 594) call “synergistic explanatory account” of socio-political phenomena; in this case, of Central America’s integrative process.

The Central Americanised model of regional integration I propose based on that intersection can be preliminarily summarised as follows. Normative elite networks have enmeshed the state within its socially constructed dimension; those networks exercise their normative power through social will constraining the state as to what is integratively possible. The following figure represents this preliminary proposition.

Figure 1.1. Preliminary Central Americanised Model of Regional Integration



To render the proposed model analytically effective, first, it is necessary to theorise the interactions between the state and elites in order to assess the existence of normative networks and how state enmeshment occurs. Second, it is essential to determine through which mechanisms integrative norms are socialised, diffused and ultimately embedded in regional policies as it is in such mechanisms that elites interact normatively. Third, and finally, it is important to theorise the emergence of the medium that articulates the normative power of the region's elites; that is, social will and the constitutive interactions among its components and how those interactions lead to integrative tendencies.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have maintained that in the context of Central American regional studies, neofunctionalism was guilty of two shortcomings. Its conceptualisation of integration as a process beyond the nation state led its integrative models to interpret the state in the traditional institutional sense thereby allowing for the analytical separation of those institutions. This was essential because of the inherent pluralism in the model within which political elites, technocrats and pressure groups interacted to generate integrative impulses. Such a model could not fully account for the role of the Central American elites in the process: the models functionally split those elites limiting their power in relation to that of the state. Methodologically, neofunctionalist models were ill-equipped to fully capture the analytical weight of the cognitive and ideational variables that they had identified.

I have argued, in addition, that the application of new regionalism's meanings and perspectives to Central America has led to a somewhat narrow view of the process. While quantitative, qualitative and exogenous studies have concluded that the nature and rhythm of the region's integration are dictated by the US hegemony, the endogenous perspective has been left in need of a hard-to-find effective multilevel participation. The inability to fulfil this analytical void has led those studies to focus on the role of the state. New regionalism studies have arrived at a state-centric view of the process; coming full circle with the old regionalism's "original sin." Yet, the nature of the Central American state is hardly assessed. Additionally, in the same manner that the old regionalism attempted to find Euro-centric elements (e.g. pluralism) in Central America, some new regionalism studies "upload" a set of pluralising assumptions onto that

region in an attempt to identify the essential multilevel participation factors of their models, at the same time that the underlying power relations remain unaddressed. This fairly narrow understanding, I suggest, is the result of overlooking and/or under theorising the process's intersubjective spaces. I propose that this analytical void can be bridged by developing a constructivist framework based on certain elements of neofunctionalist models. Such a framework will furnish the region's analysis with a toolkit that allows for the incorporation of the state's constructed structure, and the interaction of the state and normative elite networks within the regionalism process. In the next chapter I theorise that proposition.

Chapter 2. Revisiting the Central American State: the Enmeshed State, and Normative Family and Kinship Networks

Introduction

This chapter revisits the interactions between the Central American state and social elites. The objective is to bring the theoretically neglected role of social elites and their interactions with the state through family and kinship networks back into the analysis of regional integration. My purpose in doing so is not to carry out a literature review of the state and elites but rather to examine the different ways analysts conceive of the state-elite interactions. Often theorists approach the state through a modernisation prism which limits their studies to a certain sphere of analysis. Elites are neatly categorised into functional groups and the possibility of those groups' convergence in family and kinship networks is overlooked.⁵⁹ This tendency is underlined by premises that suggest those networks have been eroded by modernity. The modern/rational state is implicitly or explicitly assumed to epitomise modernity. If certain cultural dimensions leading to personal interactions among actors within the state are incorporated in the analysis, they are conceived of as anti-modern (e.g. clientelism) or even as corruption disrupting the efficient functioning of a democratic state.⁶⁰ Cultural aspects are thus dissolved into a set of functional linkages that projects mainly

⁵⁹ Studies that recognise the fundamental role of family and kinship networks at the Latin American level approach them historically: they are often focused on the colonial or early independence period. It seems that this tendency results from the perception that assessments with "cultural baggage" are directly "associated with the survival not only of a traditional and backward economic order, but also with significant remains of the colonial administration" (Oszlak, 1981: 9). Illustrative of the tendency to view family and kinship historically are for example Balmori, Voss, and Wortman (1984), Blank (1974), Lake Frank (2001) and Walker (1986).

⁶⁰ See Hedetoft (2003) for a discussion of such tendencies.

the economic aspects of the state-elites interactions. Realising that such a position leads researchers to neglect cultural continuities is essential for our understanding of the region's political processes.

Following these tendencies, models of regionalism import theoretical premises from the experiences of other regions without necessarily "filtering" them to reflect the Central American reality and thus seem incompatible with the region's context. Neofunctionalist models influenced by corporatist premises to a great extent assume a society structured around notions of pluralism and, similarly, some new regionalism studies implicitly hold multilevel governance premises which are underpinned by democratic models of the state. Both approaches seem ill equipped to fully capture the dynamics of Central American society, since these models overlook or under theorise the interconnections between the state and social elites and the normative power that the latter elites can exercise over the state. Hence, to develop a fuller picture of the integration process it is important to re-examine those interactions in order to elaborate a Central Americanised model of integration.

In the first section, I develop a definition of the Central American state. Section two assesses the corporatist⁶¹ views of the state while section three considers the post-democratisation understandings of the state that underpin the integration theory of Central America; in both sections the focus is on the analytical position assigned to the family and kinship networks within those conceptions. The fourth section observes the resilience of those networks and their constant interaction with the state. It argues that networks have granted

⁶¹ While my focus on corporatism may seem outdated to some critics, it is important to reemphasise that one of this thesis' aims is to "reactivate" elements of neofunctionalist models of regional integration in order to better understand Central American regionalism. Corporatism seems to underpin neofunctionalism's conception of integration and regional integration models that emphasise the dominant role of the executives or governments in the process.

elites disproportionately normative power over the political process. In this context, the state emerges as an enmeshed construction engrained in those networks. Section five develops the notion of normative elites and normative power within Central American political culture. Section six concludes.

Defining the Central American State

The state⁶² is one of the most contentious concepts in the social sciences and its definition a much debated topic. A simple definition is that the state is the set of institutions which claim sovereignty over a given territory (Hay and Lister, 2006: 5).⁶³ How can a set of institutions claim supreme authority? There must be a particular characteristic of the state that makes individuals accept its power. The state, therefore, must be a force. Such force is extrinsic to the will of the individual, but through law and regulation it is transformed from might to legal power, and ultimately to legitimate authority (Passerin D'Entreves, 1967: 1-2, 8). Prior to achieving legitimacy, it seems, individuals must consent to the rules and regulations that institutionalise the state. The state, thus, comprises a distinct set of institutions and organisations which perform the double task of defining and enforcing collectively binding decisions; such function, however, is “socially accepted” (Jessop, 1990: 341). This agreement sets and conditions the obedience necessary for social life (Passerin D'Entreves, 1967: 5). In this sense, the state regulates social interactions and by doing so sustains a particular political order (Pettman, 1979: 106).

⁶² For theories of the state see, for example, the edited volumes by Hay, Lister, and Marsh (2006) and Hall (1994); Jessop (1990) and (2001); and Passerin D'Entreves (1967).

⁶³ In the Latin American context, Centeno (2002: 2) takes a similar view and conceives the state as “the permanent institutional core of political authority on which regimes rest and depend. It is permanent in that its general contours and capacities remain constant despite changes in governments. It is institutionalized in that a degree of autonomy from any social sector is assumed.”

Taking into account the main elements of these conceptualisations, I develop a definition of the state as a double intersubjective structure. First is the formal institutional/legal structure in which *de jure* power or the power obtained through electoral means is exercised. This is roughly equivalent to the institutional aspects that the previous definitions implied. The second component of the conception I propose is a socially constructed structure in which normative power is articulated.⁶⁴ This structure differs greatly from the above conceptions as it refers to a dimension that they do not fully incorporate; namely, the interactions among elites from which the state is normatively constituted. Critics may argue that these interactions are included in the “obedience agreement” or “socially accepted” propositions referred to above. These propositions imply that the state has the consent of mass society with regard to its power and functions. In this sense, they are accounted for by my institutional structure because consent and agreement are implicated in the articulation of *de jure* power that I propose occurs in the institutional structure. The socially constructed state dimension I conceive refers to that space in which normative power is projected through elite interactions, and in doing so, constitute the state. My aim in developing this definition of the state is to theoretically isolate a particular characteristic of the Central American state⁶⁵ which may help us further understand the functioning

⁶⁴ In the Latin American context, Mallon (2002: fn. 1, 1995: 10) proposes that the state is two dimensional and sees the region’s state as first, “a pact of domination or rule;” and second, as a set of institutions which function as resolution mechanisms of “conflicts over power.” My institutional structure is similar to the latter dimension in Mallon’s conception. Her pact of domination seems to refer to mass consent. Thus it is not equivalent to my socially constructed structure because my dimension refers to a space in which the elites interact to normatively constitute the institutional structure and ultimately the state itself.

⁶⁵ On the emergence of the Central American states, see Dym (2006); and on the relations between the state-social classes in the context of the 1980s’ Central American revolutions, see Midlarsky (1985). For the assessment of the historical emergence of the Latin American states, see among others, Centeno (2002); López-Alves (2000); Oszlak (1981); Whitehead (2006: chapter two); and the edited volumes by Dunkerley (2002), and Peloso and Tenenbaum (1996). For specific country studies see: López-Alves (2001), on Argentina and Uruguay; and Knight

of regional integration as an “intergovernmental” process. The definition of the state I propose enables us to conceptualise the actions of social elites in the integration process beyond a mere functional role. In so doing, it also opens analytical spaces to build a state conception that goes beyond those of corporatism and post-democratisation. It thus becomes the core on which to build a Central Americanised model of integration.

Corporatism: Models and Issues

As observers began to conceive of the rationalisation (e.g. decline of clientelism) of the state and the realisation that pluralist models were unsuited for the Latin American context, corporatism became the dominant analytical model to study the region as it seemed to better capture the organisation of the region’s society and the interactions between state and society. Generally, corporatism was considered as a form of structuring interest groups and exerting influence on state policy (Schmitter, 1993: 195). Corporatism not only referred to the state structure but also to the economic system, political culture, the ideology underpinning the structure or a particular type of society (Schmitter, 1993: 196). At the Latin American level, the nature of corporatism generated a debate among those who considered it to be a political tradition (the “culturalists”) and those who conceived of it merely as an interest group representation system.⁶⁶

(2001), on Mexico. For a political economy focus on the Latin American state, see Bulmer-Thomas (1994) and Fishlow (1990).

⁶⁶ See Collier (1995) for an excellent review of the debate, and of corporatism in Latin America.

Corporatism: A Cultural Tradition

For the culturalist school,⁶⁷ Latin America has its own “indigenous reality and historical traditions” which are reflected in, and provide continuity for, its political culture (Wiarda, 1974: 31). The state is corporate, highly stratified, elitist, dictatorial and undemocratic (Wiarda, 1973: 213). Corporatism is thus centred on the hierarchically structured and vertically divided system of corporate interests, and on elite groups which, through government links, incorporated new elements (Wiarda, 1973: 222). Underpinning the region’s political culture and institutions is a hierarchical and organic conception of man, society and polity (Wiarda, 1973: 210). The state prevails over private interests: it has the power to deny or confer legal recognition to corporate groups, it controls access to official funds and it provides “favours” without which sectoral associations are likely to be functionally limited or succumb (Wiarda, 1973: 222). Corporatism has provided the region’s political culture and institutions with mechanisms to absorb and accommodate socio-political transformation through controlled change by incorporating new elements into the state apparatus without necessarily transforming its nature (Wiarda, 1973: 209, 1981: 63). As a result of its inherent continuity, the state structure has been remarkably durable and persevering (Wiarda, 1973: 209). Such an approach to the region was criticised because its applicability went beyond the analysis of the state. In this view corporatism was not only applicable to interest politics but was also a framework for the analysis of Latin America, and thus it became a description and explanation of the region’s politics and culture (Collier, 1995: 150-151).

⁶⁷ For culturalist takes on Latin America see for example Bishko (1956), Dealy (1968), and Morse (1954) and (1964).

Culturalists identify the importance of values and norms in preserving the traditional structure and assimilating new groups into elites, and the importance of personal and family relations for that assimilation. However, the role of family networks and their interactions with the state is not fully theorised in the culturalist models, and thus the family becomes a metaphor: the system resembles a family structure.⁶⁸ In addition, the relationship between elites and norm construction is not analysed within the models. If those networks and norms played a central role in the sustainability of the structure, do elites perform a function in norm elaboration? If yes, how do they achieve that task? There are other issues with the culturalist view. It argues that regimes did not become full corporatist regimes; instead, the latter grounded the new institutions in the original structure (Wiarda, 2001: 267). Despite this continuity and the socio-economic and political power that certain elites enjoyed in the old system, elites are conceived of as deferring to state power (see e.g. Wiarda, 2001: 324). Such conceptions contradict other propositions in the culturalist analysis. In the case of the Central American military regimes often portrayed as a mighty entity in control of the state and society, it is argued that the programmes and ideology that articulated and justified those regimes were developed and advanced by business elites and religious leaders (Wiarda, 2001: 276). In addition, it is proposed that democratisation was achieved because of the industrial, business, commercial and governmental elites' pragmatic realisation that controlled change was the most acceptable option after the upheavals and crises of the 1970s and 1980s (Wiarda, 2001: 313). Such contradictory propositions lead to an essential question which nevertheless is not addressed by the culturalist: were the Central

⁶⁸ Wiarda (1973: 221) writes "The national system is often conceived of in terms of the family... implying strong, benevolent leadership, assigned [and] accepted duties, privileges, status, and a purpose greater than the sum of its individual parts."

American elites deferring to state control? Or, were they through networks normatively influencing the state?

Corporatism: A System of Representation

Schmitter (1974) rejects such cultural conceptualisations indicating that interest politics of the same type occur in different cultural contexts. He (1974: 89-90) thus wonders “why do societies supposedly sharing the same general ethos exhibit such a wide diversity in interest-group values, practices and consequences?” Spain and Colombia are more Catholic than Portugal and Brazil; yet the latter two exhibit greater corporatist characteristics (Schmitter, 1974: 90). Culturalist propositions must account for such deviations; they need to be heavily supplemented (Schmitter, 1974: 90). Schmitter (1974: 93-94) goes on to propose a more empirically founded brand of corporatism. In that perspective, corporatism is “a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories” (Schmitter, 1974: 93). The state recognises, licenses and creates those functional groups, granting them monopoly over sectoral representation under conditions of control of leadership selection and demands articulation (Schmitter, 1974: 93-94). Empirically, only Brazil and Portugal come close to reproducing all corporatist dimensions (Schmitter, 1974: 94). Yet, Schmitter seems to overlook a key issue: if cultural conceptualisations of corporatism are not adequate, then why is it that the two examples that come closest to his “constructed” type of corporatism are *culturally* directly related? That is, how is the fact that Brazil is a former Portuguese colony related to their corporatist tendencies? If Spain is more

Catholic than Portugal, Colombia more so than Brazil, but Brazil and Portugal are more corporatists, is it not important to note that they are all Catholic *and* corporatist? In this light, the difference seems to be of degree and not of kind.

Schmitter's model is applicable to regions and countries beyond the Iberic-Latin countries. However, the different degree of state power centralisation in each region made necessary the elaboration of two sub-types of corporatism defined by the patterns through which the system evolved, and the nature of the distribution of power and influence (Schmitter, 1974: 102-103). In Societal Corporatism or that which is "autonomous and penetrative," the autonomy of corporate groups attenuates the power of the state and in that sense is a pluralist system. State Corporatism can be, in contrast, "dependent and penetrated" and in it, the state possesses greater power than society (Collier, 1995: 147); and thus it is a statist system. This model, because of its disregard for socio-cultural aspects, was grounded on the uni-linearity of modernisation: society is categorised functionally in order to find those interest groups that could lead it towards development. Functional interest groups became the platform for social interactions and solidarity, and the mechanism to strive for particular political objectives (Newton, 1970: 2). Considering the culturalist proposition that the nature of the region's state is rooted in personalistic politics embedded in a highly hierarchical system, it is difficult to see how such functionality emerges "free" from personal relations and without resorting to socio-cultural elements.^{69,70}

⁶⁹ This tendency may explain the issue highlighted by Philip (1980: 425): the relative silence of the corporatist model regarding how corporatist regimes emerge.

⁷⁰ Elsewhere, Schmitter (1973: 205) describes the Brazilian state in a manner that seems, to a certain degree, parallel to socio-cultural continuity, he writes that in the case of Brazil, "there exists a distinctive 'authoritarian response to modernization.'" That response was embedded in a "consistent, interdependent, and relatively stable set of political structures and practices" which in

Attempts were made to bring socio-cultural aspects into the corporatist framework without necessarily adopting the culturalist position. Bureaucratic authoritarianism (BA) is a modified version of corporatism which reflects socio-cultural aspects of Latin America; it refers to a state type through which the representation of private interests is exercised by functional organisations (O'Donnell, 1977: 2-5). Arguably, this corporatist model rejects the traditional-modern dichotomy underpinning modernisation theory (Peruzzotti, 1999: 62). And, indeed, it allows for the incorporation of socio-cultural continuities. Yet, it too is inclined to concurrently incorporate certain aspects of modernisation that “cloud” our view of the region’s state. In that model certain groups had greater influence than others. What is telling and illuminating, however, is the manner in which the profile of the functional groups necessary to carry out a comparative study of modernisation is elaborated: military institutions are dominated and strategically managed by modern or professional officers; the old oligarchy is replaced by formally trained individuals (O'Donnell, 1973: 29-31). Moreover, the private sector creates organisations and promotes public relations activities geared to increasing contact among professional managers and with other technocratic incumbents. It is notable that the same pattern as that presented by neofunctionalism emerges in this corporatist model: technocrats, private sector and old elites are neatly organised in a functional manner.

Power in the BA model can be articulated at two levels. On the one hand, the state can penetrate and thus control the popular sectors. To put it differently, in relation to society in general, power is concentrated in the state and popular sectors have, at best, minimal influence over state policy. On the other hand, the

turn enables “elites to manage, guide, or manipulate the transformation of economic and social structures at minimal cost to themselves in terms of power, wealth, and status.”

state and dominant sectors exercise reciprocal control over each other. State control over dominant sectors, thus, is less restraining than that over popular sectors.⁷¹ And hence, dominant sectors have extensive influence over state policy. The functional division prism employed by the model does not allow for a holistic incorporation of cultural continuities. The state could become controlled by dominant sectors; yet, the division of the elite into functional groupings makes that domination virtually impossible. By functionally splitting elites their power is correspondingly reduced. The BA model, thus, can incorporate the industrial elites as agents of modernisation but as upcoming elites their power is somewhat limited. And by simultaneously excluding the old oligarchy, or landed elite, whose power over the state is seen as a threat to modernisation, it reduces the possibility of proposing a return to the old feudal system.

For this reason, corporatism and its BA variant are, to a certain degree, inconsistent with the Central American structure. Corporatism ignores the possibility that individuals can have a stake in industrial, commercial and agricultural sectors while also holding political offices.⁷² This functional overlapping is facilitated by the existence of family and kinship networks which are incompatible with the corporatist model: analytically allowing for the existence of networks means limiting the role of functional interest groups in society, and incorporating the continuing power of elites is considered anti-modern. Although some models do recognise that there are “entrenched

⁷¹ Such power articulation is the reflection of BA's nature. For O'Donnell (1977: 2-5), BA is “bifrontal” because it contains two defining elements: the “statising” dimension in which the state “conquers” and subsequently “subordinates” civil society organisations; and the “privatising” component in which there are openings of some of the state's institutional areas to the “organised representation of civil society.” BA is also “segmentary” in that its effective functioning and impact differ systematically along social class lines. The segmentary dimension allows the state to penetrate and control popular sectors. The privatising dimension reflects an alliance that leads to a complex set of “interpenetrations” between the state and dominant sectors.

⁷² Hammergren (1977: 453 and en. 48, particularly) discusses elites' overlapping membership at the Latin American level.

oligarchies” (Schmitter, 1974: 96), it is ultimately the state that imposes organisation on society (Philip, 1980: 426). And in some cases, the elites become dependent on the state for their ultimate survival (see O’Donnell, 1978: 17). The state therefore possesses supremacy over the socio-political structure: state power prevails over the power of societal groups. Corporatism thus assigned an unrealistic degree of independence to the state (Philip, 1980: 435).

Such a stance is the result of the fundamental assumptions of corporatism. The corporate structure dissipates if first, the state becomes dependent and controlled by private interests, and second if the state enjoys complete autonomy and independence, and interest groups in society are completely subordinated to the state (Cawson, 1985: 19). These presuppositions effectively relegate what I have labelled “normative elites” (I will discuss these elites further later in this chapter) to the sector in which they function. While identifying those entrenched traditional elites, corporatism treats them as functional/interest groups with power limited to the economic sector in which they function. In this sense, socio-cultural continuities have at best a minimal role in politics. Yet they give texture to the socially constructed structure of the state from which the decision to impose or not corporatist organisation on society is derived.

The Post-Democratisation State Model

Post-democratisation⁷³ conceptions of the state (see e.g. O’Donnell, 1993, 1994; Panizza, 2000; Peruzzotti, 1999, 2001) further mystify the existence and role of

⁷³ By “democratisation” I mean the transition from authoritarian regimes to democratically elected governments that took place in most Latin American countries beginning in the late 1970s through the early 1990s. For a comprehensive review of democratisation in Latin America see Hagopian and Mainwaring (2005); on the dilemmas and prospects implicated by democratisation, see Cavarozzi (1992) and Karl (1990).

family and kinship networks. The analytical neglect of functional overlapping within those networks remains the trend in state models and thus the networks, as a type of social “glue” that enables the functioning of the political and the economic structures, is further relegated to “history.” Democratisation and the reforms that it encompassed are argued to be the product of the discretionary power and concentrated authority held by the executives vis-à-vis economic interest groups (Haggard and Kaufman, 1994: 69). The BA state model thus became a distinctive type of democracy, a “delegative democracy” in which elected presidents are entitled to govern at their discretion restrained only by “the hard facts of existing power relations” and by the constitutionally established term of office (O’Donnell, 1994: 59). The model, thus, to a large extent detaches the executives from social processes. In addition, technocrats are fundamental for the proper functioning of the model, and just as in neofunctionalism and the BA state models, they are analytically separated from elite networks.⁷⁴ More importantly, the source of the president’s discretionary power and politico-economic preferences, not to mention the constraining hard facts of power relations, are hardly questioned or discussed.

Delegative democracy is considered to be a transitional phase towards a fully institutionalised and consolidated democracy. Complete transition, however, is not guaranteed as democracy may stall or there may be a regression to authoritarian rule (O’Donnell, 1994: 56). In this way, Delegative democracy incorporates the “problematic” cultural tendencies of the region as its salient characteristics are those of resurrected identities (Peruzzotti, 2001: 136). This brings lasting cultural factors that might have historically thwarted democratic

⁷⁴ See O’Donnell (1994: 60).

development back into the analysis (Peruzzotti, 2001: 155). The model proposes, however, that rather than exhibiting constant cultural continuity, the region's political culture has undergone an extensive transformation: the emergence of an "autonomous public opinion" and a politicisation oriented towards rights (Peruzzotti, 1999: 66). The region, in short, has reached a "democratic plateau" (Peruzzotti, 2001: 134).

Cultural variables thus remain problematic for the analyst as they are conceived of as constraining modernity; in this case, democracy.⁷⁵ Hence, the analysis is implicitly committed to modernisation principles: the feudal past has completely disappeared, authoritarianism has receded opening up to the transitional phase, albeit an uncertain one, but transitional nevertheless, to democracy. The assumption is that the region's societies are traditional societies on the way to modernity; and for this reason, arguments that stress continuity in the structure rather than a uni-linear progression are quickly discarded.⁷⁶ The state is assumed to be interest-neutral, without prejudices, and lacking its own culture and identity; and yet states are underpinned by cultural idiosyncrasies and particular normative understandings of reality (Hedetoft, 2003: 39).

In the post-democratisation models, the state comprises three structures (O'Donnell, 1993: 1356-1357). First, the state apparatus: the public sector or public bureaucracies. This structure refers to the formal institutional framework of the state or the government. The second structure is ideological, in which the

⁷⁵ Haynes (2001), for example, when including the role of "traditional landed elites" in the analysis, considers it as a structural impediment to democratisation in the region. Haynes overlooks the possibility that the landed elite is interconnected with individuals perceived as essential for the democratisation process; that is, politicians in key positions, technocrats and leading figures in policy research.

⁷⁶ For Whitehead (2006: 114) by the 1950s, the oligarchical Latin American state had disappeared almost completely and it had been replaced by a "modernising" state. And yet, he (2006: 115) points out that to reconcile the evidence with modernisation theory, "a little forcing" (e.g. ignoring its predictions) is needed.

state projects itself and is perceived as “state-for-the-nation.” This is the ideational structure wherein ideas that frame a society’s reality are embedded. Third, the legal system: a formalised set of social relations which reproduces the unequal power relationships that occur in society. The law is partly constitutive of the social order. The law, more importantly, through the constitutionalisation of state power eliminates private privileges detaching the state from particularistic social powers (Peruzzotti, 1999: 74). The law thus brings to an end the state modernisation cycle: personalistic politics are eliminated, political-bureaucratic elites are now assumed to be independent, the state can now claim to possess a monopoly on legitimate power and hence politics becomes a “rational” and impartial process. Such a legal focus raises a fundamental question: if the state is part of the general social structure wherein it is intertwined in various and complex relations with society,⁷⁷ is it the law that constitutes the state? Or, is it the constant social interplay that occurs within the structure that constitutes the state? Where do the norms and principles that the law institutionalises come from?⁷⁸

Such issues could be approached through the state structure I proposed previously. I have argued that the state is an intersubjective structure in which two interconnected spaces converge: first, the formal or legal framework constituted by state institutions; and, second, a socially constructed space. In these spaces power is projected in two forms. First, *de jure* power is exercised through the formal structure of the state. Second, what I labelled normative power—which refers to the power derived from the possession of material,

⁷⁷ As O’Donnell (1993: 1356) indicates.

⁷⁸ Luhmann (1990: 200-201) argues that the law depends “on highly complex social preconditions that are historically determined” and which “cannot simply be assumed as given.” In any case, these aspects of law are well beyond the scope of this thesis; it is appropriate for jurists, law theorists and/or historians to explore them.

political and ideological resources—is articulated within the socially constructed space of the state. While the post-democratisation three-dimensional structure separates the state legal structure from its formal counterpart (i.e. state apparatus), I argue that they belong to the same dimension as it is in the institutional apparatus that the law is projected. In addition, these models establish a separate ideological structure which seems to parallel the socially constructed space I propose. However, I differ from any view which assigns supremacy to the state in ideological matters. I argue that both ideological and legal structures are underpinned by the existence of normative elites which contribute to the construction of the principles and norms that give substance to the formal state structure. To put it differently, the formal state structure is the space in which normative power materialises. Undoubtedly, the legal structure constrains state actors. Norms and values that underpin the law, however, are negotiated and interpreted through the day-to-day rituals and traditions of power (Hedetoft, 2003: 37). Such articulation of power implies that the ideas, interests and values of elites play a constitutive role in the social interactions from which legal and ideological structures evolve given those elites ultimate power to shape society. Conceptualisations of the state that fail to incorporate the existence of networks whereby elites can obtain normative power and perform such a constitutive role, lead to the conclusion that the state is detached from the social processes with which it is supposed to be intertwined.

In the post-democratisation state model, political institutions⁷⁹ are selective as to what agents they favour, becoming identity shapers which lead agents to mould their identities in order to fulfil the criteria that determine the

⁷⁹ Defined as “regularized patterns of interactions that are known, practiced, and regularly accepted (if not normatively approved) by social agents who expect to continue interacting under the rules and norms formally or informally embodied in those patterns” (O’Donnell, 1994: 57).

distribution of benefits (O'Donnell, 1994: 57-58). To the extent that political institutions are constituted by social agents, those models need to recognise that there are members of society who may have the power to determine the ideas and values embedded in political institutions. When such power is acknowledged it is considered as a filler of the power vacuum left by feeble political institutions,⁸⁰ and not more accurately as a power that constitutes normatively those institutions. Why do institutions favour some social groups and not others? Do the rules, norms and principles that determine social interactions emerge out of a “big bang” phenomenon from which autarkical institutions arise? It is important to emphasise that institutions are constructed on an ideational structure provided by social agents, and which influence how agents fare within those institutions. Cultural continuities play an essential role in that construction as they frame and mould the ideas and interests of normative agents: those social elites that shape the norms and principles that govern social interactions.

Other observers acknowledge, to an extent, a degree of continuity in the state structure.⁸¹ Panizza (2000: 737), for instance, questions the assumption that economic modernisation undermines traditional social institutions and politics.⁸² The adoption of liberal democratic principles did not put an end to old politics (Panizza, 2000: 738). Within certain limits, rather than being a limitation to economic modernisation, old politics have facilitated and moulded economic reforms. Admittedly, thus, democratic reforms may have strengthened the region's traditional elites (Panizza, 2000: 763). Yet, the state is not simply

⁸⁰ See e.g. Peruzzotti (1999: 69).

⁸¹ For a continuity argument see also Lambert (1999: 394) who argues that in the case of Paraguay the transition to democracy has been characterised by “change of regime but also by a high degree of continuity with regards to the state.”

⁸² That is, particularist relations based on “patrimonialism, clientelism, patronage and corruption” (Panizza, 2000: 737). On this “traditional Politics” see among others, Powell (1970), Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984), Mosovich Pont-Lezica (1997), Meyer-Stamer (1999), and Lazar (2004).

enmeshed in old politics; nor can the state and the policies it develops and implements be extrinsic to the democratic context (Panizza, 2000: 760). To address these seemingly contradictory propositions, state models increasingly divide society into formal and informal sectors. Old politics have adapted to current social practices and operate within the informal sector of the economy in which individuals have fewer rights and exist mostly outside civil society (Panizza, 2000: 762). Old politics also help to account for the integration of state organizations into certain privatised “circuits of power;” for example, government officials converge within “drug trade” circles (O’Donnell, 1993: 1359 and en. 8).

This is another analytical rupturing point of the old (oligarchic) state system and the modern democratic state. The effectiveness of the old is relegated to the fringes of legality. This raises a fundamental question, if old elites have been strengthened by modernity, have they abandoned the old politics’ way of dealing with the state and thus remain focused on the informal sector? It also highlights the ambivalent position of analysts: as they struggle to reconcile the modern with the old, they tend to divide society into formal (modern) and informal (old) practices, in which division old politics becomes illegal.

Parallel to such “illegalisation” of old politics, civil society is granted greater leverage in its interactions with the state.⁸³ Civil society can only achieve greater power within a new phase of modernity in which the continuity of the socio-cultural factor is further relegated to the historical background that freezes them in time. Although the existence of social groups with exceptional power is again admitted, left behind in the illegal space are the old politics of oligarchies

⁸³ See e.g. Peruzzotti (2001: 155).

and their direct relationship to the state. Powerful elites are now considered fully functional sectors with power limited to their specific function. And yet, economic functional labels such as “agrarian” and “commercial” cannot capture the sources and degree of elite cohesion (Hagopian, 1996: 16-20). In addition, freezing elites and the structure they historically influenced, and in some cases directly designed, leaves out of the analysis the fact that civil society and its new found voice must nevertheless remain within and interact with a durable socio-political structure. Such a structure, I argue, is fostered, maintained and perpetuated through family and kinship networks.

Putting Elites Back in: The Enmeshed State, and Family and Kinship

Networks

The decline of kinship has become a standard to assess modern economies and societies: kin is perceived as a constraint on individuals attempting to build a self-sufficient system and hence becomes a characteristic of anti-modern societies (Sabeian and Teuscher, 2007: 23). Modern society is assumed to be characterised by a division of labour that governs its functions and systematic reproduction through a set of social institutions that follow different logics: the market governs the economy; the state, politics; the church, religion, and the family, kinship (Yanagisako, 2007: 40-41). These modernity standards are followed by conceptions of the state that theoretically divide elites, and by default overlook the networks in which those elites are embedded. Those conceptions are underlined by premises that lead to the conclusion that economic

modernity must result in impersonal social relations.⁸⁴ As the complexities of society increase the differentiation of its internal structure also increases. Institutions in this context become functionally specialised in a given task. Specialisation, in turn, leads the family and kinship networks to gradually lose functions to other institutions (Smith, 1984: 5). The modernisation process exerts pressure on family and kinship leading to the decline of their importance. Yet, evidence suggests that in the Latin American context modernisation was moulded to the traditional institutions and functions of family and kinship: individuals were affected by modernity, networks, however, were not necessarily destroyed (Carlos and Sellers, 1972: 113-114).

In Central America, the embryonic forms of such resilient networks are found in two colonial institutions that from design enmeshed the state: the *encomienda* and the *cabildos*.⁸⁵ *Encomiendas* were grants given by the Crown to the conquistadors. They were perpetual and consisted of the conquered land and the labour of its inhabitants; from these grants emerged the region's grand estates ruled by the absolute power of the landowner (Wiarda, 2001: 57 and 98-99). During the early colonial period, these *encomenderos*⁸⁶ (originally *peninsulares*⁸⁷) controlled the *cabildos*, or town councils, becoming effective leaders of society and transforming the councils into family-owned entities, providing the means of survival for large clans (Lockhart, 1985: 57). As colonial society grew the old elites were challenged by newcomers (i.e. *criollos*⁸⁸). In these struggles, the *cabildos* became centres to protect the family's interests and

⁸⁴ See Smith (1984: 3-4) and for a theoretical analysis of modernisation and kinship see Cancian, Wolf Goodman and Smith (1978).

⁸⁵ See also discussion in Balmori, Voss, and Wortman (1984: 27-35).

⁸⁶ Or an individual granted an *encomienda*.

⁸⁷ *Peninsulares* were Spaniards living in the American colonies.

⁸⁸ *Criollos* or creoles refer to Spaniards' descendants born in America.

privileges supposedly based on direct descent from the original conquerors (Wortman, 1982: 65). A position in the councils remained a symbol of power, of authority embedded in tradition; a position to be transferred from generation to generation (Wortman, 1982: 65-66). As the composition of society continuously shifted, it was necessary to accommodate other classes. Eventually, newcomers were reluctantly incorporated into the councils. Spanish merchants and other government officials obtained their share of power in the councils through marriage alliances with elite members (Wortman, 1982: 66). Established landed elites co-opted the rising merchant-business elements into their own networks and also became involved in those activities themselves, thus converging the older and the newer basis of wealth and power (Wiarda, 1973: 213).

This institutional evolution signals the emergence of the networks that were to be so influential for modern Central American society. As elites grew and diversified their power became fragmented. And yet, kinship and family ties provided a structure in which different sources of power could be exchanged. Members in possession of economic power could support those with political power. When political power thought it necessary to reinforce the ideological foundation of the social structure, they could resort to members of the network who possessed the authority to build such a foundation; for example, members of the church hierarchy or academics. Networks, thus, provided the Central American elites with an accumulation mechanism that has resulted in normative power: the capacity to set norms and rules that lead to a particular social reality. Over the years, this exchange system has sustained elite power and the social structure necessary to articulate that power.

There are two trends that point to elite persistence in the region (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006: 57). First, we find the endurance of the economic system. Despite changes in the political structure (e.g. democratisation) the underlying economic structure persists.⁸⁹ This in turn reinforces the position of the region's elites in the economic system. The second trend is elite identity. Although changes occur in the latter through the incorporation of new elite members, newcomers adopt the policies and practices of their predecessors resulting in the sustainability of the socio-political and economic structures (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006: 57). Family and kinship networks facilitate continuity of elite identity. Networks are interconnected through five dimensions: marriage alliances; business alliances; geographical proximity and socio-racial matters; membership of political, religious, and socio-cultural associations; and the "making" (*formación*) of their own "organic intellectuals" who provide the ideational structure to rationalise and sustain the power of the elites (Casaus, 1994: 41-43). Hence, at the core of the region's socio-economic structure and political institutions are prominent families; and their networks lead the region to a feeble or inchoate demarcation of the public and the private (Vilas, 1992: 309-310).

The reciprocal exchange of resources within those networks led to profound socio-political and economic outcomes (Lomnitz and Perez-Lizaur, 1984: 183 and 192).⁹⁰ The system became conducive to patron-client relations because it allowed individuals from all levels of the social hierarchy to enter the networks and exchange goods, services, and support on a person-to-person basis

⁸⁹ For example, the Labour market's organisation around "repressed" wages, that is, below competitive levels (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006: 4-5).

⁹⁰ The family and kinship phenomenon is not exclusive to elite groups. It also takes place in other levels of society. See Carlos and Sellers (1972), and Lomnitz and Perez-Lizaur (1984).

(Blank, 1974: 260-261). Powerful individuals situated on the upper levels of the hierarchy provided tangible (e.g. economic) and intangible (e.g. political favours) resources to others thus accentuating the hierarchical nature of the region's structure. That hierarchical nature allowed a relatively small group of individuals to concentrate status, wealth and power.⁹¹ The system thus became self-fulfilling.

Continuity of the network structure does not mean that elites lack dynamism. On the contrary, the network structure changes constantly as elite members circulate continually. Alliances provide dynamism and allow these networks to absorb and attract new members. Economic and political trends may affect the power of networks, but the assimilation and accommodation mechanisms enable these networks to accommodate disruptions. Charismatic political actors could be incorporated into the networks and at times of crisis those actors were able to gain political power providing networks with continuance. Currently, professional individuals, for example in the case of commerce and finance, who bring in technological knowledge are integrated⁹² and provide innovation that reinforces family businesses by generating new dynamics (e.g. multinational business). Hence, networks remain resistant to change because they are capable of assimilating newcomers who bring resources that in the long run sustain, and to an extent, provide justification for, the existence of the system. New members may be innovative and generate new dynamics that sustain a particular core of elites; but they are nevertheless components of networks. It is analytically inefficient to just divide Central American elites into neatly functional elites because this leads the analysis to overlook a constituting force of the region's socio-political structure. This is not

⁹¹ See Blank (1974) for a discussion on such exchange.

⁹² On this trend see e.g. Paige (1997).

to argue that there is not a division of labour among elites: it is evident that there are elites that dominate different aspects of social life. It is to argue that the region is dominated by a social structure in which elites converge in networks that in turn enable them to accumulate normative power. It is thus important, for example, to incorporate business groups into the analysis—not as functional rent-seeking pressure groups, but rather as factions of networks which exercise a degree of normative power in their societies.

In the past, networks facilitated the structuring of the economy and the powerful associations dominant in formal institutions were made up of business families linked through marriages and business alliances (Walker, 1986: 18). Family networks provided businesses with a continuous resource pool of loyal labour which during critical times (e.g. economic crisis) rendered the system stable through continuity (Carlos and Sellers, 1972: 97). They served as an interface between the social and the economic, and ultimately, the political. Family networks were subsequently transformed into a nucleus of powerful business blocs through alliances. As these business blocs expanded, the family network acquired shares in almost all dimensions of the economy: financial, commercial, agro-exports, and industrial sectors. Business blocs thus developed into a “family-centered version of a multinational corporation” (Brown, 1997: 102). Business groups embedded in family networks accumulated political and, of course, economic power becoming what an observer calls “hegemonic business blocs” (ECA, 2002: 595).⁹³

⁹³ El Salvador offers the opportunity to easily observe this phenomenon. For example, Paniagua (2002), studies in detail 23 family groups in El Salvador. He demonstrates that family networks are the foundation of the business blocs that control the country’s financial system and have a considerable presence in other sectors. See appendix II for a “map” of the complex interconnectedness of that country’s family networks.

Business, commerce and industrial chambers, in the process, became important mechanisms in the influencing of state decisions because in many instances they functioned as semi-governmental institutions commissioned by the state to research and review economic policies (Miller, 1999: 14-15). Interest associations provided a channel to access power holders and thus became a link between private interests and the state, remaining so to the present day (Miller, 1999: 15).

Within the networks, therefore, the predictions of modernisation failed as the different elite factions converged. Conceptualisations of elites as fragmented groups, then, distort our ability to observe their linkages and lead us to conclude that elites coexist functionally rather than to detect the interconnectedness among the different factions. Networks, for instance, enable political actors to interact with members of the business elites in an intimate setting weakening the divide between the public and the private. Such interactions allow for the existence of elites with access to strategic policy-making, elites who possess the power to construct consent to support those policies and in the long run to perpetuate the system. It is at this juncture that the state is enmeshed in normative networks.

Elite Networks and the State

There is data that suggests the intertwining of networks and the state. In Guatemala, a network based on family and kinship relations control the means of production including land, labour, and commercial, financial and industrial institutions (Dosal, 1995: 3). During the 1980s, eighteen notable Guatemalan families were linked through 155 intermarriages and in the 1995 presidential elections, four candidates were direct descendents of those traditional families

(Vilas, 1996: 475).⁹⁴ In Nicaragua, even within the revolutionary Sandinista regime, offspring of “traditional, conservative families” abounded (Vilas, 1996: 475). In El Salvador, a group of prominent families has created a “hegemonic block” (Paniagua, 2002; see appendix II).

The interconnectedness of that network and the Salvadoran state is observable through an influential “non-partisan” policy-research organisation, FUSADES.⁹⁵ Among its founders are former Salvadoran presidents, Alfredo Cristiani, Armando Calderon Sol, and Antonio Saca (see FUSADES, 2003); all members of the same political party (ARENA) and of powerful business groups. FUSADES’ founding members also include former high ranking government officials (for example, Elias Bahaia of the Saca administration), who are also important business leaders. In addition, one can note the inclusion in FUSADES’ founders of Miguel Ángel Simán Dada, a director of the Central American Bank of Economic Integration. Interestingly, another director of the Bank’s board is a member of an important Guatemalan family (this will be discussed subsequently), Alfredo Skinner-Klée. It is also interesting to note that FUSADES’ founding members’ list could reasonably be perceived as a “family oriented” social club comprised largely of several members of several families. (See appendix III which presents a partial list of FUSADES founding members).⁹⁶ The power of such a network to develop and advance implementation or to obstruct and prevent state policies cannot and should not be ignored.

⁹⁴ Dosal (1995: 4) notes that some families have declined but others “notably the Castillo and De León, have maintained their status since conquistadores Bernal Díaz del Castillo and Juan De León Cardona” arrived in Guatemala.

⁹⁵ Fundación Salvadoreña Para el Desarrollo Económico y Social (Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development).

⁹⁶ The complete list of founding members is available at: www.fusades.com.sv.

Family networks, in addition, have produced in some instances a type of political dynasty. Such is the case in Costa Rica and in its relations to other countries of Central America. Costa Rica is considered an exceptional democratic case in Latin America. Intuitively, one is hesitant about the applicability of the “enmeshed” state argument to this particular country. Yet, certain historical trends suggest that Costa Rica is no exception: networks have been closely intertwined with the state.⁹⁷ Such interconnectedness not only occurs within the country but also with other networks throughout Central America. Here it is worthwhile to quote at length from Stone’s (1990) groundbreaking study:

“A Costa Rican social class formed by conquistadors and their descendants has provided most of the important office holders there since the conquest. One conquistador, Cristobal de Alfaro, is forefather of all the presidents (with a single exception) since Independence... His family tree frequently crosses with that of another conquistador, Juan Vasquez de Coronado, who has generated over half the presidents and over a quarter of the members of congress, and was married to a cousin of Pedro Arias de Avila (Pedrarias), conquistador and governor of Panama. Vasquez’s family tree crosses with that of Jorge de Alvarado, conquistador of El Salvador and Guatemala, who is forefather of a tenth of the members of congress (some one hundred forty) in Costa Rica and was a brother of Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador of Guatemala” (Stone, 1990: 6-7).

According to Stone, in Central America many of its presidents are the direct descendants of the noble colonial families; many rulers were, and remain, related to other presidents of the region (Stone, 1990: 3).⁹⁸

The Arenales/Skinner-Klée family of Guatemala is also illustrative of a network intertwined with the state. Two of its members, Alfredo Skinner-Klée and Alejandro Arenales Farner, are (or have been) directors of the board of leading corporations and of the board of the Guatemalan Chamber of Commerce.

⁹⁷ See also Vilas (1996) for a discussion on the Figueres and Calderon families.

⁹⁸ See figure in appendix IV for an example of such complex interconnected networks.

Alfredo Skinner-Klée is a former member of PARLACEN and is also, at the time of writing, the General Secretary of the Reform Movement party. Jorge Skinner-Klée and Alejandro Arenales Catalan are both former members of the Guatemalan Congress. Jorge is also a former Minister of Foreign Affairs. Jorge Skinner-Klée Arenales is a former Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations, and former International Counsel and Alternate Delegate for the National Coffee Association of Guatemala. Pablo Arenales Farner has served in several consular positions. Four members of this family have been representatives to the United Nations including one former President of the Guatemalan Delegation and another Permanent Representative. Also, other members of the Arenales and Skinner-Klée law firm are (or have been) legal advisers to Guatemalan governments on several issues.⁹⁹ The profiles of the main members of the Arenales/Skinner-Klée family are presented in appendix V.

The interconnection of the state and networks, in addition, is thoroughly exemplified by the relation of regional business associations and the Central American presidents. It is intriguing that six of the region's presidents elected in the last ten years have been high ranking members of RBOs before being elected presidents of their respective countries. They are also members of powerful networks. For instance, I noted previously that former President Saca of El Salvador is linked to FUSADES—a policy influential institution that groups several family networks. Also, former President Flores Facussé of Honduras is a member of an important family network that combines ownership in the industrial sector and the media; other members of his family also hold important

⁹⁹ See <http://www.arenales.com.gt>.

government positions.¹⁰⁰ Table 2.1 presents the list of Central American presidents with links to RBOs.¹⁰¹

Table 2.1. Central American Presidents with Links to Regional Business Associations, 1997-2009

President	Year	Country	RBO Link	Source
Álvaro Colom Caballeros	2008-	Guatemala	Director of Agexpront and member of the board of the Chamber of Industry both associated to CACIF (FEDEPRICAP)	http://www.guatemala.gob.gt/biografia-presidente.php
Elías Antonio Saca	2004-2009	El Salvador	President of ANEP (National Association of Private Enterprises, affiliated to FEDEPRICAP) and FEDEPRICAP	http://www.casapres.gob.sv/presidente/index.htm
Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales	2006-	Honduras	Member of the board of COHEP (Honduran Council of Private Enterprise, affiliated to FEDEPRICAP)	http://www.presidencia.gob.hn/frmHtml.aspx?urlID=Biografia.htm
Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé	1998-2002	Honduras	National Association of Industrialists (affiliated to FECAICA) and COHEP (affiliated to FEDEPRICAP)	http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacion/biografias_lideres_politicos
Enrique José Bolaños Geyer	2002-2007	Nicaragua	Director and President of COSEP (Council of Private Enterprises affiliated to FEDEPRICAP) and President of FEDEPRICAP	http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacion/biografias_lideres_politicos
Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo	1997-2002	Nicaragua	Board member of COSEP (affiliated to FEDEPRICAP)	http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacion/biografias_lideres_politicos

As we have observed, businesses are equally embedded in the family and kinship networks in which the state seems to be enmeshed. Nevertheless, business groups are continuously seen functionally as another corporate group dependent on the state even by those observers who argue for a culturalist approach to the state.¹⁰² Other analyses of business-state relations deny cultural

¹⁰⁰ Marcia Facussé de Villeda, at the time of writing, is Alternate Second Vice President of the Honduran National Congress. See http://www.centralamericaleadership.net/en/marcia_facusse_de_villeda

¹⁰¹ Possibly, other former Central American presidents have links to RBOs but the available evidence is not clear; see fn. 23 for a list of those presidents.

¹⁰² Wiarda (2001: 324), for example, indicates that the private sector “continues to defer to the state... usually unwilling to challenge the state, lobby it, least of all take it on... The state

continuities and neglect the persistence of family and kinship networks. Corporatism is conceived of as enabling the state to exercise control over capital thereby obtaining greater autonomy (Bensabat Kleinberg, 1999). Such an approach to the nature of business groups circumscribes their embeddedness in larger powerful networks and thus inaccurately limits their power to their functional sector.¹⁰³

These analyses do not contemplate the possibility that the private sector performs an important role in the formation of technocrats—consider essential components of the state models they propose—and thus overlook an important link between the state and the private sector. Though difficult to assess empirically,¹⁰⁴ it could be the case that the business elite directly or indirectly funds the studies of technocrats and by doing so, locks them into its networks. For example, the most important Central American family business groups¹⁰⁵ provide funding for the professionalisation (e.g. at MBA level) of their executives (Fonseca, 2005). In some cases these executives go on to become members of governments or technocratic elites. In structuring our attention away from such tendencies, we overlook the remarkable endurance of the Central American elites and the influence they may exercise over the state. State models that neglect or simply assume as “constraining relations” the interconnectedness between state and elite networks are unhelpful in advancing our understanding of Central American political processes.

remains a godfather, patrimonialist, a dispenser of favors (gifts) and patronage, a paternalistic figure.”

¹⁰³ For an approach that conceives of the business elites’ nature and roles in a strictly functional (economic) manner within regional integration, see e.g. Fischer (1999).

¹⁰⁴ Though, perhaps we could assess it by researching the sources of funding that, institutions such as El Salvador’s CONACYT (National Council of Science and Technology) uses to fund students and where students are reincorporated into the country’s labour force upon finalising their studies.

¹⁰⁵ El Salvador’s Grupo Roble (Poma family) and Taca; Guatemala’s Grupo Paiz (Paiz family); Nicaragua’s Grupo Pellas (Pellas family); and Honduras’ Tiendas Carrión (Carrión family).

To be clear, I do not purport that family and kinship networks give unity to the elites or lead to a single elite. Rather, I argue that networks give the elites a recruitment pool and socialisation mechanisms through which they reach a degree of cohesiveness. Elite cohesiveness is reached through shared understandings about what constitutes legitimate public discussion, for example. Specifically, socialisation through networks determines the elite's attitudes towards the rest of society (Martin, 1977: 147-148). Autonomous members constitute those networks; they are interdependent and they may have different, but mutually contingent interests. In this sense, there are several parallel networks that may compete normatively: a particular network may contest norms supported by another. Yet, if need be, as I will argue in the next chapter, they can present a harmonised position. Ultimately, networks provide a space to converge and exchange power sources leading to the accumulation of normative power.

Within such weak or inchoate separation of the public and private dimensions, the state seems to be enmeshed. However, it has not been recently privatised as others argue: the state by design was embedded in a network of families and kinship that throughout the years has been flexible enough to absorb disruptions and changes, and hence to perpetuate itself. Such a position may parallel that of the "radical" view of networks; i.e. "embedded networks" (Haggard, Maxfield, and Schneider, 1997: 54-55). In that view, networks are considered a type of "primal social fabric" which embeds social, economic and political interplay. There is a valid criticism of such a view. Arguably, a shortcoming of this embedded networks conceptualisation is that it neglects the state which is considered not to participate in the establishment of networks and on the contrary, considers that governments are inserted into networks. As a

critic of the “embedded networks” proposition, Evans (1997) argues that it is crucial to bring back the state through the concept of “embedded autonomy:” the state possesses first, the “corporate coherence” required to achieve and pursue collective goals; and second, “dense ties” with the private sector and thus can develop joint public-private projects seeking “economic transformation” (Evans, 1997: 66). If these two conditions are not met then there is a latent risk that the embeddedness of the state could lead to a “super-cartel” designed to protect the interests of its members (Evans, 1995: 58; quoted in Haggard et al., 1997).

Such a strong objection may apply to my argument; however, I could highlight three points in its defence. First, I have attempted “intentionally” to keep the state in but at the same time to bring back in those family networks that had hitherto been theoretically excluded from the Central American analysis. My position is that the state, through the role of political elites, actively participates in the formation and functioning of networks. Second, Evans’ point of departure is precisely the assumption I have striven to critique: the implicit modernising content of the analysis of the state. Evans (1997: 63) argues that “Any analysis of government-business collaboration must be grounded in a vision of economic transformation.” Evans, thus, must assume the premises on which that transformation (i.e. modernisation) is based. A final point in defence of my argument: the political and socio-economic structures are co-constitutive of the cultural. The political regime conditions, moulds and reproduces the cultural foundations that underpin it (Vilas, 1996: 462). At the same time, however, cultural patterns and the socioeconomic structure continuously shape their political counterpart. Thus, their resilience¹⁰⁶ and flexibility must be

¹⁰⁶ On the Latin American structure resistance to change, Worcester (1964) is illuminating.

acknowledged and incorporated into our analysis of the region. Simply bracketing out cultural continuities impairs our understanding of Central American political processes.¹⁰⁷

It is not my intention to contend, however, that the state is merely an elite instrument. The state enjoys a degree of relative autonomy in certain policy issues. And yet, the state is a social construct that reflects the social interactions from which it emerges: how can we account for instances in which, as we have seen, the president of a country is a member of the private sector and a leading figure in business associations? What about instances in which the director of the Chamber of Commerce becomes a government minister? Are individuals brought into the government because they are members of those networks? How can we determine on which side of the dense ties advocated by Evans (1997) those individuals stand?

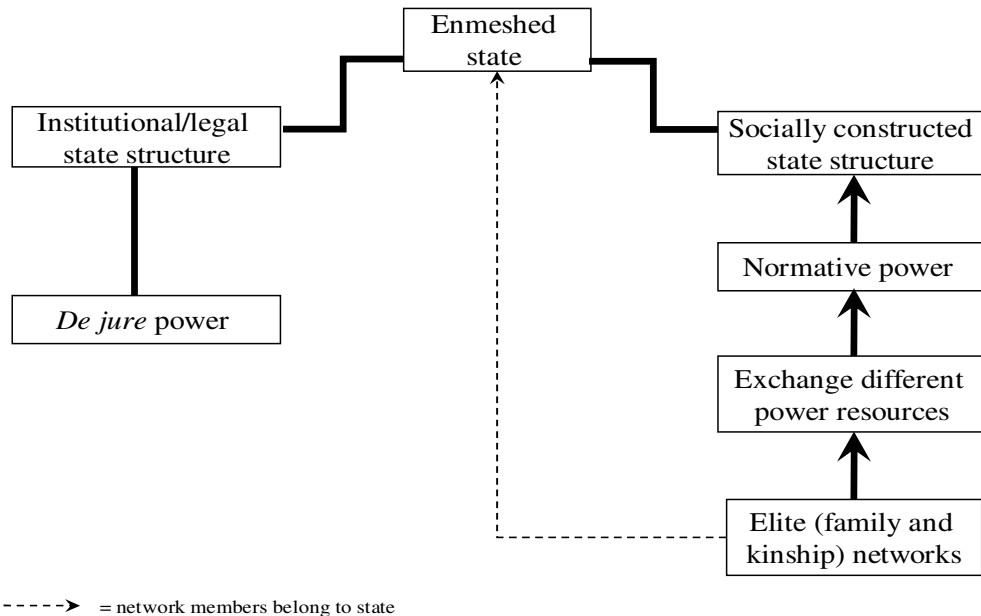
By incorporating cultural continuities, we have observed in this section that the Central American state and state politics are constantly intertwined with family networks. This process results in a state enmeshed in a web of relations

¹⁰⁷ Teichman's (2001) work on market reform in Chile, Argentina and Mexico goes against such a trend by incorporating "historical realities" into the study of Latin American political processes; particularly the "Iberian strain" of the region's "heritage" (Teichman, 2001: 200). Teichman (2001: 16) conceives of a Latin American state "heavily penetrated" and "punctured" by what she labels "policy networks." Those networks are "conduits of policy influence" and are based on "personalistic relationships" among "international and domestic actors" (Teichman, 2001: 16). In this policy networks concept, in the same manner that Haas and Nye have conceived the regional integration mechanisms, technocrats are at the core. Technocrats often possess "specialized academic training and bureaucratic career paths" and employ "mechanisms of political control" based on "hierarchy, rigidity, personalism, discretionality, and, sometimes, clientelism" (Teichman, 2001: 15). Technocrats build "narrow domestic personalistic support" based on "trust and personal loyalty with other technocrats of similar mind-set" and also "cultivate close personal ties with powerful members of the private sector" (Teichman, 2001: 15). Personalism allows for the organisation and concentration of power (Teichman, 2001: 201). Yet, Teichman falls short of incorporating the notion of family and kinship networks. Perhaps, this inclination is because her analysis is underlined by a "Weberian" conceptualisation of the state and private sector relations anchored on a political-bureaucratic-technocratic elite fully dependent on political elites for appointments within the corporatist state structure in which that elite interplays with other societal groups (e.g. business and labour) (Teichman, 2001: 20). This position effectively leads the analysis towards the conceptions of the state that I have striven to question. See also Teichman (2004).

among normative elite groups who ultimately greatly influence state policies.

Figure 2.1 depicts the enmeshed state.

Figure 2.1. The Enmeshed Central American State



This argument implies that state enmeshment occurs in a two dimensional space. The first dimension is (for lack of a better label) “physical;” that is the interconnectedness between the state and family networks assessed in this section. The second dimension is normative and implies the exercise of the normative elites’ power through the socially constructed state structure. It is to the discussion of that normative dimension that I now turn.

Political Culture and Normative Elites

The resilience and persistence of family and kinship networks in Central America can be approached by using the conceptual differentiation between social structure and social organisation. The structure gives social life its

continuity while social organisation implies fluctuations and social change which enable individuals to pursue and achieve goals (Smith, 1984: 7).¹⁰⁸ Structures are resistant and provide continuity to social arrangements.¹⁰⁹ Changes to the structure are possible; individuals may attempt to modify the structure in order to advance their interests. Yet, structural changes occur at a somewhat slower pace than alterations to their organisational counterparts. Social changes at both levels—structural and organisational—require shifts in different normative beliefs (discussed subsequently). While organisational changes in the Central American networks may imply shifts in behavioural standards (ranking norms), structural changes require shifts in the “stiffer” membership norms which imply the incorporation of new members into highly resistant elites.¹¹⁰

From such “stiff” structure emerges a Central American political culture that carries, and provides the grounds for the sustainability of continuities; for example, the role of family and kinship networks in political processes. I understand political culture as first, the system of rules, norms, values and practices that condition and arrange how politics take place and how power is exercised, and second, as the particular forms of historical interactions between the state and the social realm (Hedetoft, 2003: 38). Such political culture is then ingrained in the social structure of the region, and is thus hierarchical and pluralistically limited, at best. It is a dynamic space in which constant social interactions renegotiate the rules, norms, values and practices that constitute the

¹⁰⁸ See also Firth (1951).

¹⁰⁹ On the “stickiness” of structures see Aspinwall and Schneider (2001).

¹¹⁰ An argument could be advanced here as to the “stickiness” of the social structure: in the post-War World II period, changes in the membership norms of some of the Central American elites “required” social conflicts. For example, the civil wars experienced in some of the region’s countries (e.g. Nicaragua) led to the incorporation of new members into the ranks of the normative elites. At the same time, however, the issues that led to the conflict (e.g. social and economic inequality) remarkably went barely addressed.

culture. On the one hand, rules provide the link between the state structure and individuals and include (but not exclusively) legal rules (Onuf, 1998: 59). Rules give texture to social structures as they connect the material and ideational elements that constitute those structures (Burch, 2002). On the other hand, norms are shared principles that set standards of behaviour and hence provide order to the system by coordinating social actions (Green, 2002: 6). When norms become institutionalised they provide the bases for rules. This does not mean norms are static; they are, in contrast, constantly elaborated (Rosamond, 2001: 202). Norms are constitutive of the social system, and in them, culture is set (Smith, 1984: 13). Embedded in this political culture is a narrower “state culture” composed of the informal interactions implicated in the policy and decision making processes, and which allows for the deployment of “subjective resources” that “neutralize, impact upon or transcend ‘rational authority’” (Hedetoft, 2003: 53).

The enmeshment of the Central American state could be seen, thus, as normatively oriented through its socially constructed structure and made possible by the political culture of the region. In this ongoing social construction, there are groups that have greater discursive power than others. Such normative elites possess the ability to construct the three types of normative beliefs.¹¹¹ First, they are able to set “ranking norms” or those norms that establish standards by which an individual or groups are perceived. Second, normative elites fix “membership norms” or norms that define standards for including or accepting individuals to a social group or position. The elites have the ability to restrict their ranks’ membership and are also flexible as regards incorporating new members into their networks through a variety of mechanisms. Third, Central American

¹¹¹ This typology of norms was developed by Cancian (1975) in her ground-breaking study of a Mayan community.

normative elites are able to set “reality assumptions” or accepted understandings of reality. These are assumptions that constitute reality and delimit alternative actions or realities (Cancian, 1975: fn. 2 in page 3). These levels of normative beliefs interplay constantly thereby imparting texture to the construction of social reality. Political patronage and controlled party systems, for example, have become part of the region’s assumed reality. Thus, it is expected that democracy in the region is less democratic than elsewhere. Yet, democracy has become a ranking norm through which those upholding it are prized. Democracy has a mere “symbolic” value as a “currency” that increases the political capital of those who claim to abide by it (O’Donnell, 2007: 6). Of course, access to that capital (i.e. membership in the elite) is highly restricted.

The ability to construct norms in such a manner is a reflection of normative power. Normative power is a broader type of social power.¹¹² I understand power to be social as it is implicated in human interactions. Normative power subsumes the different sources of social power:¹¹³ material, political and ideological.¹¹⁴ Normative power imbues its holders with the ability to set the norms and rules that guide the constitution of social structures. It sets the core of a particular social reality by establishing the elements of meaning-making and thus defines what is “true” or “real” and what is not. Normative power thus moulds and conditions reality by establishing parameters as to what is

¹¹² On social power see Mann (1992) and Poggi (2001).

¹¹³ For Poggi (2001: 18-19) material power is expressed through exchanges: what an individual obtains is determined by what that individual has or can do for others; political power consists in the ability to determine access to society’s good; ideological power is that which is articulated on the basis of culturally defined understanding of what characteristics and social position an individual needs in order to be rewarded in a specific manner.

¹¹⁴ Poggi (2001) also refers to ideological power as normative power. I have chosen to include the term ideological power in reference to Poggi’s work in order to differentiate it from my notion of normative power. The latter notion implies the possession of (and ability to exchange one type for another) the three types of social power elaborated by Poggi and Mann (1992), and thus encompasses ideological power.

achievable and desirable for a particular society. It allows its holders to develop, through ideational mediums or those ideas that are readily adopted by others, a given set of assumptions about reality projecting a particular reality as general. The hierarchical structure of the Central American society, for example, is generally considered as inevitable and natural, rather than as a historically and socially produced structure that sustains a particular way of societal organisation.

As we have seen, there are data that point to the current existence of family and kinship networks in Central America. Those networks give the elites first, monopoly over status and prestige (i.e. ideological resources); second, the ability to enter alliances that become powerful economic mechanisms (i.e. material resources); and third, direct access to state policy making (i.e. political resources). Considering such factors, it seems fitting to talk about normative elites in the region's context. This notion of normative elites implies that those elites accumulate synergistically through their convergence in networks, the different sources of social power. Through the possession of ideational mediums normative elites can convert material resources into ideological power, or ideological power into political power. Moreover, normative elites employ their power to become norm "entrepreneurs" engaging in the construction of social reality through the elaboration of reality assumptions whereby the existing social arrangements are maintained. In this process, networks function as "organisational platforms" wherein norms are rendered legitimate and prominent.¹¹⁵ Normative elites empower particular norms (i.e. they become

¹¹⁵ On the concept of norm entrepreneur, organisational platform and the importance of norm's legitimation and prominence, see Finnemore and Sikkink (1998).

elements of debate) eventually being instrumental in those norms gaining acceptance or salience throughout society.¹¹⁶

Networks, however, provide the elites with a cognitive dimension well beyond the mere organisational platform: an intersubjective framework (e.g. common meanings and understandings) through which they construct their reality attaining therein a degree of cohesion. Hence, such frameworks play a fundamental role not only in the accumulation and exercise of normative power but also in rendering elite networks sustainable. Normative power, in turn, enables the elites to articulate and project their reality as a guiding framework for the reality of society. The power of the elites, thus, is normative because it not only produces behavioural changes in society but also subjective shifts which ultimately result in social outcomes through the production of the norms and rules which frame what is socio-politically possible.

Normative elites can maintain or change the direction of a given policy; they can set, influence or obstruct the public debate agenda. In the process, the state enmeshment takes place normatively. In the case of regional integration, for example, normative elites can generate social heterogeneity through the construction of particular discourses despite the well documented presence of integrative elements (e.g. common culture and language). Conversely, they can generate a degree of willingness to support aspects of regional integration thus facilitating the socialisation of the process.

Perhaps, over the years the strategy to empower norms has changed. In the past, it was “effective” to incorporate the dominant military elements into family and kinship networks through marriages or business partnerships and in

¹¹⁶ On norm empowerment see Checkel (1999b); and on norm salience see Cortell and Davis (2000).

the process advance or protect norms and principles that would perpetuate the socio-political structure. Currently, normative elites may establish and fund policy research centres (such as FUSADES in El Salvador) that empower the norms and principles they favour.¹¹⁷ Conversely, they can obstruct norms from gaining salience by redirecting public debate. Normative elites may fund scholarship schemes that select students based on their proposed studies, or their intention to attend particular universities that are ideologically compatible with the elites concerned. Perhaps, normative elites are able to influence such institutions by inserting in their administrative echelons members of their networks.

Conclusion

This chapter has revisited the state in order to bring back the role of social elites into the study of integration in Central America. The region's elites converge around networks based on family and kinship. Networks enable the elites to accumulate and exchange different sources of power transforming them into normative elites. The latter exercise their power through the socially constructed dimension of the state, and in this manner enmesh the state in a web of interactions that occurs within the elite networks. The chapter thus incorporates the cultural continuities essential for the understanding of the region. It does not propose that Central America is frozen in time or that the region is backward and non-modern. Rather than bracketing out or assuming away those networks because their resilience and persistence are inconsistent with conventional

¹¹⁷ As we will see in chapter five, FUSADES played a normative role in the reactivation of the regional integration process of Central America through the development of a highly influential integrative model (FUSADES, 1986) which was echoed by other regional institutions.

(modern) paradigms, this chapter theorises the evolution of the networks and their power. And in so doing, it elaborates a conception of Central American elites that allows for their incorporation into “modern” analyses. The elites’ traditional oligarchic predispositions seem to have been replaced by “enlightened” tendencies wherein they exercise their power not as absolute force but as normative elaboration. While “modernity” may have brought to the forefront a specific segment of the elite (i.e. the business elite), networks allow other segments of the elite to retain power.

The chapter thus builds the first part of the “Central Americanised” regional integration model: the interactions between the state and normative elite networks and the enmeshment of the former within the latter. The second part of the model consists of the normative mechanisms wherein those interactions take place, and where elites exercise and articulate their normative power. The next chapter undertakes the theorisation of those components.

Chapter 3. Normative Structure and the Emergence of Social Will: A Central Americanised Model of Regional Integration

Introduction

The tendency for an a-theoretical and non-elites scope in the study of Central American integration leads to a limited conceptual toolkit incapable of completely incorporating into the analysis the region's cultural continuities we observed in the previous chapter. Current frameworks, in addition, cannot apprehend the mediums that enable elite networks to engage in the normative construction of the region. To overcome these limitations, this chapter further elaborates that toolkit by developing the second part of the Central Americanised integration model. At the core of the model are the normative channels employed by elite networks in the exercise of their power; namely, the mechanisms of norm socialisation and diffusion. These mechanisms enable normative elites to disseminate their understanding of "reality" and ultimately embed that understanding in the general ideational structure. For such construction, social will as the articulation of the power of normative elites, is essential. The aim of this chapter is to set forth the steps through which elite interactions construct regionalism in order to derive a more comprehensive model of the process.

With this objective, in the first section, I focus on regional integration as a political process wherein norms are socialised and are subsequently embedded in regional policies. I argue that current theoretical models of the normative structure seem inadequate to the study of Central American integration. For this reason, a socialisation model, "ideational drive," and a diffusion mechanism, "circumscribed-statist," are elaborated to obtain greater insights into the nature of

regional integration by allowing for the incorporation of normative networks and their interactions with the state into the analysis. In section two, I develop the concept of social will or the predisposition of normative elites to empower norms that may enable the state to develop policies that could advance integration. Based on the theoretical elaborations of this chapter, in addition to those of the previous chapter, section three presents the Central Americanised model of regional integration. Section four concludes.

Regional Integration and the Elaboration of Norms

Regional integration is a socio-political process. As such, the process defines the region based on a particular set of ideas, values and principles which ultimately are embedded in norms.¹¹⁸ There are in society actors, norm entrepreneurs, who are interested in modifying or contesting current norms (Sunstein, 1997: 36 and 40).¹¹⁹ Generally, studies¹²⁰ consider as norm entrepreneurs those individuals who oppose current or dominant norms, and organise themselves in an attempt to modify or replace those norms; for example, activists. It seems that implicit in this view is a pluralising assumption: changes to the socio-political structure come about from below through the initiatives of, or the exercise of pressure by, civil society, transnational or domestic. Power is thus conceived to be diffused throughout society and the state becomes a reflector of the preferences of the civil society. In this view, normative adjustments take place within a multilevel

¹¹⁸ For an in-depth study of norms see Burch (2002); Green (2002); Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein (1996); and Kratochwil (1989).

¹¹⁹ In this context, norms are “collectively held principles and standards that guide, prohibit, and render actions appropriate and provide order to the system by coordinating social actions” (Green, 2002: 6).

¹²⁰ See e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink (2001).

governance system in which civil society can contest the established normative structure.

This view of norm entrepreneurs does not accommodate the Central American normative elite networks. The normative power possessed by those networks, implies the capacity of elites to combine material, political and ideological resources in a manner in which they are co-constitutive and mutually reinforcing. Of course, such power could be exercised as force. However, through its intersubjective content, normative power is a capacity for affecting the attitudes and behaviour of other societal groups. It allows elite networks to effectively establish norms and rules as to how regional integration is played out. The position and prestige that normative elites have in the region's society enables them to construct a normative structure that is perceived as reality by the rest of society. They can outright manipulate meanings leading to a particular understanding of the region and thus greatly influence state preferences and ultimately policies. The members of normative networks emphatically do not belong to that organised society that contests the normative structure from below but nevertheless they act as norm entrepreneurs.

In addition, the study of norms, surprisingly, has largely focused on the positive and moral dimensions of normative processes. Scholars favour the analysis of "progressive norms"¹²¹ because they admire certain social structures (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 403-404).¹²² Focusing on the not-so-nice or non-ethical norms leads the analyst directly to the self-interest of social individuals. It

¹²¹ For examples about this tendency see e.g. on human rights the volume by Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999); on apartheid (Klotz, 1995) and on the landmines issues (Price, 1998).

¹²² Finnemore and Sikkink (2001: 403-404) indicate that constructivists have not investigated social constructions such as "xenophobic and violent nationalisms." Finnemore and Sikkink are quick to indicate that there are some studies on the negative outcomes of "well-intentioned social construction projects"; e.g. Barnett and Finnemore (1999). However, they conclude that the "admiration" bias persists.

seems that there is a tendency to think that progressive norms emerge from ethical identities perhaps because the individuals advocating those norms seem not to profit from that support. One could wonder, what can possibly be obtained by advocating human rights? Behaviour supportive of such norms is thus seen as egalitarian, moralistic and ethical; and occasionally, it seems to go against the self-interest of the actors involved. Conversely, advocates of “regressive” norms seem to be motivated by self-interest and thus not by principled ideas. The issue is that self-interest, arguably, leads to relations within the material power structure. In this view, the latter structure seems inadequate to incorporate the independent role of ideas and identity in social processes. A position that acknowledges a predominant role of power groups in the process of social construction, makes the role of ideas less autonomous because it assumes that ideas are fixed in relations of social power (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 398). I differ from this position; I argue that material and ideational power are inextricably embedded in normative power as defined in the previous chapter. I conceive of interests (e.g. material preferences) as endogenous, which within the normative structure constantly interplay with ideas in a mutually constitutive relation. As I will argue subsequently, the ideas held by normative elites and their identity and interests constantly interact leading to normative constructions that articulate the power of the networks. Certain constructions are not necessarily undertaken or supported for material reasons. Normative elites could pursue them in an attempt to incorporate new ideas or redefine existing ones, which in turn affect their identity (e.g. place in society) and inevitably their interests. Power relations among certain groups at the top (i.e. elite networks), thus, can be conceptualised beyond a materialistic perspective.

Focusing on the study of progressive norms, in addition, brackets the fact that there are norms with limited or non-existent moral outcomes, or norms that do not have a direct positive outcome (e.g. regional integration) or may have a direct negative outcome (e.g. violent nationalism). These norms determine social relations, and in some cases, the assumed reality of a given society and may favour and benefit specific societal segments. That is to say, norms can have a functional character and non-ethical objectives, and in some cases may have negative effects on the welfare of some societal groups.¹²³ Such outcomes may be perceived as beneficial for the individuals advancing those particular norms. If individuals' identities so dictate it, however, their actions may originate from the "logic of appropriateness."¹²⁴

I previously noted that the hierarchical structure characteristic of Central American society is conceived of as appropriate and even inevitable. The normative elites' role is entrenched in such a social structure. Their role originates in an invented and largely unquestioned tradition guided by practices that communicate particular values and norms, and reinforce and legitimate the nature of the system.¹²⁵ Through such a social structure normative elites perceive themselves as leaders of their society. Leadership in this context refers to a role of an "educator" who stimulates and promotes changing worldviews, and in so

¹²³ For a discussion of the functionality and non-ethical origins and purposes of norms see Klotz (1995) and on their possible negative effect on human well-being, see Sunstein (1997).

¹²⁴ Which indicates that "actions are fitted to situations by their appropriateness within a conception of identity" (March and Olsen, 1989: 38).

¹²⁵ This entrenchment may be the product of the social structure's origins. Among the latter, there are notions of "obedience to higher authority," and the political authority fashioned after the "paternalistic family model" (Wiarda, 2001: 41). It follows that Central American society is characterised as yielding to the will of "strong men" as individuals "trust [in] authority [is perceived] as the basis for actions and judgement" (i.e. authoritarianism) of those individuals who, in turn, accept or internalise the structure which becomes "natural rather than historical" (Martín-Baró, 1994: 206 and 214). On the notion of invented traditions and the tendency not to question those constructions, see Hobsbawm (1983); and on the transformation of myths into legitimate, natural and inevitable characteristics of social systems, Sidanius and Pratto (2004).

doing, redefines the meanings of society's surroundings (March and Olsen, 1984). Normative elites can influence the knowledge that guides and shapes mass society's understandings of social phenomena and thus they can influence or define society's policy preferences.¹²⁶ This influence, however, does not mean that normative elites consciously engage in manipulative and self-serving behaviour. Rather, normative elites undertake their social role,¹²⁷ or expected behaviour which is legitimised by the region's invented traditions. To reiterate the point, this argument does not privilege rationality, fixed preferences and material power over cognitive interactions. Rather, it proposes that normative power subsumes material power. My argument is not about the instrumental moves of self-conscious elites pursuing their rational preferences; it is about the normativeness of the power of elites. Considering that what we observe in the normative elites' behaviour is their socially expected roles, perhaps their actions are better conceived of as socially appropriate. Nevertheless, to be sure, normative elites may employ their power instrumentally.¹²⁸ They may, for example, advance certain policies because those policies reify their position in society; that is, maintain their role as an essential component for the adequate functioning of society.¹²⁹

Norms are embedded or institutionalised in particular policies: policies articulate institutionalised norms. Policies encompass cognitive spaces in which particular meanings—or those determined by individuals or groups of individuals—prevail. And in this sense, elites with normative power can

¹²⁶ Berger and Luckmann (1966: 33) label these individuals as “merchants of ideas.”

¹²⁷ Social roles are the ways “in which acts conform to or violate expectations associated with [a given] role” (Sunstein, 1997: 46).

¹²⁸ This is not to say that structures are, as Wendt (1996: 50) puts it, “inevitably malleable” because, in occasions “they confront actors as obdurate social facts” that perhaps “cannot be changed in a given historical context.”

¹²⁹ This concept is parallel to what Klotz (1995) refers to as “self-affirmation.”

influence the ideas and knowledge that underpin norms, and thus can advance or delimit certain policies. Those cognitive spaces are the building blocs of the socially constructed structure of the state. Norms must be negotiated and learned. This process takes place through constant interactions among elites. They negotiate ideas and proposals about the optimal way to approach a policy issue. Those ideas and proposals deemed appropriate become norms and rules and, ultimately, are embedded in policies. These building blocs are comprised of two elements. One that serves as a medium for elite negotiation and one that articulates the elites' normative power as preferences or support for a particular policy. Negotiation channels are those of socialisation and mechanisms for the diffusion of norms. The articulation of normative power arises as the elites' ideas, identity and interests converge and are expressed as social will towards a particular policy.

The enmeshment of the Central American state has important consequences for the socialisation process. Regional integration is a social construct elaborated out of shared understandings that lead to a "cognitive region," or one that is comprised of its members and keeps the meaning of the region constrained to a specific space (Adler, 1997a: 254). The process, thus, as constituted by norms must be socialised to gain salience within society:¹³⁰ it must be transmitted throughout society and, via learning, internalised.¹³¹ Norms constrain behaviour and depend on the power distribution that underpins society. Norms need to be empowered or become elements of debate through discursive

¹³⁰ According to Cortell and Davis (2000: 69), norms acquire salience as society develops "a durable set of attitudes toward the norm's legitimacy in the national arena, such that the norm is presumptively 'accepted as a guide to conduct...' when a norm is salient... its invocation by a relevant actor legitimates a particular behavior or action, creating a prima facie obligation, and thereby calling into question or delegitimising alternative choices."

¹³¹ My interpretation of socialisation follows the definition offered by Checkel (1999a: 3).

modifications or shifts (Checkel, 1999b: 87-88). Socialisation, thus, is the switchboard through which regional policies are negotiated.

The Socialisation of Norms

There are three ideal types of the norm socialisation process: “adaptation and strategic bargaining,” “moral consciousness-raising, ‘shaming,’ argumentation, dialogue, and persuasion” and “institutionalization and habitualization” (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 11).¹³² The adaptation type refers to adjustments by governments that breach current norms; readjustments result from domestic and international pressures, and in them, discursive practices are not considered (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 12-13). The second type, argumentation and persuasion, aims at raising moral consciousness (e.g. shaming) in order for political actors to conceive of norms as valid and significant and thus adopt them in their discourses (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 12-13). Finally, institutionalisation refers to the incremental adaptation of norms as a result of external pressures: higher acceptance of norms leads to a higher engagement in dialogue about the implementation of particular norms which, in turn, leads to the institutionalisation of those norms (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 16-17). These processes differ depending on the underpinning logic that determines social interactions, and rather than being fully independent they occur simultaneously (Risse and Sikkink, 1999: 11). These are ideal type models conceptualised within the study of norms as moral and ethical and leading to positive outcomes. And thus they remain within the bias toward progressive norms implicit in current studies.

¹³² Berger and Luckmann (1966: 65-109) also discuss institutionalisation and habitualisation.

The models also imply that socialisation occurs as political elites come under pressure from a multitude of non-state actors such as activists and members of other governments who are able to persuade local state elites as to the moral (or in the case of the adaptation model, the material) value of adopting certain norms. In this position, just as in regional integration and state models, there is an underlying pluralist and corporate logic at work. And hence, the role of Central American normative elites cannot be incorporated in these models because doing so reduces that role to merely one more among a plurality of influential actors, with their power “sectorally” fragmented.

In order to overcome such a conceptual limitation, I propose a model of socialisation, the “ideational drive” (ID). In this model norms may lack moral content; they can have aspects considered retrogressive (e.g. virulent nationalism) or can be relatively neutral which could be perceived as progressive or retrogressive by some actors (e.g. regional integration). Under the ID model, powerful societal elites can be intersubjectively authoritarian and outright determine the adoption and content of a norm, depending on how norms affect them. External pressure, by activists or other governments, may or may not play an influential role in the socialisation process. Norms are incrementally internalised through an ideational “struggle,” not necessarily moral, between political actors and social actors (e.g. normative elites). This struggle takes place within the normative networks. The ID model differs from that of “persuasion” in that the latter implies the need to convince political leaders of the appropriateness of a norm by raising their moral consciousness. Conversely, in the ID model political elites look for the normative elites’ sanction for a particular norm that need not be moralistic. Hence, what we observe is not a

process of moral consciousness raising but a consultation process within a normative power structure; a process that encompasses an ideational struggle wherein political elites attempt to obtain from their normative networks, a degree of empowerment for certain ideas and proposals. Shaming is neither necessary nor effective in this process because in the first instance, norms are not necessarily progressive and thus actors need not be “ashamed” if those norms are not supported or breached; and in the second instance, shaming is potentially a behaviour-conditioning tool in the institutional (formal) structure of the state. The ID model functions within the state’s socially constructed dimension in which the effectiveness of shaming as a persuasion device is reduced because the public embarrassment necessary for shaming is not present. The ID also differs from the “strategic bargaining” model in that the latter is elaborated on the assumption that governments have violated certain norms and that they readjust their behaviour along the lines determined by external pressure. The ID model incorporates a degree of strategic bargaining and behavioural modifications on the part of political elites but these are the result of state enmeshment and negotiations; to emphasise the point, the “struggle” implicated in the ID model occurs within the normative networks that interconnect social and political elites. The ID model and other socialisation models are summarised in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Norm Socialisation Models

	Risse and Sikkink's Ideal Socialisation Models			<i>Ideational Drive</i>
	<i>Adaptation and Strategic Bargaining</i>	<i>Argumentation and Persuasion</i>	<i>Institutionalization and Habitualization</i>	
<i>Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Instrumental adjustments by violating governments * Domestic and international pressures * No considerations of discursive practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Moral consciousness-raising (e.g., shaming) * Need to convince political leaders about norms' appropriateness * Political elites accept norms' validity and significance * Discursive practises important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Gradual norms adaptation * External pressures → higher acceptance of norms * Higher engagement in norm implementation → institutionalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Norms incrementally internalised * Ideational struggle between political and social elites within normative networks * Discursive practices important * Shaming not effective because its potential is realised in the formal state dimension
<i>Norms' nature</i>	* Norms are progressive/moralistic			* Norms need not be moralistic
<i>Underlying social interaction & state structure</i>	* Activist pressure/persuade political elites			* Political elites look for normative elites' sanction of particular norms
	* Occurs in formal state structure			* Occurs in socially constructed state structure

Source: columns one to three adapted from Risse and Sikkink (1999); column four, my elaboration.

In the ID model, norms may originate in ideas and proposals of normative elites or may, conversely, result from initiatives undertaken by political elites which are ultimately empowered by normative elites. The important point is that political elites have relative autonomy from normative elites in certain policy issues. Issues, for example, that affect the social organisation may be openly undertaken by political elites; those that have the potential to impact the social structure are filtered through the ID model channels. In this model, the degree of salience¹³³ that a norm reaches determines if it becomes a reality assumption in the ideational structure of society. In turn, the degree of normative power that the

¹³³ Arguably, this degree of salience could be “measured” qualitatively/discursively by assessing the invocation of a particular norm, by relevant actors, as legitimate behaviour or action.

proponents of a norm possess determines the pace of institutionalisation. Normative elites act not upon the “logic of consequences” but rather on the “logic of appropriateness” as their identity dictates their leading role in society. If new norms somehow protect their material interests, it is incidental.¹³⁴

Within the ideational struggle at the core of the ID model, normative elites can substantially influence the life cycle of norms through groups that compose their networks; for example, in the regional integration process there are particular regional groups (e.g. regional Chambers of Commerce) that are embedded in the region’s normative networks. Groups rooted in those networks express and reflect their members’ ideas, identity and interests, and could develop an agenda based on those intersubjectivities. In the integration process, regional groups may grant the normative elites access to supranational institutions, leverage, policy feedback, and spaces wherein they propose or obstruct regional new norms, or maintain and modify current norms. Regional groups can also be sources of ideas, knowledge and information. In an instance of a deviant state—a state whose normative network is resistant to particular norms—that ignores proposals from normative elites, regional groups could translate their members’ normative power into regional power. By doing so, regional groups could then present as regional certain new norms or a modified set of norms to supranational institutions, granting in that way a degree of

¹³⁴ Consider for example the democratisation of the region. In Central America the end of social unrest was brought about partially by the actions of members of the region’s normative elite (e.g. Presidents Cristiani of El Salvador, President Arzú of Guatemala and President Chamorro of Nicaragua). The resulting socio-political stability greatly benefited the material interests of the elites (e.g. created the conditions for privatisation of national enterprises). And yet, the adoption of the “democratic gospel” was not perceived as an ideological defeat which drastically changed some of the fundamental reality assumptions in that region (e.g. awareness of restrictive dictatorial regimes and tainted electoral processes). Rather, it gave the region’s elite a sense of enlightenment by constructing an identity as leaders of a society on the way to a “higher truth.” My conception of democracy’s role in the ideational structure of the region’s elites builds on Smith’s (1996: 41) argument of the “democratic gospel” which he develops in the context of the US “imperialistic” behaviour towards Latin American.

legitimacy to the elites' proposals. Such a situation, because it jeopardises the credibility of its commitment to regionalism, may persuade deviant states to reconsider the "proposals" of the normative elites. Once norms have been socialised by elites, they are diffused throughout society. The channels of norm diffusion become thus essential for our understanding of the normative elites' role in the elaboration of the normality that surrounds and legitimises regional policies.

Norm Diffusion Mechanisms

Depending on the domestic structure, there are four norm diffusion mechanisms (Checkel, 1999b: 88-90). First, the "liberal" structure in which the political elites are greatly restrained by the pressure exercised by domestic individuals or groups in the policy-making process. Within this configuration, norm-learning by political elites is irrelevant. Second, the "state-above-society" structure in which the state is free from domestic pressures and at the same time possesses a fair degree of control over society. In this arrangement learning on the part of the political elite is required if norms are to be empowered. Third, the "corporatist structure" political elites perform a greater role in achieving norm adjustments or modification than in the liberal mechanism, but they do not impose their preferences on society. This structure is characterised by policy networks linking the state and society. Society is accorded an essential role in the decision making process. Empowerment in the corporatist mechanism functions in a two-step process: first societal pressure, and second, political elite learning. In the final structure, the "statist," learning by political elites is the determinant of the norm diffusion process. Penetration of the state by societal groups and the organisation

of social interests in the statist system, in comparison with the liberal and corporate, are weaker. In the statist arrangement there is no probability that societal pressure will empower norms. Hence, the state is conceived of as autonomous from society.

The liberal and corporatist mechanisms of norm diffusion reflect the pluralist premises that delimit our understanding of Central American integration. Aspects of the statist and state-over-society mechanisms seem to fit the conventional view of Central American regionalism as an intergovernmental process. And yet, those mechanisms conceive of the state as autonomous from the social structure wherein it must act, and from which the state must obtain the power to socialise norms and eventually diffuse them. To underline this point, it is worth assessing how observers conceptualise policy adoption in the region. At the Latin American level, Sikkink (1991) offers a fitting illustration of the statist approach undertaken in the analysis of the region's policy making processes.¹³⁵

Policy makers, in that view, can be entrepreneurs who advance ambitious programmes that may go against their own political survival (Sikkink, 1991: 18). Policy makers and technocrats introduce new ideas, perform a fundamental intermediary role in the interpretation of ideas and in so doing affect the manner in which those ideas are received throughout society (Sikkink, 1991: 253).¹³⁶ What is plausible regarding policies is determined by the manner in which ideas shape the understanding of first, policy makers and second, the general public; when the ideas of top policy makers change, new models (e.g. economic models) are adopted (Sikkink, 1991: 20 and 244). Once ideas—as embedded in norms—

¹³⁵ See also Teichman (2001).

¹³⁶ It is important to note that Sikkink—in much the same manner as neofunctionalism and some new regionalism studies—approaches technocratic elites functionally thereby overlooking their embeddedness in family and kinship networks; that is, the normative elite networks.

are set in policies, the diffusion of the latter experiences a three step process: adoption, implementation and consolidation.

Policy adoption in presidential systems such as those of Latin America depends greatly on the ideas upheld by the president and his closest advisers; however, policy implementation requires those ideas to be embedded in state institutions (Sikkink, 1991: 2). At the same time, policy consolidation depends on a substantial consensus and the fit of new policies with the ideologies of key economic and social groups. Success depends on first, adequate ideological conditions, how new ideas are introduced and the appropriate institutional support (Sikkink, 1991: 21). The second condition for success is the learning (which in turn functions as “the memory of the system”) experience of policy makers and the continuities in institutions and bureaucratic personnel which allows for the embodiment of new ideas in institutions and policies (Sikkink, 1991: 24-25). Personnel continuity in this context refers to the drawing of top policy makers from “the same pool” who rotate in different bureaucratic positions thereby acquiring experience and establishing networks (Sikkink, 1991: 25).

The factors necessary for successful adoption are different from those required by the implementation and consolidation of norms (Sikkink, 1991: 249). Adoption requires the political entrepreneurs’ leadership and actions; implementation in turn requires that the ideas that arise from those actions become embedded in institutions; and consolidation requires that political leaders mobilise public support for policies (Sikkink, 1991: 250-251). At this point the argument leads us to a statist view: in the first instance, political elites learn new norms and then they are diffused throughout society. According to this

framework, social elites are important for the latter stage of policy adoption; that is, for consolidation. And yet, Sikkink (1991: 5-19) indicates that social elites can prevent consensus, they can veto certain alternatives, or rule out policies, which seems to contradict the implicit role assigned to those elites by the model. For the statist perspective, in short, social elites are important *only* for the consolidation stage of the diffusion process. Considering the role that those elite groups play in the region within the constructed dimension of the state, such a view seems inadequate as the importance of normative elites goes beyond (or perhaps comes prior to) the consolidation stage of new norms. Approaching social elites as normative leads the analysis to detect a greater and more determinant elite role in the diffusion process than the statist mechanism enables us to identify. (I will return to this point later).

With this in mind, and returning to the regionalism studies of Central American integration reviewed in chapter one, it seems that those analyses undertaking new regionalism's endogenous perspective (with a multidimensional and multi-participatory view) of the process fit into the liberal or corporatist structures. Similarly, as I indicated in that chapter, neofunctionalist models attempt to find pluralising tendencies in Central America by assigning an equal weight to the role of different societal groups in the process and dividing, thus, elite groups functionally. The pluralist structure that underpins such a multidimensional and multi-participatory system seems deficient because—following the state conception I propose—the assumed autonomy of the state in political processes is limited to social organisational issues. Apparently, therefore, it is implausible that the liberal or corporatist mechanisms of norm diffusion represent Central America's regional integration process. New regionalism's

exogenous perspective attributes to the state a greater role in the process; thus it seemingly corresponds to the statist system. Conversely, the enmeshed state I elaborated in chapter two does not seem to fit too comfortably in this norm diffusion categorisation. The liberal and corporatist structures imply a society in which a multitude of pressure groups (civil society) are highly influential in policy making. On the other hand, the statist and state-above-society structures assume a relatively independent strong state. The statist mechanism rests on the ability of the political elite to act autonomously. In turn, this ability depends, for example, on the capacity to isolate bureaucracies and to recruit potential technocratic elites (Skocpol, 1985: 16). At the Latin American level, arguably, the weakness of political parties and the presidential nature of the systems grant greater space for interpretation and adoption of ideas and norms by policy makers and technocrats (Sikkink, 1991: 253). The state, in this view, is capable of carrying out its goals independently of any control by dominant classes (Sikkink, 1991: 22).

Statist perspectives focus on the formal dimension of the state, and when they highlight the autonomy of the presidents and technocrats (i.e. elites are divided functionally), those perspectives reflect the corporate model of the state. This view, thus, overlooks the interconnectedness of elites within networks and the state's constructed dimension wherein normative elites play an essential role in political processes. Considering the enmeshed nature of the Central American state and the existence of normative networks, the state autonomy assumed by the statist view seems limited. The region's technocratic and economic elites, as we have seen previously, are embedded in networks. It is thus difficult for the state to isolate its bureaucracies and technocratic elites; and moreover separating

the ability to achieve policy goals from the role of normative elites seems difficult as well.

In the context of Central American regionalism, it thus seems more appropriate to talk about a variation of a statist structure; one which I will refer to as “circumscribed-statist.” Within this structure, the state/political elites function as filters of regional norms, not necessarily going through the norm learning process, but searching for approval or support from the normative elites for a given norm (i.e. activating the channels implicated in the ID model of socialisation). This “consultation” process may take the form of contacting think-tanks or other knowledge producing organisations. As noted in the previous chapter, such organisations may be directly linked to or embedded in the normative networks of the region. Hence, those organisations may actively promote norms and ideas that are normatively desirable for members of the networks, and thus, they are not apolitical and much less value-neutral as they engage in the production of knowledge that advances a particular notion of reality. Once normative networks “approve” a particular norm, the latter is empowered, diffused and eventually internalised by the rest of society. This process is characterised by three phases. First, “bandwagoning;” as the cost of supporting the new norms decreases, the number of political actors rejecting previous norms and supporting new ones increases. Second, “cascading” or the instance in which societies experienced rapid developments toward regional new norms. And third, a “tipping point” phase in which institutionalised new norms move the regional process in new directions.¹³⁷ The different norm diffusion

¹³⁷ Sunstein (1997) develops the concepts of norm bandwagoning, cascading and tipping point.

mechanisms and the relationship between the state and society are summarised in table 3.2.

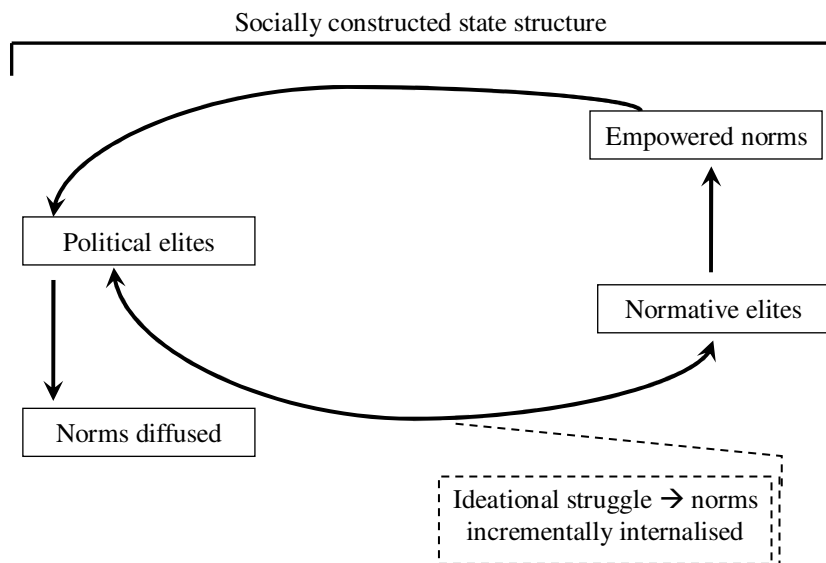
Table 3.2. Norm Diffusion Mechanisms

	Checkel's Original Categorisation				<i>Circumscribed-statist</i>
	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Corporatist</i>	<i>Statist</i>	<i>State-over-Society</i>	
<i>Domestic Mechanisms Empowering Norms</i>	Societal pressure on [political] elites	Societal pressure on [political] elites (primary) [Political] elite learning (secondary)	[Political] elite learning (primary) Societal pressure on [political] elites (secondary)	[Political] elite learning	Political elite filtering Normative elites' approval → norm empowerment
<i>State-Society Links</i>	State constrained by organised society Bottom up → Individuals and groups play central role in policy-making	State less constrained → Plays greater role in the process Society (policy networks) plays important role in policy-making	State controls society Weak societal penetration of the state and weak organisation of social interests	State fully controls society No organised social interests, nor societal state penetration	State delimited by social elites with normative power Great state penetration by normative networks; the rest of society, although could be very well organised, lacks normative power

Source: columns one to four, adapted from Checkel (1999b); column five (or the “circumscribed-statist column), my elaboration.

And the following figure depicts the intersection of the ID model of norm socialisation and the circumscribed-statist mechanism of norm diffusion in the socially constructed state structure.

Figure 3.1. Intersection of the ID Model of Socialisation and Circumscribed-Statist Diffusion Mechanism



This intersection is fittingly illustrated by the reactivation of Central American regionalism in the 1990s. Regional integration in the isthmus declined in the early 1970s. Once it began to appear that its reactivation was necessary, political elites strove to find the normative elites’ approval or support for re-engagement in the regional process. In a revealing document (FEDEPRICAP/FECAICA, 1991), organisations that represent the economic interests of regional normative elites developed the basis for a new model of integration. In its introduction, the document states that the model was elaborated “as per the request of the Ministers in Charge of Integration, to be presented at the Meeting of Ministers and Vice-Ministers in Charge of Integration.” This consultation activated mediums represented by the ID model. Once the new norms (e.g. outward looking economic schemes) implicated in the new model of regional integration had been empowered (i.e. after normative elites had sanctioned the process), they

were diffused through the circumscribed mechanism. At that point, the political elites were able to reactivate regionalism.

This advancement occurred in three phases. After the decline of CACM, the discourse of integration lost importance and to a point became unpopular. By the early 1990s, following a decade of civil unrest, political instability, high inflation rates, and decreasing exports and terms of trade, the need for socio-political stability and market expansion could have lowered the cost of reincorporating integration into the political discourse (i.e. the “bandwagoning” phase) contributing to the reactivation of the regional project encompassing new strategies—such as “open regionalism”—of achieving it (i.e. the “cascading” phase). Subsequently, new norms institutionalised in regional policies led the process into new policy areas (i.e. the “tipping point” phase). For example, one of the early documents concerning the reactivation of integration in the region, the *Declaration of Nicaragua* (SICA, 1993: preamble), goes beyond the economic nature of its predecessor in the process (i.e. CACM) and declares that the Central American states are “one community” with the desire to “achieve political union” which is a “mandate” that originates in the region’s “social and cultural” links. At this point, integrative norms began to cascade as the region experienced a proliferation of regional institutions and agreements designed to support all the community dimensions that the process assumed. A Secretariat for Social Integration was established to guarantee the advancement and fulfilment of resolutions regarding aspects of social and cultural integration (SICA, 1995). In addition, issues that had until that point been generally ignored, appeared in the official discourse. Article three of the *Tegucigalpa Protocol* (SICA, 1991) declares that Central America, through SICA, must strengthen democracy, and

must attempt to institutionalise human rights and to eradicate extreme poverty; and tellingly, SICA must promote economic and social justice.

In short, at the moment that integration was perceived as essential for the region, political elites looked for the predisposition of normative elites to re-initiate the process. An ideational struggle took place regarding the new norms that were socialised and ultimately constituted the regional process in its reactivated form. From the willingness of the normative elites emerged a degree of support for new norms which allowed political elites to lead the integrative process to a tipping point. I label such predisposition social will. It is to the conceptualisation of the latter that I now turn.

Social Will: Ideas, Identity and Interest

The last component of the Central Americanised model of regional integration I propose is social will. We have observed the mechanisms that facilitate interactions among elites which lead to the socialisation and diffusion of norms. The normative power implicated in those interactions is articulated by social will.

Regionalism is a social construction that emerges from interactions among social agents. Interactions spawn meaning systems which lead to collective understandings. From this emerge structural frameworks that constitute—and are in turn constituted by—the actors' conceptualisations of key issues and by doing so affect the agent's preferences. Social constructions are thus elaborated on the meaning that arises following a particular set of interests (Searle, 1996: 19). The impact that each societal group may have in the process differs greatly. In the social construction process, there are individuals and groups of individuals who possess the type of power that delimits the options

available for approaching a particular policy issue; that is, groups I refer to as “normative elites.” From this context, processes such as integration arise and are sustained; regional institutions are socially “induced” and “endorsed.”¹³⁸ Within the integration process, actors define the region discursively exercising their normative power constantly. Elites interact in normative networks through the socialisation and diffusion mechanisms establishing, preserving or modifying norms which eventually affect society’s attitudes and preferences regarding regional integration. When considering the normative power layer within regionalism understood as a social construction, it seems that Central American integration is underpinned by the predisposition of normative elites to support the delegation of political power from the national to the regional. This is not to say that other societal groups cannot articulate their particular conceptualisation of the region. Of course, other groups participate in the region’s construction, but their power to influence norm production and sustainability, and ultimately policy development seems limited.

The above argument implies that for regionalism to advance there must be a degree of willingness among the normative elites. This willingness, or social will, is the predisposition of the normative elites to support (or oppose) and thus empower norms which in turn may enable the state to advance, or impede, the regional integration process. In chapter one, I suggested that a framework that incorporated the intersubjectivities until now under-theorised in the context of Central American integration would overcome the somewhat analytical narrowness of that region’s integration studies. For that purpose, I proposed to use certain intersubjectivities highlighted by neofunctionalist models. Those

¹³⁸ The socially induced and endorsed nature of constructions are proposed by Collin (1997).

models developed concepts such as community sentiment and elite value complementarity that implicitly tapped into the ideas, identity and interests of the elites regarding the integrative process. Neofunctionalist models, however, could not fully explore those concepts because of the limitations their assumed ontology of the process set on the power of social elites. Building on these concepts, I argue that the positive interplay of the ideas, identity and interests of normative elites towards the integrative process leads to an intersubjective congruence: a predisposition to initiate, embrace, sustain or contest integrative impulses. Social will, then, is constituted of three dimensions: ideas, identity and interests.

Ideas

Ideas are the raw material of meaning. Ideas and the context in which they emerge are co-constitutive. Ideas shape the ideological structure of society but in turn that structure limits the range of possible ideas. Through ideas, for example, normative elites can establish meanings that define society's shared identity. A collective identity, conversely, limits whose ideas contribute to the constitution of the structure. The ideational dimension of social will also refers to the shared meanings embedded in the political culture which makes the social order sustainable and constructible, and thus they also possess a transformative capacity as they provide social actors with the means to produce new ways of interacting (Mittelman, 1999: 35). This capability to innovate, for example, enables normative elites to elaborate a particular paradigm to construct Central America as a more or less coherent entity.

Ideas are different from norms in that the latter are “ideas” that have attained a degree of legitimacy in the ideational repertoire of a particular society thus becoming a principle or standard of behavior for that society. Hence, when ideas shift, norms shift. Norms are, in short, entangled with ideas: ideas generate spaces whereby norms are constructed; at the same time, norms condition the spaces from which ideas emerge. Ideas enable individuals to produce a given representation of reality. They shape and define particular practices. In this sense, ideas are also inextricably linked to the emergence of given interests (Laffey and Weldes, 1997: 194-195). Ideational factors also shape the way in which social actors pursue and achieve their interests (Ruggie, 1998: 225). Thus, ideas act directly on material power: they mould and constrain it. Material power derives its aims and ultimately its legitimacy through ideational matters.

Identity

The second dimension of social will is identity which refers to the understanding of one’s role and place in society. Collectively, identity refers to the objectives, aims, and goals of a community and the necessary roles that need to be undertaken by its members in order to achieve them. Identities are social productions that give social actors a sense of belonging to a community or groups of individuals. Hence, they are elaborated on common ethnic background and language, and/or on collective myths, symbols and values. Social identities result in political outcomes: shared beliefs, feelings, values and cultural commonalities may lead the group to imagine that as a community they possess and can rightfully exercise sovereignty over a particular territory (Herrmann and Brewer, 2004: 6-7).

Collective identities as social constructions can be instrumentalised. The individual or group of individuals who determine a particular identity define the characteristics necessary to be encompassed by that identity and its objectives. Identity becomes an essential element in political process because it helps to set agendas through how particular roles conceive of reality. In some instances, those understandings become socially accepted as collective reality (Adler and Crawford, 2006: 15-16). A particular identity thus can condition a given set of interests which are perceived as the common good of society.¹³⁹

Identities have also two interrelated legitimising aspects. First, identities are constructed by dominant social actors in order to maintain and rationalise their control over other actors (Castells, 2004: 8).¹⁴⁰ Second, identities legitimise the parameters set to determine who participates in political processes (Kowert and Legro, 1996: 453). In so doing, identities not only define who is included or excluded from those processes but also the profiles of social actors within those processes: who can act as a dominant actor and who can contest the outcomes of politics, for example. Such profiling leads social actors to modify their identities in order to fulfil the requirements of participating in the making of politics. In the integration process, the prerequisites to conform with the regional identity leads actors to adopt particular behaviours, attitudes and values that may facilitate their transformation into regional actors.¹⁴¹ Identities, in addition, play a fundamental

¹³⁹ On the constitutive role of identity in the production of interests see Risse and Sikkink (1999), and Wendt (1992).

¹⁴⁰ Castells (2004: 8), in addition to a legitimizing dimension, proposes a “resistance identity” which refers to that “generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institution of society.” Also, there is a “project identity” that emerges when “social actors, on the basis of whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society, and by doing so, seek the transformation of the overall social structure.”

¹⁴¹ For a discussion on identity and the construction of the other, see Adler (2002), and Herrmann and Brewer (2004).

role in the perceived existence of regional institutions: the awareness that social actors have regarding the “entitativity” of the region, or the representation of the region’s institutions as real entities in the individual’s mind (Castano, 2004: 43-44). The entitativity of a region functions as mechanism that enables the individuals to perceive regional institutions as capable of action, as security providers, and as links with societies that share past cultural experiences and ethnic identities (Castano, 2004: 54).

Interests

The final dimension of social will is that of interests. Interests are interconnected with ideas and identity. And in this respect they are endogenous: They emerge from and condition ideational matters. Culture, for example, delimits the range of possible and acceptable interests.¹⁴² They are intelligible only as ideational items articulated as material objects but once an actor’s interests are realised interests project values and ideas (Haas, 1990: 2).¹⁴³ As interests evolve, they feed back into the actor’s identity, redefining those values and ideas. Interests, in short, are not fixed in the “objective/material” spaces but are cognitive and continually changing (Rosamond, 2002: 157).¹⁴⁴

An actor’s social role, in addition, affects the development and nature of interests, because they are mediated by that role and the norms that define it (Sunstein, 1997: 37). In the process, a particular set of interests is implicit in a given representation of “self” and, when the actors constructing the

¹⁴² Green (2002: 6) and Weldes (1996: 280) discuss the relation between interests and culture.

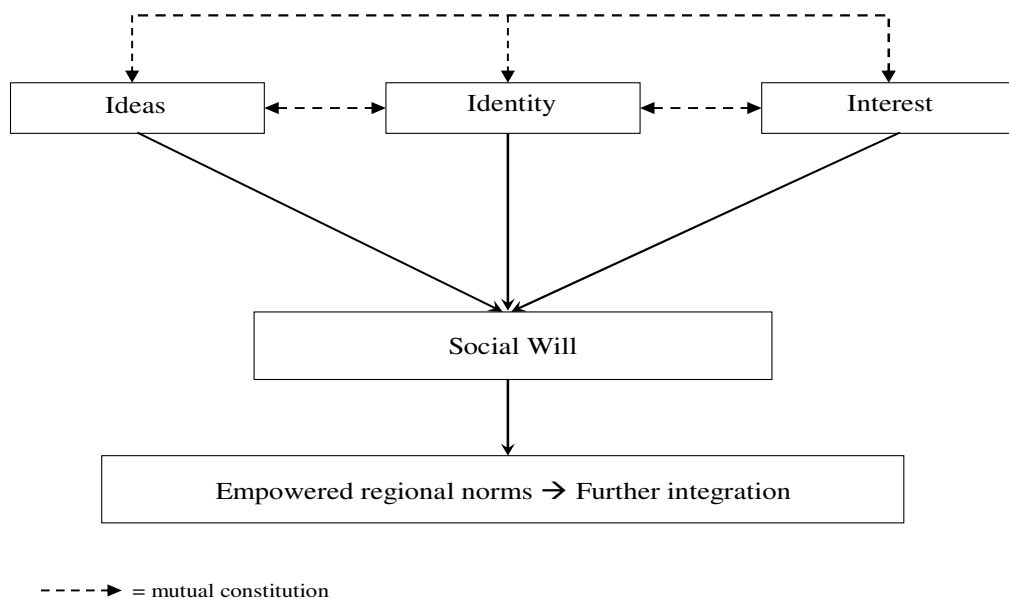
¹⁴³ Hopf (1998: 176) indicates that there are “absent” or “missing” interests or “produced absences, omissions that are the understandable product of social practices and structure.”

¹⁴⁴ Wendt (1999) also discusses interests as cognitions, and Hopf (2002: xi) argues that “the only reality of interest is intersubjective.”

representation possess normative power, in a particular construction of “other” readily accepted by those others. When interests condition societal actions they do so through in-group (e.g. through social identities) interactions (Edelman, 1964: 62). Interests are thus conditioned through the interplay of ideas and the actors’ identity. Importantly for regional integration, shared interests lead to feelings of interdependence which in turn direct actors to assume the indispensability of regional institutions thereby facilitating the “entitativity” of the region. Interests evoke particular mental states that may have “unintended consequences:” normative elites considering their interests in a materialistic sense, and perhaps unaware of the subjective impact of those interests, engage in integrative strategies in pursuit of some self-beneficial objective. The achievement of those objectives, however, redefines what constitutes the region and impacts on the Central American identity.

The following figure portrays the emergence of social will and its impact on regional integration.

Figure 3.2. Social Will: Emergence and Impact



The interaction of ideas, identity and interests is constitutive and mutually sustaining, and the relationship among these dimensions is in constant flux. As individuals assign meaning to ideas, their interests rank ideas hierarchically by relevance and their identity delimits the scope within which the ideational meaning is shared. This interplay may also follow other patterns. A shift in a particular characteristic of identity overhauls interests along similar changes. For instance, to the extent that identity provides the basis for interests, an identity modification may result in a shift in interests and new ideational meanings. From these interactions, social will emerges as a necessary background condition for the regional process.

This willingness is social because it emerges intersubjectively as meaning is assigned to the region. First, it emerges from the shared understandings produced by the convergence of ideas, identities and interests among the normative elites. And second, because those cognitivities must be shared by the rest of society; that is, they become reality assumptions in the ideational structure of non-normative societal groups or of society as a whole. To put it differently, there is a dimension of consent as societal groups accept, first, the normative elites' representation of "self" as leaders of an elusive Central American Union, and second, internalise as their reality a particular set of reality assumptions defined by normative elites; for example, that Union begins from regional economic integration.¹⁴⁵

The emphasis on the essential role performed by social will in the process does not mean that regional integration is a monocausal process. Social will is

¹⁴⁵ My argument here parallels that of "consensuality" developed by Sidanius and Pratto (2004: 324) in which "social representations' and social ideologies are broadly shared within the social system;" that is, "shared across the continuum of social power and within both dominant and subordinate groups alike."

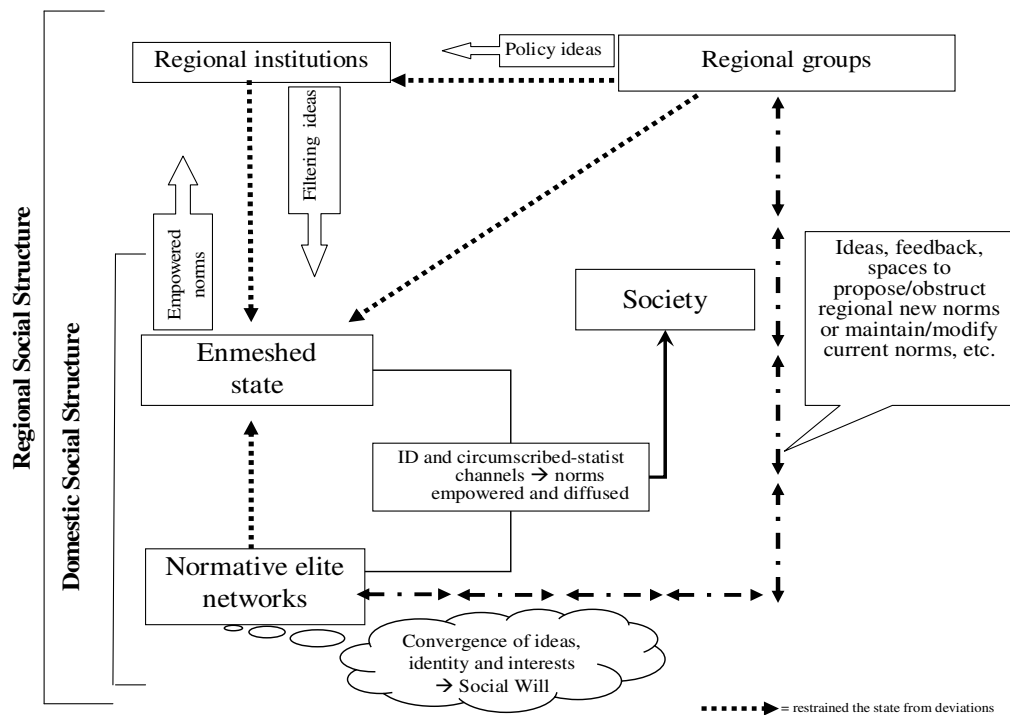
not the sole determinant of the process. Rather it is to argue that a positive interplay of certain intersubjective dimensions leads the Central American normative elites to construct a solid foundation from which regional integration evolves. If at a particular moment there is a high degree of social will, then regionalism is likely to advance or expand so as to encompass policy areas considered as fixed within the national domain. Conversely, when social will is minimal, the process is likely to experience disruptions and/or strategic modifications, if not complete stagnation.

A Central Americanised Regional Integration Model

Up to this point, my intention has been to elaborate a holistic conceptual machinery that enables the study of Central American integration to incorporate certain essential factors for the understanding of the process. Those factors, I noted, have been neglected by observers because they assume particular frameworks underpinned by modernisation premises that lead the analysis to overlook variables ingrained in cultural continuities which seem non-modern. I also noted a trend towards the lack of theorisation in Central American studies. This trend is the more evident in regional integration analysis, a direct outcome of the modernising tendencies assumed by those studies. If what we presuppose, for example, is an evolutionary process longing to become an entity *à la* European Union, then there is no need to theorise because there are established theoretical frameworks to hand. The Central American idiosyncrasies are thus overlooked and when it is inevitable to engage them, they are assumed to be aberrations from the modernising or evolutionary path: clientelistic and personalistic politics, if not outright illegal practices. The Central Americanised

model I have developed attempts to incorporate those idiosyncrasies not as troublesome variables but as pillars for the construction of regional integration in the isthmus. The following figure represents the model.

Figure 3.3. The Central Americanised Model of Regional Integration



Regionalism is a process that affects multiple dimensions and interests (e.g. political, economic and social). As such, it will inevitably become politicised. Politicisation leads to junctures generally characterised by integrative stalemate. If the issues are structural (i.e. not dealing with organisational matters), then the options of political elites are somewhat delimited by the enmeshment of the state. Normative networks are, thus, activated through the ID model of socialisation and the circumscribed-statist mechanism of norm diffusion. If the normative elites' ideas, identity and interests converge positively around a set of integrative norms, social will emerges. Once social will predisposes those elites

to approve the modified or new regional norms, those norms are empowered and diffused throughout society. Those norms redefine the region and the identity that goes with it. Countries traditionally considered as outside the region, for example, can become full members of the regional scheme.

Once the process overcomes the impasse, there are mechanisms that enable normative elites to monitor the process. Regional groups and associations embedded in the normative networks (e.g. business federations) function as feedback channels on the effectiveness of new norms. If strategic modifications to the process have negative outcomes, regional groups could hinder or change the direction of new norms by developing alternative schemes or strategies. Regional groups are also sources of new proposals and ideas for the regional Parliament and the General Secretariat, which in turn sustain the enmeshment of the state. New ideas could, conversely, emerge externally through international actors. They are, however, localised through the ID model. The General Secretariat of SICA, for example, could react upon policy ideas from international organisations by interplaying with the relevant members of the national cabinets. These interactions set in motion the normative networks. In turn, the channels that articulate the power of those networks are activated and the construction cycle begins again.

Conclusion

Regional integration is a set of complex norms that govern the conduct of politics regionally. These norms result from the social practices of actors. The existence of normative networks in Central America and the enmeshed nature of the state directly affect the development of regional integration. This occurs through the

constructed dimension of the state and the intersubjective channels that facilitate the interactions among elites. In this chapter, I indicated the inability of existing paradigms to accommodate the Central American idiosyncrasies ingrained in the political culture of the region which lead to the salience of elite networks and their ability to enmesh the state. Hence, I have attempted to conceptualise the channels that facilitate elite interactions; namely, the ideational drive model of socialisation and the circumscribed-statist mechanism of norm diffusion. These concepts enable the analysis to capture the normative power that the region's elites possess: their ability to produce or redefine norms in order to construct or sustain particular socio-political structures as a "region" and which are accepted by Central Americans as their own.

I have also modelled the medium that articulates such normative power; that is, social will: the intersubjective congruence of the ideas, identity and interests of the elites converging favourably, or not, around the integrative process. Normative elites are capable of empowering new or modified regional norms. Social will predisposes elites towards such empowerment. Once social will is articulated, the state is able to implement policies that could advance the integrative process or that lead to strategic shifts in its direction. Regionalism is, to put it differently, entangled with social will: On the one hand, if there is a high degree of social will, then the integration process is likely to be sustained or be further advanced. On the other hand, if social will is limited, integration is likely to experience a stagnation phase or a strategic alteration.

The final section of this chapter completed the theoretical framework I set out to develop. It presented a Central Americanised model of regional integration that takes into account the existence of elite networks that through cultural

continuities—that is, the role of kinship and family relations in socio-political processes—have enabled the elites to accumulate normative power and hence to enmesh the state within the networks. The functioning of that model depends on the normative mediums of elite interactions— the ID model of socialisation and the circumscribed-statist diffusion mechanism—that this chapter developed. The Central Americanised model, it is hoped, sheds light on the intriguing persistence of the ideal of union in the region and the cyclical decline, stagnation, reactivation, and eventual distortions and strategic shifts experienced by the process. The chapters that follow turn to the empirical section of this thesis.

Chapter 4. Counterfactual Exercise Part I: Political Will and Regional Integration in Central America

Introduction

The empirical section of this thesis—the present and next chapters—engages in a *counterfactual* exercise. At the core of this thesis’ argument is the proposition that Central American elites converge in normative networks. It may seem, thus, counterintuitive to assess empirically the predisposition towards regional integration among political elites (i.e. political will) and among social elites (i.e. social will). This analytical separation may be interpreted as incorporating the functional division of elites I have striven to critique. To empirically assess integrative trends among political elites, however, does not contradict my conception of normative elites. It is evident that certain groups dominate different aspects of social life. The concept of normative elites does not propose that the Central American elites are a single undivided body; rather, it conceives of those elites as *converging* in networks formed along the lines of family and kinship relations. Those networks then become mechanisms in which elites concatenate synergistically different resources thereby attaining normative power.

A counterfactual exercise is beneficial because it imbues this thesis with analytical leverage to “test” alternative “explanations” of the process. In this chapter, it allows for the appraisal of Haas’ (1967: 341) dictum that the region lacks an integrative strategy and the political will to sustain the integration process, and of the hypotheses that the “unwillingness” of Central American governments delimits integration (Sánchez, 2003b), and that governments impose their vision on the integrative process (Sánchez, 2003a). The exercise,

also, enables the thesis to assess the existence of elite interactions and consultation channels deemed crucial for the socialisation and norm diffusion elements of the Central Americanised model of integration, and of the enmeshed state.

The counterfactual, in addition, offers the possibility—in the course of the present and subsequent chapter—of “testing” the existence and role of social will as a background condition for regionalism, and the proposition that social will, as an articulation of their power, enables normative elite networks to delimit the regional policy options of political elites. In this chapter, the exercise enables the assessment of the comparability between the political elites’ discursive practices and the dominant trends in the process. If we find that the members of the political elite here interviewed offer “aberrant” opinions and ideas from those underlining the current nature of the process—the insertion of the region into the globalised economy and the exploitation of its competitive advantages—then it is possible that dominant ideas are embedded in other factors. If the political elites advance ideas that, or if their identity reflects, integrative impulses not so dominant in the process, and simultaneously, social elites present—in the subsequent chapter—discursive practices that reflect the current integrative trends, then, it may be that the latter elites’ “normativeness” has greater weight in defining regional policies and strategies.

It is also worth pointing that the methodology adopted— previously discussed in the introductory chapter—in the empirical chapters offers avenues to overcome the limitations experienced by neofunctionalism in assessing the intersubjective elements that underline the discursive practices of integrative actors. Empirically, the thesis attempts to observe beyond the overtly expressed

opinions of the participants and strives to identify those discursive elements from which the construction of the region emerges and which remained largely elusive for neofunctionalist models.

The chapter is organised as follows. The first section presents the study's sample. Section two develops the first phase of that analysis and traces the representational, valuing and identifying discursive practices of the participants. The third section elaborates the second phase of the analysis. It does so by assessing the structural components of the participants' narrative through key events discussed during the interviews, and the discursive regularities among the interviewees. The latter section focuses specifically on the implications of the participants' narratives for the existence of political will in Central America and how those regularities fit into the regional integration model here proposed. Section four concludes.

Central American Political Elites: The "Sample"

Aiming at capturing the existence of political will, I carried out a series of "interviews" in person, via telephone and also by circulating an "open questionnaire" enticing the respondents to elaborate on their views and understandings of the integrative process. The interviews took place in three stages: August to October, 2005; February to April, 2007; and January to April, 2008. The interviews were conducted in a conversational manner using a relatively small number of guiding questions. The sample consists of 56 individuals from countries which are members of the System of Central American Integration (SICA) which includes Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Among the

participants there are a former President and a Vice-President of some of the region's countries; a former President of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN, in its Spanish acronym) and Vice-presidents of National Assemblies or Congresses; Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the legislative bodies' Commissions for Foreign Affairs; Presidents and General Secretaries of political parties; Members of Parliament¹⁴⁶ and of National Assemblies and Congresses; and SICA Officials. Among these interviewees there are 23 political parties represented.

The majority of participants spoke in conditions of confidentiality and for this reason I omit their names. Instead I have assigned a code to each of them: for example, PP1 refers to an interview with "participant-political actor number one." The interviews were carried out in Spanish, and for reasons I pointed out in the introductory chapter (i.e. issues of equivalence of meaning in translation; see fn. 26), I largely avoid translating long textual citations. Instead, I textually cite keywords, key terms or short expressions that seem fundamental for the successful uncovering of the discursive dynamics through which the interviewees construct the Central American region. Appendix VI presents the complete list of participants and their respective country of origin and the institution to which they belong, and appendix VII includes excerpts (in Spanish) from the interviews. I will subject the "data" hereby obtained to the discourse analysis I discussed in the introductory chapter. In the sections that follow I strive to uncover patterns of political will in Central America through the analysis of the discursive practices of the elite members here interviewed.

¹⁴⁶ Throughout "Member of Parliament" refers to a member of PARLACEN.

Discourse Analysis: First Phase

In this stage of the analysis I concentrate on tracing the discursive representations, characterisations and “self/other” constructions from which the participants build their particular reality. The identification of these elements is essential as it is from them that the participants “select” key events that give “meaning” to their “story.” Those events, in turn, become patterns that signal what is socially desirable or possible. In the following subsection I trace the participants’ representations of regionalism.

Discursive Representations of Regional Integration

All the participants represent regional integration as fundamental, important or necessary for the welfare of Central Americans. Regionalism is imperative and thus the region’s countries are “compelled” to integrate (PP1). Regional integration has become a “political, social, economic and cultural necessity”¹⁴⁷ (PP46). For members of the Salvadoran National Assembly, the region is “viable” only through integration (PP33); hence the process is an “exigency” and it is vital (PP32) for the “survival of the region’s societies” (PP30 and PP31). The region’s countries will not further their socio-economic development outside regional integration (PP16). Admittedly, integrating these countries is a “problematic” (PP26) and “arduous task” (PP4 and PP5). However, according to other participants, regional integration is “unavoidable” (PP15 and PP16). Furthermore, integration is a “right” of the Central American people and thus it should be “prioritised” by the region’s governments (PP16). In short, if the

¹⁴⁷ The “social” in the participants’ narratives relates to matters that affect the welfare of the region’s societies; for example, problems such as illiteracy and limited health coverage, or policies aiming at solving those issues.

region does not achieve integration, “it would not achieve the development, the welfare and happiness of its peoples” (PP33). No integration means “regional instability” (PP9). Members of Guatemala’s Congress concur and indicate that if integration is not achieved, the region will “experience socio-political and economic distortions” (PP43). Another Guatemalan deputy furthers this point by arguing that what is missing is a “clear integrationist consciousness as a mechanism to rid the region of the socio-economic issues” that it experiences (PP35).

According to a Salvadoran deputy (PP32), however, there is not a “real” strategy about how to generate integrative impulses beyond the economic spaces. Integration is desirable but what is its objective? Will the process assume a confederation structure? This participant (PP32) argues:

“...the process lacks design; there is not a plan of how to generate supranationality in the region. There is excessive rhetoric concerning the importance of regional integration, though it cannot address the fundamental question: what shape will integration take? What is needed is the establishment of an entity with a Central American personality, for instance a Central American Confederation. Regrettably, there is no integrationist thought aggressive enough or creative enough to determine what we are as a region. We have to think in terms of other dimensions such as that of ‘deterritorialised’ societies. Current nationalities are not explainable considering the territorial space of the region” (PP32).

Central America thus needs an aggressive and creative strategy which assumes the realities of the region and that defines what the process will eventually achieve.

For some participants, such a strategy could begin from the direct participation of the top-tier of the political parties’ hierarchy in regional institutions (PP5). In this sense, 42 interviewees signal that their respective political parties assign a degree of relevance to issues regarding integration. Some indicate that this relevance is apparent in the support that their parties give

to the national initiatives (e.g. education campaigns) proposed by PARLACEN members (PP1, PP10 and PP11). Other members of Parliament indicate that they occupy high ranking positions in the party's hierarchy and that in this position they maintain constant contact with their national counterparts (PP3). Moreover, it is indicated that some political parties (e.g. the Honduran Liberal Party) have an integration secretariat (PP9). In Nicaragua, also, there have been proposals among some parties to give PARLACEN members law initiative at the national level (PP16). Embryonic as they may be, these efforts signal an attempt to build an alternative regional strategy and in turn give us an opportunity to observe a latent willingness towards integration.

Others disagree about the existence of such integrative inclinations. For example, a Guatemalan Member of Parliament (PP7) argues that the difficulties that integration experiences in Central America originate from the lack of interest that political parties show regarding the process which in turn reflects on "the government's position on regionalism." Similarly, others point out that Central American parties are solely focused on the national agenda (PP6 and PP34). They argue that this is so because the channels of communications between the regional and the national are at best minimal (PP50). A Nicaraguan deputy quickly points out that recommendations emerging from PARLACEN, for example, are not followed up within the region's parties (PP50). In this regard, only 23 participants agree that their parties have made a fair contribution toward the advancement of integration. Another participant indicates that regional integration is not "institutionalised as a mechanism for the region's development" in some of the parties' agendas (PP34). Similarly, a Salvadoran deputy indicates that regional integration is not a "topic of discussion" among

political parties (PP32). According to this participant, it is more concerning, however, that a member of the National Assembly “cannot make regional integration an important issue on the agenda of the Assembly’s Commission for Foreign Relations and Integration” which supposedly deals with issues related to the process (PP32). And on this point:

“Every political party must make the commitment to incorporate integration as one of the most important elements of their agendas...” (PP16).

Despite a widely-held conception of the process as fundamental among all participants and their belief that the process is considered relevant by their political parties (42 interviewees), 49 participants employ in their narrative expressions that construct regional institutions as lacking, albeit to different degrees, capacity for action. The process is represented as “exclusively in governmental hands” (PP17). In such a process, regional institutions have “no teeth” and they have become “dead word” entities (PP41) with minimal impact on the national level (PP18, PP19 and PP22). Regional institutions have had “their wings cut off” and may have, at best, limited binding powers at the regional level but have no “intervention at the local level” (PP7). A high ranking official of the Honduran Liberal Party (PP47) argues that due to “resistance from certain political sectors” the regional process is highly deficient. For this reason, regional institutions remain as forums of discussion lacking any binding powers. More concerning for other participants is the perception of the regional institutions’ lack of “identity” (PP46). Those institutions, accordingly, “hide” themselves from the “public scene” as they are “barely” able to affect the daily lives of the Central American peoples (PP6). Regional institutions have not been able to “generate the dynamics through which they could become the vanguard

of the process” (PP50). It is indicated that the lack of a “real presence” of those institutions has delimited the “we-feeling” among Central American societies and negatively affects the mass of the population’s perception of those institutions (PP50).

A member of the Guatemalan Congress indicates that the “common” Central Americans, who have a fair degree of knowledge about the process, support regionalism; however, they do not support certain regional institutions as they do not comprehend their usefulness (PP37). Another Guatemalan Congressman agrees and points out that in this respect the Parliament “is the regional institution most misunderstood and thus the people cannot perceive how it benefits them” (PP40). In reality, however, the Parliament, this participant adds, is of “great potential benefit” for the region as it is the political forum with the “largest political representation” in Central America incorporating about 50 political parties (PP40). Such a “democratising dimension is clearly overlooked by members of the media who attack and undermine the Parliament” (PP40). The media’s “destructive” stance, however, “points to the frustrations and conflicts that exist among certain Central American societal segments” despite “the common history of these societies” (PP40). Another interviewee concludes that such a stance overlooks a significant fact: supranational institutions are merely “the reflections of the policies of the states” that participate in the process and thus it is important to analyse and question the depth of the participation and commitment of those states (PP46). Table 4.1 presents a summary of the interviewees’ discursive representational practices.

Table 4.1. Summary of “Representational” Findings

	The Process is Fundamental/Imperative/Vital	The Process is Relevant for Party	Party Contributes to the Process	Regional Institutions have Limited Capacity for Action
Total number of participants	56	54*	54*	56
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	56	42	23	51
Percentage of the sample	100	0.78	0.43	0.91

*= Question not relevant for members of SICA

In the subsection that follows, I assess the political elites’ discursive characterisations of the regional process.

Discursive Valuation of Regional Integration

The majority of the interviewees (47) characterise regional integration as a centralised process that has not reached the Central American society. The process is perceived to be almost exclusively in “state hands” (PP17). Specifically, it is indicated that integration is overtly “dependent on the Executives” (PP2). Such dependence is observable in the central role of the “Presidential Summits” in the process. The Summits, however, are perceived as “non-democratic” and to an extent against the functionality of the System of Integration as they are fairly perfunctory (PP3). As we have seen, other participants indicate that the lack of progress that the process experiences, originates in the “prevalent attitude” (e.g. “minimum importance, if any”) among the leadership of the region’s political parties which in turn influences that of the Presidents (PP7).

As a result of such a centralised nature, the great majority of the participants (53) underline the fact that regional institutions lack binding powers and, hence, proposals originating at the regional level do not have any impact at the national level. It is indicated that supranational institutions do not “intervene in local issues” (PP7). More concerning, according to a Panamanian Deputy, such a trend maintains supranational institutions isolated from the people (PP51). Regional institutions are, thus, too far apart from Central American societies; they must strive to converge with the people and to offer solutions to the problems these societies experience:

“Regional institutions have been too isolated from the people. Regional institutions must “touch” the people and must draw closer among themselves... Political leaders must prioritise integration through actions and not just with words... Solutions must be given to the people through integration...” (PP16).

In addition, some participants indicate that there is limited knowledge of the activities of supranational institutions; hence there is not “recognition” about “any effective work” done by those institutions for the “benefit” of the region’s peoples (PP43). Furthermore, as a result of the invisibility of the process, in Panama, for example, the people do not “think” about Central America as a “logical frame to confront” socio-economic problems (PP54). Another participant indicates that in the rest of the region the trend is similar and the general population remains focused on the issues that directly afflict them (e.g. migration, insecurity, poverty); this is partly the result of the centralised nature of the process (PP6).

This limited knowledge leads the Central American people to “misuse the institutional spaces available for their participation” (PP8). Indeed, according to a Costa Rican Deputy (PP18), such a centralised process limits the impact of

popular participation on the process. She argues, for example, that the spaces that exist for the civil society's participation (i.e. SICA's Consultative Committee) have not had an impact on the integrative process (PP18). In addition:

“The obstacles to integration are excessive individualism, the countries' short-sightedness, the inability to understand the process, the total lack of knowledge about the process which leads to negative stereotyping (ignorance) and the emphasis on economic aspects which excludes the 'integration' of the Central American people from the regional process” (PP18).

The overwhelmingly economic focus of the process thus isolates the people and the organisations that represent them. Civil society remains at the fringes of regionalism. If this societal basis of integration is not articulated the process itself would remain peripheral for the Central American people. Regional institutions can only develop into “real” institutions (i.e. “acquire a degree of identity”) in the people's perspectives, if they become the vanguard in a social dialogue that connects the people with regional integration through socio-cultural spaces:

“... [Current] issues can be solved by generating a Central American culture and transform the integration process into a development agenda... A 'social dialogue' is needed in order for integration to move forward. In such dialogue the Parliament becomes indispensable. It could establish hearings with the Central American society in general in order to reduce the existing breaches [between the process and society]... The region's people must acquaint themselves with other Central Americans, so as to realise all the commonalities that exist among them, only then can the Central American people be integrated... An integrationist campaign is needed in order to generate a higher Central American consciousness. Also, the region needs a political-cultural strategy parallel to the economic schemes, one in which the region sees itself as a region...” (PP18).

In order to further reduce the gap between themselves and the society they are supposed to represent, regional institutions need first, to “divulge information about the process” (PP18); and second, to concretise a “product”

(PP51) or “material results” (PP52) visible for the common Central American individual. Integration, for example, can be employed to “level the Central American societies:” regionalism should aim at social and economic development in order to reduce the socio-economic differences among and within the region’s societies (PP26). If strategies (e.g. the education budget) that begin to move the process toward this aim are established, integration would become “visible” for the people, which may “force” reluctant political actors to further current integrative schemes or begin new regional initiatives (PP26). With this in mind, in Guatemala UNE members have proposed the creation of an “agency for the promotion, divulging and development of integration” which could disseminate information about the activities of supranational institutions, especially PARLACEN (PP8). Such an agency could work together with the Central American media which would facilitate a “direct channel of communication with the region’s civil society” (PP8). A member of the Honduran Liberal party suggests that a further and related decentralising strategy is to employ such an agency to “incorporate integration as a topic of debate” in political campaigns and in the internal agenda of political parties (PP46). In other words, an information campaign should be employed to give the process and its institutions a fair degree of visibility.

Fifty participants employ in their narrative elements that advance regionalism’s new meanings (e.g. social meaning); and 43 interviewees consider education and training as means to achieve integrationist success. It is indicated that regional integration and the supranationality that presupposes means prosperity for the peoples of the region (PP5). Obviously, integration will not solve all the problems that the region experiences but would set a “solid basis” to

begin working towards a “greater degree of prosperity” for the people (PP6). Supranational actors and institutions, however, have not been able to widely disseminate “the idea that integration opens a wide horizon of new possibilities that could be used to solve the region’s current problems” (PP6). Unfortunately regional integration in Central America does not “parallel the social issues” that the region experiences (PP14). It is overwhelmingly focused on the economic dimension which, alas, it is not “perceptible” to the Central American peoples (PP9). For example, despite the increasing economic integration that is taking place between the traditionally considered Central American countries and Panama, the common Panamanians are not “conscious” of the “other” Central Americans because that economic integration does not affect them directly (PP54). Political actors should diffuse the “social and cultural messages” simultaneously to the economic counterpart they currently emphasise (PP16). Integration must be shifted from its current focus on the acquisition of private profit to the acquisition of public welfare (PP13, PP14 and PP34).

According to a Guatemalan Deputy, regionalism “must be global, it must begin from the minimum” or by enabling “ignored groups, for example minorities, to obtain a regional space” (PP37). “Minority issues, especially women’s rights” should be at the top of the agenda as those issues would bring integration closer to the general population (PP37). For a Member of Parliament (PP9), it is the advancement of such socio-political dimensions that could become the nucleus on which integration in Central America would become a reality:

“Economic integration is not perceptible to the Central American people. The socio-political aspects of the process should be the backbone of the process. The political

should be the spine of integration. Therefore, the development and strengthening of the [regional] political institutions are important for the process...” (PP9).

A high ranking official of the Honduran Liberal party (PP45) indicates that indeed it is fundamental to bring the social in parallel to the economic side of integration. He suggests that this is achievable through the synchronisation of a space little discussed within regionalism in the isthmus; namely, legal integration. The Central American Court of Justice, for example, should be given “binding powers” in order to act as a truly integrative mechanism advancing legal reforms that could benefit the general population (PP45). In this sense, considering that laws are “social,” another participant argues that regional integration could “become a social development plan” through the region’s national “legislative bodies” and by doing so, the region’s societies can be socially “homogenised” (PP19). A Costa Rican member of the National Assembly points out that although the “economic dimension integrates,” regionalism requires the “synchronisation of the process with social policies” that can underpin integration with a degree of “reality” in the peoples’ perception (PP21). In short, first the process must be explained to the common Central American, and second, integration can emphasise economic factors because these eventually generate integrative trends but political actors should strive to parallel such emphasis with social issues (PP22).

It is thus imperative to develop programs that “level the social issues” (e.g. health coverage and the education budget) in the region (PP3). Members of Guatemala’s UNE agree, and argue that Central American regionalism must be all encompassing:

“It is important to integrate all the comparative advantages of the region’s countries. Yet, the process must be broad and include all dimensions, not only the economic. Integration must not be merely economic but become inclusive. This means that it must comprise the social, political, cultural and economic aspects” (PP43).

It is thus fundamental to focus on the development of certain segments of society barely affected, at best, by integration: “the local communities” (PP43). Such development can be achieved through support from regional institutions for educational opportunities available to those communities (PP43). For instance, regional institutions could promote “training programs on integration topics for community leaders” who, in turn, would become “integrationist agents” disseminating the message of integration (PP43). In this respect, a PARLACEN member (PP4) has conducted informative campaigns regarding integration among Guatemalan indigenous communities; he was quick to indicate that those campaigns were carried out in the communities’ native languages. Current efforts, however, are “too isolated” from these societal segments and it is imperative that integration strives for the “social development of those communities” as well as their economic advancement (PP43).

Limited knowledge about integration results in a narrow vision of the process (PP4). An integrative vision can be elaborated through educational programs that emphasise an integrated Central America (PP11). In Honduras, members of PARLACEN have initiated one such program which has “generated interest in integration” among that country’s youth (PP11). The same members have been able to advance a “proposal to the region’s ministries of education” who agreed to include in their respective school curricula a “peace and integration content” (PP11). In this respect, in the Dominican Republic, political actors have obtained authorisation from the country’s Ministry of Education to

offer “talks about regional integration” in schools and universities, and have proposed the establishment of integration modules at university level (PP1). Education is thus perceived as fundamental to the advancement of regional integration: it can be “used” to “encourage” the emergence of “regional consciousness” among Central American societies (PP5). What is needed is the development of a “consistent educational program;” that is, uniform regional curricula that emphasise Central America as a unit in socio-economic, political and cultural aspects (PP33).

Regionalism needs an “integrationist campaign” to diffuse information about the process which can become a point of convergence between political actors and the general public and thus generate a “Central American consciousness” (PP18). More importantly, the objective of this campaign should be that the “region learns to see itself as a region” through a socio-political and cultural strategy (PP18). Such a campaign is fundamental for the empowering of integration: to transform it into a “topic of discussion” (PP19). An increased “consciousness” about the process is also important among political actors: a greater Central American “consciousness” among the general population “requires” a greater “consciousness” among political actors (PP43). The latter thus must be “trained” in integration issues in order to fully comprehend their tasks; only then they “could act as true agents of regional consciousness promotion” (PP43). It is thus recognised that lack of “training” is also an issue among political actors as many among them “do not know about integration” (PP4). Members of Guatemala’s UNE assent and indicate that “educational programs” targeted at political actors, including members of PARLACEN, are essential (PP43). Importantly, it is observed that political actors need to

“empower themselves on integration issues” in order to “generate” the degree of “Centroamericanism” needed to strengthen the process (PP4). In this sense, supranational institutions could be employed as “socialisation mechanisms” for national political actors with limited regional identity (PP23 and PP54).

It is also important to incorporate the “work of the people” into regionalism (PP18). The success of the process requires the incorporation of “the ideas and proposals” of the common Central Americans (PP24). With this in mind, regional institutions, particularly PARLACEN, could develop a type of public “audiences” (PP18) or “socio-economic councils” open to the public (PP25) thereby opening spaces wherein a “popular Central American identity” can be expressed and sustained (PP40). By designing such participatory mechanisms, first, the “gaps” that exist between the political and the social spaces of the process could be reduced; and second, the people would “appropriate” the process and by doing so could begin further integrative trends (PP24).

A high ranking official of the Honduran Liberal party concludes that whatever form the process assumes, economic or otherwise, it needs regional institutions with “binding powers” in order to be able to sustain integrative trends emerging from any level of society (PP47). In short, the degree of consolidation of the process works parallel to the reinforcement of the institutional framework:

“The functionality of regional institutions is deficient. The process’ consolidation must be accompanied by institutional strengthening, which would be demonstrated through its consolidation” (PP47).

In this sense, it is necessary that political actors “further promote activities that involve governmental officials and members of civil society thus they can [first,]

generate greater consciousness about the importance of the process;” and second, reinforce the “existent Central American identity” (PP35). Regional institutions thus can become “socialisation mechanisms” in which political elites can “teach” reluctant socio-political groups to be “regional.” It is to the representation of that “other” that I now turn. First, however, table 4.2 summarises the discursive characterisations of regionalism.

Table 4.2. Summary of “Valuation” Findings

	The Process is Centralised	Regional Institutions Lack Binding Powers	Social/ Cultural Meanings	Education/Training as Means to Integration
Total number of participants	56	56	56	56
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	47	53	50	43
Percentage of the sample	0.84	0.95	0.89	0.77

Self and “Other” Discursive Identification

Constructing “otherness:” executive powers and private sector

According to a Member of Parliament, in the Central American context regional integration has entered a purely economic dialogue wherein the executives become the vanguard of integration (PP12). The process has been centralised as the region’s presidents and certain economic groups control regional policies and information flows regarding regionalism (PP25). For a Costa Rican deputy, the “parliamentary diplomacy” that integration entails has been “reserved for the executives” (PP23). In this centralisation process, the social and political dimensions become supplements of the economic dimension and thus the

institutional spaces (e.g. PARLACEN) in which to advance the socio-political process are not utilised:

“In the new context of integration, [the process] enters an economic, social and political dialog. In economic aspects, [the process] advances at the executive level and not within political parties. As a consequence, the executives become the vanguard excluding the political aspects from the process. The social becomes an appendix of the economic. An evaluation and reform of the treaty of social integration is needed. In the political, we have squandered the Parliament as a space to elaborate true integration proposals which would project the region as a unit and with a clear direction” (PP12).

This detracts, thus, from the possibility of establishing a clearly delineated institutional direction which, in turn, contributes to the “jealousy” among regional political actors (e.g. increased competition for “available resources”) and the lack of regionalising “ideological development” (PP12). In the words of a Member of Parliament, the current “regional vision is generated by exogenous factors, such as the FTA with the US,”¹⁴⁸ that conversely delimits first, a regionalising “vision” and second, the emergence of a “communitarian sentiment” (PP12).

The region’s Presidents and the governments they represent have advanced integrative processes that “develop and strengthen certain economic groups and the existent private capital” (PP14). The issue is, more specifically, that all the “Central American Presidents are linked to the same private capital and this capital is speculative” which in turns “does not need integration and much less supranational institutions that may delimit the financial space for speculation;” for example, a Central American Court of Justice with comprehensive binding powers could enact regulation that would affect investments in the region (PP32). A member of Guatemala’s Congress (PP36)

¹⁴⁸ FTA refers to the Central America-Dominican Republic-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) reached in 2004.

underlines a similar interconnection between the Central American Presidents and certain overwhelmingly powerful economic groups:

“The region’s political systems are not independent from powerful economic sectors. This financial dependency enables those sectors to control the political spaces. Therefore, politicians do not have the liberty to develop politics. The political is subordinated to the economic. The region’s Presidents lack the political freedom to develop a truly integrationist agenda. We must think as nations and not as economic interests. Because of this dependency and way of thinking the regional institutions never achieve the binding power they should have” (PP36).

Thus, the region lacks an in-depth integrationist initiative (PP36).

A member of the Salvadoran National Assembly states that he is highly “pessimistic about the integrationist attitudes of the region’s governments” and indicates that the Presidents “do not accept anything that smells like supranationality” (PP32). There is not “predisposition among the Presidents” toward the process (PP42). “Intergovernmental sectors and specially the executives perceive supranational institutions as rivals” (PP17). The delegation of “binding powers” to supranational institutions, for example, is perceived as the “executives’ loss of power” (PP16). At one point or another, certain “political groups” including “some of the region’s Presidents” have wanted to “disappear” regional institutions such as the Parliament because “they are the ideal forum wherein integration can truly take-off” (PP42). Those individuals believe that by empowering regional institutions they would be “letting go of their power” (PP42). Therefore, the attitude among the Presidents of the region “slows down,” and occasionally, “blocks” the regional process (PP5).

A Member of Parliament, thus, argues that the process depends on the “whims” of the region’s executives (PP11). A high ranking official of Honduras’ Liberal Party agrees and suggests that there is a high level of “resistance” among the Presidents which in turns detracts from the institutionalisation of the process

(PP47). Some participants indicate that the region's Presidents and Governments "lack an integrationist identity" (PP13). Other interviewees point out that there is a lack of "truly regional leadership" among the executives (PP46). This is observable in the "contradiction" that exists between the "willingness exhibit" by the region's governments and the rhetoric they employed, and the "implementation of the process" (PP46). For example, a member of the Honduran National Party attests that agreements reached at regional Presidential summits are not followed-up at the national level by the same officials attending the meetings (PP49). For this reason, a Nicaraguan Deputy argues that regional integration is "merely a rhetorical exercise used by the region's governments" (PP50). In such a context, the region's Presidents create regional institutions but then they abandon those institutions (PP31). Also, integration becomes an issue through which the upcoming Presidents "get revenge on outgoing Presidents" (*revanchismo*); that is, newly elected executives see integration policies as a way of "discrediting" their predecessors which results in "high degrees of instability within the process" (PP30). For a Guatemalan Deputy, it is more concerning that some of the executives "do not comprehend the process and lack a vision of what it means to be a unified Central America from which to build integration according to the region's reality" (PP42).

It is hence necessary to "create" regional consciousness among the Presidents and their Cabinets:

"The process' relevance depends on the role of the political parties. Depending on the level of awareness about what is needed for the success of the process, the level of influence on the [region's] legislatures and executives could increase, which in turn would strengthen the process and make it more effective... Intergovernmental sectors consider the supranational as a rival; for this reason the process is slowed down. Therefore, it is necessary to create an integrationist consciousness among the Presidents and their cabinets. This could be achieved through the political

parties. In any case, the process must not be exclusively in intergovernmental hands” (PP17).

As noted previously, some interviewees indicate that it is important that regionalism be taken seriously by the executives and other high ranking party officials. Considering its importance for the region, it must be a topic of debate beyond its current status of an appendix to electoral campaigns (PP16). In the short run, it is argued that for integration to be successful, the region’s Executive powers must “acquire” a “communitarian vision” (PP7). In the long run, the System of Integration itself must become a “communitarian system” without “dependence on the executives” and incorporate wide popular participation (PP2). A Nicaraguan member of PARLACEN concludes that the region’s Presidents “must assume the political responsibility” of giving the Central American societies “a much-deserved unified *patria*” (PP16).

As mentioned previously, it is indicated that regional institutions are but “the reflections of the region’s government policies” and as such they “lack an identity” that may generate integrative impulses among the general population (PP46). In this sense, the lack of binding power that the regional institutions are experiencing is not the result of these institutions’ “limited productive activities” as some “members of the media” point out but the direct outcome of policies implemented by the region’s Presidents (PP34). It is highly concerning, for this participant (PP34), that the media “does not know nor understand the System of Integration [SICA] and go about presenting it as [a group of] unproductive institutions.” In short, the media has developed a “destructive spirit towards integration” (PP40). A member of the Guatemalan Congress (PP44) who was directly involved in the founding of PARLACEN, agrees with this assessment

and argues that there is a “negative attitude” among the region’s Presidents towards regional institutions, especially the Parliament. He indicates that the Central American societies are not against integration, rather there has been a “good degree of opposition” among some of the region’s Presidents (e.g. former Guatemalan President Serrano and former Honduran President Maduro) who resist the consolidation of regional institutions; and in some cases, the executives have “initiated negative press campaigns against supranational institutions” (PP44). The relation between the media’s representation of integration and the executives’ lack of support for regionalism, thus, becomes “a mutually reinforcing process” (PP34). This situation is taken advantage of by other groups (i.e. the private sector) that do not support certain aspects of the process by feeding the media with “discrediting campaigns” against regional institutions; especially, PARLACEN (PP34). According to this participant, it is at this point where the Central American process reaches an “impasse” and the resulting “stagnation” is embedded in the System (PP34). One of the main issues that the process faces, it seems, is the “myopic criterion of certain producers [*forjadores*] of public opinion” (PP53).

In this context, integration as a “political” process is declining because the economic dimension of the process is overwhelmingly highlighted by economic elites who possess a great degree of political power (PP9). The economic dimension, as argued previously, has limited impact on the lives of the majority of Central Americans (PP9). Governments have planned the process according to the interests of the region’s “social hierarchies” who largely belong to powerful economic sectors (PP1). According to a former high ranking official

of the Guatemalan government and later Member of Parliament (PP5), certain powerful groups within the private sector do not want regional integration:

“... powerful groups in society do not wish for Central American integration to take place. Those who sell chicken, cement, and beers, prefer to have their own ‘farm’ in each country so as not to share and compete at the Central American level” (PP5).

It is suggested that the Central American “economic class” is “afraid of the integration process” (PP39). The issue is that certain economic groups have a great degree of power over the regional agenda and are able to make the region think almost exclusively in terms of economic interests; thus regional institutions are not able to obtain the binding powers they should have because these institutions are perceived as potentially detrimental for economic interests (PP36).

For a high ranking official (PP34) of the Guatemalan Social Democratic Party, the region’s private sector prefers an integration process with relaxed regulations under their control and thus they strive to control the Central American States:

“The greatest obstacle to integration is the business groups that want to control the state and participate in an economic integration process with minimal regulations, which means an integration controlled by them. PARLACEN with binding powers would elect the executives of SICA, SIECA and BCIE; which would result in strong regional institutions able to regulate the integration process, particularly the economic process; [for business groups] it is not an economic matter but one of control” (PP34).

Strong regional institutions able to enforce regional regulation imply increasing limitations to the type of integration sought by the regions’ powerful elites.

A Guatemalan deputy (PP35) wonders that if Central America shares solid cultural and historical bases for integration why is it, then, that the process stagnates so often? He goes on to indicate that the answer lies in the actions of the powerful economic groups of the region’s societies:

“The ones who oppose the process are the private sector groups, the powerful economic groups, the local oligarchies. Due to their objectives, the Central American oligarchies want to integrate without integrating. Which means they want to integrate, have bank alliances, for instance the Cuscatlan bank. Such [business] alliances must be carried out according to the oligarchies’ own conditions, without regulations or laws, and without obligations towards the region’s countries. A formal integration implies the creation of powerful binding institutions. Such institutions would limit the informal integration (the Parliament would legislate binding regional norms). For this reason [i.e. potential threat] the oligarchic groups discredit even the national congresses. The private sector, because of their objectives, oppose formal integration, they also criticise local congresses because they do not want norms... Banks are integrated, businesses are integrated; then, is a strengthened regional integration needed?” (PP35).

In this view integration has been informal and has facilitated the emergence of a kind of regional multinational corporation. The process, however, advances as long as powerful societal groups set the conditions for that progress and as long as the process remains without strong laws and regulations, and without serious commitment from the region’s countries to achieve these. Others argue that historically the Central American oligarchies—with which the private sector is interconnected—have been “anti-integrationist” and have tended to “parcel” the region for their economic interests; this is a “simplistic explanation” for the repeated failures of the process but “it is a historically real explanation” (PP13).

A Guatemalan deputy member of the Unionist Party indicates that the lack of a definitive regionalist position on the part of the executives generates a political vacuum that creates an ideal space for anti-regionalist segments to exploit (PP41). The powerful economic groups, for example, “occupy the regional space and attempt to discredit regional institutions” because they are not able to “control those institutions” (PP41). The private sector, thus, attempts to “discredit regional institutions” through negative press (PP35 and PP41). According to a Guatemalan deputy (PP40) there are “frustrations and conflicts” in the region; he indicates:

“Despite all our history we do not consider ourselves as a region. The coffee growers’ attitude towards integration is not positive. A culture of integration is non-existent; the benefits of integration are not perceived nor understood... The greatest obstacle is the lack of credibility of the regional institutions and the confrontation between the economic sector and the political class. The economic sector has developed its links, for instance they interact through the chambers of commerce or industry. The economic elites do not believe that the political class is capable of articulating their interests. Therefore, they do not use integration’s institutional channels. These groups control the media; they feed it with arguments which discredit regional institutions. For instance, they argue that national representations to the Parliament are too large. Destroying in that manner something they do not understand” (PP40).

The private sector thus detracts from the potential spillovers that may originate from the actions of regional integrationists actors and institutions.

Other participants have a positive outlook toward the “otherness” of the private sector. For instance, a member of the Honduran Liberal Party indicates that despite the political stagnation that the process seems to permanently experience and “the existence of conflictive economic interests, the private sector integrates itself” and by doing so, contributes to “regional integration’s survival” (PP48). Yet, interviewees are concerned about the path that economic integration has followed. They assert, for example, that the private sector supported Central America-Dominican Republic-US Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) of 2004 has halted the integration process. CAFTA-DR, they indicate, was bilaterally negotiated by the US with each of the region’s countries which created divisions among those countries (PP16). It is argued that the CAFTA-DR obstructs Central American regionalism:

“There are members of the dominant private sector who are linked to the interests of the United States. This relation has allowed for the process of integration to be subordinated to the Free Trade Agreement because integration must be consistent with that treaty. As a result the treaty divides the Central American region limiting integrationist tendencies... Therefore, it is necessary that the process reflects a balance between the private sector and the state.” (PP3).

CAFTA-DR hinders integration by breaking existent integrative impulses such as the customs union (PP3). Moreover, through such agreements the private sector increases its links with international interests (e.g. multinational corporations) which makes regional integration indirectly dependent on those interests (PP13 and PP14).

Political norm entrepreneurs: ideational struggle in the socially constructed state structure

A foremost concern among the interviewees is that lack of “regional and communitarian vision” at the “state level” which is readily observable in the limited follow up given to regional treaties (PP7). The “parochial” approach towards integration assumed by segments of the political elites which entails a limited regionalising commitment has delimited the possibilities for achieving a long-term regional vision (PP41):

“Political will is fundamental in this respect as long as it is preceded by a solid cultural apparatus and we have not built a Central American culture; not among labour unions, guilds, student groups, or artists and sports associations. This is due to integration’s focus on economic matters which requires a great degree of competition and rivalry among the Central American countries...” (PP41).

On the one hand, according to this participant (PP41), despite the lack of regional culture, economic integration is fairly advanced among members of the private sector. On the other hand, economic integration has led to a “localist vision” (*vision de aldea*) among other sectors of the Central American society thereby limiting the integration of spaces beyond economic regionalism (PP50). In such a context, regional institutions have not been able to generate the dynamics to

become the vanguard of integration which has detracted from the continuity of the process (PP50).

To overcome such limitations, it is suggested that economic integration must aim at “reforming” the region’s markets “giving buying power to all Central Americans;” it must not “integrate small markets” which could exacerbate the current “delicate social balance” in the region (PP46). A Guatemalan Congressman emphatically states that “regional integration means political, social and economic union” (PP36). Integration must begin from the “social” and it “must provide answers to the people” (PP10). Some participants propose to include the “social” in the regional agenda through issues that affect the great majority of the Central American societies. For example, programs of regional “social security” coverage (PP2) and “citizen safety” (PP3) could be incorporated. A Member of Parliament elaborates on this point and states that the “social” can be “attacked” through the “educational” (PP1). Others, conversely, perceive economic integration as a launching platform for a successful regional process. According to a member of the Honduran National Party hierarchy (PP49), it is “necessary that Central America integrates as an economic bloc.” In turn, the economic would lead to the integration of “judicial, political and social” matters. In any event, leaders of the Guatemalan Congress indicate that the “process’ stages should be paced out gradually selling the idea of integration to all of society’s sectors” (PP38 and PP39).

With this in mind, political actors should strive to develop a more “belligerent regional agenda” around issues beyond economics which would “generate a regional sentiment” among them promoting further cooperation and thus, at the same time, would facilitate “changing the image of regional

institutions” in peoples’ perceptions by giving those institutions more “presence” (PP50). For such an integrative impulse to occur, however, it is necessary that political actors assume greater regional “consciousness and identity” and that they conceive of their role and that of the institutions they represent as “fundamental stances” for the development of the region (PP50). A Guatemalan member of Congress furthers this argument by indicating that “the most important thing for integration is” that members of regional institutions “perceive themselves as regional actors on charge of Central America’s destiny” (PP44). For instance, PARLACEN members should “assume a sense of historical responsibility” and strive to be “closer” to their national counterparts and their respective societies” (PP44). It is also important that regional political actors “court” those individuals who hold ultimately “regional agenda powers;” that is, “the Presidents’ and Foreign Affairs Ministries’ advisers” (PP44). The role of the latter is highlighted by a member of the Guatemalan Congress (PP35) who was directly involved in the establishment of PARLACEN. He indicates that the region’s Presidents “lack regional leadership” because they “do not understand the process” and thus “they are against the process;” importantly, they are anti-integrationist, “precisely because their advisers are against the process” (PP35). The trend, nevertheless, can be reversed: regional political actors must “insist to the Presidents;” they must constantly “work on the executives” through their advisers (PP44). A Nicaraguan Deputy agrees that there is lack of willingness among the region’s executives; however, he strongly argues that it is the duty of the members of regional institutions to act as motivators and have the Presidents become involved in the process (PP50). He notes, however, that there is a limited

“dynamism” among regional officials in this respect and concludes that the executives cannot be “blamed” for such passiveness.

For other participants, the reality is that, in general, there is a “limited regional identity” (PP40). It is thus imperative to begin “working on the identity of the region’s youth” (PP40). It is fundamental to strive to increase the Central American peoples’ “consciousness” about integration in order to generate greater levels of a shared identity (PP1). In the same manner, other interviewees indicate that regional political actors “should develop programs that increase the awareness and identity of the general population,” and by doing so, “the people would become diffusers of integration” (PP38 and PP39). Members of supranational institutions and “pro-integration” national political actors thus must “work on the regional consciousness of the Central American peoples” (PP10); they “need to converge in order to develop educational programs about integration” (PP7). Education can be employed to “irrigate the regional consciousness among the general population” but also that consciousness can grow through the convergence of “all political forces in the region” on the importance of integration as an issue of debate (PP46). In short, it is important to promote a regional identity among the mass of the population through “consciousness raising activities targeted to the understanding and acceptance” of an integrated Central America (PP43).

A former PARLACEN President indicates that it is the “duty” of regional political actors to “work” on the level of awareness about the process among the Central American societies (PP15). Politics is about “symbols” and that is precisely what the regional process lacks (PP50). Regional symbols that lead to integrative trends can be generated through “regionalising ideas” (PP13). With

this in mind, the “media” can be employed to “disperse integrationist ideas” (PP15). The media could “reposition” the integrative discussion in the official agenda (PP3). Approaching the general public in this way will “generate an attitudinal change” toward regional institutions because the latter would acquire “a better image” by making public their activities and thus enabling Central Americans to “feel” the impact of integration (PP6). In the Dominican Republic, for example, PARLACEN members carry out such a task through the media (PP1). It is thus important that pro-integrationist actors rethink their approach to the “social producers of information” in order to challenge the prevailing views of the process (PP9).

For a Nicaraguan Member of Parliament, institutional “binding powers are not necessary” if the regional political actors and the institutions they represent “know how to sell the idea of integration” (PP12). The lack of those powers, however, has become “an extraordinary pretext” for the limited institutional dynamism in the region (PP12). Members of PARLACEN, for example, should “divulge information” through “reports that sell their activities;” it is important for the “health of the regional process” that regional actors regain their “regionalising motivation” and that they assume “interests, commitments and convictions” that could lead to greater regional achievements (PP12). Others concur adding that the Central American political elites must begin to think as a nation and not confine themselves to economic interests thus reaching a definite regional posture that would eventually contribute to the reinforcement of the regional institutional framework (PP36). The concern of regionalising actors should be to “sell the idea of integration” through “regionalising political decisions” that would eventually lead to supranational institutions with “strong

binding powers” (PP49). It is acceptable that the executives take the lead through the “presidential summits;” what is important is that “adequate follow up” is given to the agreements reached at those summits (PP49). This participant concludes that “it is necessary to sell the idea of integration” because this would “generate willingness” towards integration among reluctant political actors.

The “control” over the process exercised by the Presidents and which delimits the possibilities for regional institutions to obtain binding powers could be challenged “head-on” by regionalising political elites (PP41 and PP42). For example, in the case of PARLACEN, the “way to binding powers” could be facilitated by promoting greater interplay among the Parliament and the National Assemblies (PP42). Regionalism, in other words, requires first, the “integration” of the “political forces” (i.e. the political elite) of the region (PP25). The Parliament and SICA’s General Secretariat could be employed as the basis to build a “regional entity with political personality” that establishes a “symbolic regional president who would not be the head of state” but who “would begin overcoming barriers and who could begin to generate a common foreign policy” for the region (PP41). Through legislation the region could do away with the executive support; “fortunately” and more importantly, it is indicated that the private sector does not have control over legislative decisions (PP41). It is fundamental, however, that integrationist political elites clearly convey the idea that integration does not mean to surrender sovereignty and national identity (PP47):

“The process has an enormous potential with innumerable benefits for the region. Therefore, we need to speed it up with increased political will, we must not think that to bestow power to integration means to surrender power, our sovereignty and national identity; on the contrary, it means the search for greater possibilities of social and economic development, which would be beneficial for all the region’s countries” (PP47).

Rather, the process is about synergy: the common search for the possibility to achieve a degree of development for the region. It is thus essential to “make others aware of the importance of regional integration” and to look for “consensus as to what path the region should follow” (PP3). Regional actors can facilitate convergence by becoming agents of discussion and regional consciousness promoters (PP2, PP3 and PP43). In the end, it is the pro-integration political elites that should “learn to take advantage of the regional institutions” to advance the process (PP40). Regionalising political actors should develop a further “forum of cooperation” within the current institutional framework that could lead to greater integration (PP34). Such a forum must be based on the idea that regional integration is a “development vehicle” which requires that political elites—regionalising or otherwise—“learn” integration: greater understanding about the process, in turn, would “reduce the current disintegration of the national and the regional” (PP34). Table 4.3 sums up the findings regarding the self/other construction.

Table 4.3. Summary of “Identification” Findings

	Executive Powers as the "Other"	Private Sector as the "Other"	Political Elites as 'Norm Entrepreneurs'
Total number of participants	54*	54*	56
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	30	19	52
Percentage of the sample	0.56	0.35	0.93

*= Question not relevant for members of SICA

The data presented in this section seems to corroborate my conception of the existence and role of Central American normative elite networks, and the

enmeshment of the state within those networks. First, it points to the private sector's close relation with other social elite groups and their interconnectedness with the political elite: regional preferences and policies seem to emerge from the struggle and/or convergence among the different groups. Second, it implies the ability of those groups to delimit the spaces in which political actors can construct the region. Third, it denotes the ability of elite groups to control the construction of knowledge, "making" other actors "think" in terms of those groups' interests; fourth, and thus, it reveals their normative power. In the following section, I turn to these narratives' implications for the existence of political will in the isthmus.

Discourse Analysis: Second Phase

In this stage of the analysis I focus on the key events or turning points employed by the participants to reorder their reality along a given meaning. Turning points subsequently become discursive patterns that give essence to the intersubjective structure from which the construction of the region's reality materialises. It is within these discursive turning points and patterns that the dimensions of political will (i.e. ideas, identity and interests) could be better identified. I begin the section with a discussion of the key events of the participants' narratives and the consequences of their willingness to support regional integration.

Syntagmatic Analysis: Implication of Discursive Turning Points

In the data presented in the previous section, the participants employ certain key elements or events that enable them to construct a particular Central American reality in which those elements become turning points that allow the interviewees

to construct the “self” as the saviour of integration. To put it differently, through discursive turning points, the participants construct a “self” who engages in a particular social role taking as redeemers of first, the Central American political elite which has allowed other elite groups to control integrative impulses, and second, of regional integration. From this self construction thus the participants can propose ideas to overcome the stagnant nature of the regional process often conceived of as natural and inevitable. And hence they offer alternate paths for a successful integrative process. In so doing, they initiate the ideational drive of socialisation I elaborated in chapter three: political elites propose alternative policy choices to other social elites which begin an ideational struggle that concludes once willingness is achieved, modified or halted.

The first of such turning points is that of integration as a centralised process. The centralisation of regionalism occurs at two levels, that of the executive powers and that of the private sector. Importantly, this centralisation enables the participants to distance themselves from the unsuccessful record of integration in that region; I will return to this point subsequently. It is noteworthy that the centralised nature of regionalism leads to a second discursive turning point: the focus of the process; namely, economic integration. It is interesting that for the interviewees the economic characteristics of regionalism detract from the legitimacy of the process. Economic integration is perceived to be constructed in such a way that promotes the limited interests of the business elite rather than moving forward the integration of the Central American societies. In this conception, the particular construction of the private sector “otherness” is significant as implies that that “other” can “impede” through its influence on the executive powers trends that may lead to further integration, or alternatively,

imposes policies in the direction of national development rather than supranational. The concern among participants about the current focus on economic integration seemingly arises from the competition that the exploitation of comparative advantages entails. Resources in the region are limited. It is perceived that economic agreements supported by the private sector (i.e. CAFTA-DR) lead to competition for those resources rather than to the regional complementarity of the latter. Such agreements, thus, lead the region's governments to develop *national* economic policies rather than *regional* thereby limiting the spaces in which a popular regional identity or consciousness can emerge and hence delimiting the integration process.

The economic nature of the process and thus the limited popular participation is the result of the links between the executives and the private sector. Arguably, the region has developed a process tailored to the interests of the economic elite. More importantly, only four interviewees argue that the private sector has a positive influence on the regional process. And another participant (PP41) argues that fortunately the region's legislative bodies are not controlled by the economic sectors. What seems to be overlooked in the construction of the private sector as "other" is the relationship among the participants as members of both the political and economic elites: several interviewees are directly involved in businesses, some have stakes in the media and industrial sector, and others are well known to have links with members of powerful business groups such as that led by former Guatemalan President Álvaro Arzú. In this respect, it is noteworthy that only 23 participants commented on the "otherness" of the private sector of whom nineteen constructed the economic sector as a negative "other." Several others (e.g. PP38

and PP39) overtly opted not to comment on the issue. Another issue to contemplate in this respect is campaign funding which could be a mechanism to lock-in political elites into normative networks.¹⁴⁹

Another key element in the narrative that arises from the centralised nature of the process is the lack of “binding powers” among the regional institutions. In this respect, the regional institutional framework is not able to function as a platform from which to secure and launch emerging popular integrative impulses: the process is thus without Central Americans as it has not been able to fully incorporate the region’s peoples. In this respect, it is notable that the interviewees implicitly have adopted the notion that multilevel participation, more specifically popular participation, is a fundamental variable in the process. This is more remarkable because traditionally the popular sectors’ participation in the region has not been granted much importance among political elites. It seems thus that regional integration is contributing to a “democratising” trend in the ideational structure of the political elites. In any case, without binding powers regional institutions cannot offer “palpable products” to the Central American societies and thus regional integration does not resonate in peoples’ perception. By arguing so, the political elite here represented suggest that the regions institutions lack “entitativity;” that is the power of action in the mind of the general population. No entitativity, in other words, implies a limited psychological existence of regional institutions which partly curtails the emergence or strengthening of a shared identity.

This leads to a further turning point which is that of the lack or limited regional consciousness or identity. As we have seen, it is recognised by a few

¹⁴⁹ Garcia (2005: 26) indicates that “undoubtedly” the main funding for political parties comes from the “private sources” of the region’s elite.

participants that there is limited consciousness among certain members of the political elites including members of the Parliament. The bulk of such criticism falls, however, on the region's Presidents. Arguably, the executives lack regional consciousness and an in-depth knowledge about the process as they depend on their advisors for regional policy options. This particular construction of otherness makes the Presidents vulnerable to external influential forces such as the private sector. Also, however, it makes them accessible to the influence of the participants. As we have seen it is suggested that the integrationist actors could "insist" on the Presidents through their advisers. It is also concerning for the participants that the Central American people lack a regional identity. For this reason they see it as their "duty" to work on the consciousness and identity of the mass population. In this respect, the participants perceive that they need to "learn" to "sell" the idea of integration through educational and informative programs through which they can empower integrative norms. The participants suggest that a shift in the structure of regional power would be possible through the advancement of ideas that lead to a greater regional consciousness, especially among the common Central Americans. Implied in this line of argument is the conception that an increase in regional popular identity would impose constraints on the regional policies that the executives pursue. Such a democratic conception of regionalism is indeed a radical shift in the ideational structure of the region's political elites.

An additional important trend in the narrative is the discursive construction of "otherness." As can be deduced from the preceding discussion, that construction enables the participants to construct the "self" as a transformative regional agent capable of working on the regional identity or

consciousness of the people and on that of the Presidents. The participant can thus transform “common” Central Americans into agents of integration. In turn, this transformation could limit the overwhelming tendency of the process to focus on the economic space and shift attention to the social space in which integration could positively affect the Central American societies. That is to say that the participants can engage in the production of norms which could change the direction of the “whims” of the Presidents. The construction of the executives’ and the private sector’s “otherness” as the delimiting factors for the success of integration, projects the interviewees as actors who grasp what changes are needed to uncover the Central American “nation” hidden beneath the surface of economic integration. They perceive themselves as capable of carrying out those changes in order for the people to take charge of their own destiny as a unified region. The participants, thus, become norm entrepreneurs generating a series of ideas that initiate an ideational struggle within normative elite networks.

It is worth noting that the participants favour further integration. There is, in other words, a political elite initiative to advance integration. More remarkable is the fact that this willingness exists across political parties, ideological stances, and regional and national levels. Although ideology could be an element of friction in a regional process, seemingly there is a common understanding among the different ideological currents represented in the sample about what tasks need to be undertaken to generate integrative initiatives. This intersubjective convergence occurs, for example, between such disparate parties as former guerrilla fronts FSLN (Nicaragua) and FMLN (El Salvador), and their

conservative counterparts the Liberal Party and ARENA respectively.¹⁵⁰ To put it differently, within regionalism ideology does not seem to lead to conflicts. Rather, some participants (PP11 and PP17) indicate that ideology can be used as a vehicle for regional integration. Ideology, for instance, could be used by pro-integration actors to generate party commitment towards the process (PP13 and PP34). The current ideological harmonisation could be the basis for a Central-Americanist ideology (PP4). This elite complementarity across potentially “political conflict lines” has great significance as an “indicator” of a shared identity. Seemingly, thus, the political elites’ loyalties and interests are subordinated to the construction of regional norms and policies that they believe could challenge the current status quo. This implies a shared commitment to the construction of the region based on a common set of values and objectives. In turn, such commitment points to a common identity among the majority of participants: the regional complements (rather than competes with) the national identity. I will return to the significance of this finding subsequently. First, I turn to the implications of the discursive regularities in the narratives here analysed.

Paradigmatic Analysis: Implications of Discursive Regularities

In this section I analyse the implications of the argumentation patterns or discursive regularities employed in the interviews to construct Central American regional integration. Several interesting patterns emerge. It is noteworthy the discursive overlap of the interviewees centres on the idea that increased regional consciousness would lead to further integration. This view rests on the conception that they through the dissemination of information and the

¹⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that ARENA (ARENA: prin. 12) and the FMLN (FMLN: art. 5) both include in their party platform or principles, pro-integration articles.

educational system can generate a broader sense of community that would, in turn, facilitate the process. The participants perceive that greater engagement in the process has the capacity for constructing a regional or supranational identity among the Central American mass population which in turn would generate integrative impulses. Such construction, they perceive, would socialise reluctant members of the political elites leading to a reshuffle of the process' emphasis from an economic focus to a socio-cultural and political one. In this process, constant interaction among elite members would form socialising bonds that eventually would turn reluctance into a regional identity. Although not at one instance the participants indicate that the attitudes of the normative elite can be transformed, implicit in their line of reasoning is that, perhaps by proxy (e.g. supporting presidential initiatives), the normative elite would also enter the process and support new regionalising trends that may affect the benefits that they obtain from the economic spaces of integration.

In such argumentation patterns, proposals to disseminate ideas and information about regionalism imply an ideational struggle to diffuse norms conducive to higher levels of integration. This struggle resembles the Ideational Drive model of socialisation and the Circumscribed-statist model of norm diffusion I elaborated in the previous chapter. For example, what we observe in these narratives is that political elites are acting as producers or filters of norms in an ideational struggle; and, at the same time, they seem to be searching for “support” from an “unnamed” societal sector. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume from their narratives that the state is experiencing a fair degree of enmeshment within networks I have conceptualised as normative, which are conformed by the different social elite groups that the participants label as the

“economic class,” “private sector” or the “oligarchies.” In addition, the channel that the participants propose to be employed to disseminate integration, namely the media, fits the theoretical elaboration of the aforementioned models. The media, for example, is admitted by the participants to be under the control of the economic class who, according to the participants, is also directly involved with the region’s Presidents in the “management” of the region. The proposed use of the media as a regionalising mechanism depends in the last instance on those who control it; that is, the private sector. It seems, thus, that the employment of the media by political elites presupposes a consultation process wherein the “social producers of information” support (i.e. publish information related to) a particular regionalising norm.

It is also salient with respect to the dissemination and construction of regional norms that in the majority of interviews (43), there is a discursive regularity that proposes educational strategies as a diffusion mechanism; for example, the use of education through the development of regional integration modules at all stages. This approach has two striking implications. First, it seems that the consultation process with the normative elites indicated in the preceding paragraph is paralleled by further ideational struggle. The use of education for integrationist purposes entails the generation of ideas through which the Central American political elites have entered a process of redefining their understanding of integration towards a more socio-political meaning which would detract from the economic focus on the process thereby affecting the interests of the normative elite. Second, it suggests that there is a fair degree of willingness among these political elites towards the advancement of integration. Their predisposition towards regionalism is readily observable in their willingness to

cede, albeit perhaps minimally, authority over educational matters to regional institutions in an area traditionally related to the transmission and redefinition of the “national” identity. I will return momentarily to the discussion of this point.

First, however, it is important to highlight that in the participants’ discourse there is a practice which runs as a connecting thread through almost all the interviews: the success of regional integration depends on their normative entrepreneurship. As such entrepreneurs, they will transform supranational institutions into integrative “catalysts” wherein regionalising norms would be empowered. Political elites, thus, must engage in a process of social engineering through which they can construct a regional identity that eventually will drag the region’s Presidents into entering higher levels of integration and that would balance the normative elite’s influence on the process. By doing so, in other words, the political elites would first construct a regional pluralist system, and the entailing multilevel participation, conceived of as a prerequisite for success; and second, as norm entrepreneurs, they would directly enter an ideational struggle with their “others” in an attempt to challenge the current normative structure. Additionally, we cannot ignore the normative dimension of the “data” here presented. The members of the political elite interviewed position themselves as “exogenous” to the “circles of power;” for example, outside the family and kinship networks in which I previously argued the state has been enmeshed and through which the region’s normative elite exercise their power. Regional integration, it seems, opens spaces which, in turn, generate possibilities to overrun the “barriers” that keep them outside those circles.

In this “outsider” conception of the self, in addition, the participants have embedded the idea that they are removed from the political structure: distant

from political parties, the state, the government and more emphatically the executives. Specifically, they construct themselves as possessing limited, if any, political influence. For this reason they have become norm entrepreneurs striving to construct a new set of regional “cultural” values and symbols in an attempt to further integration. In this construction of the self there is a fact being overlooked by the interviewees: they *are*—in the same manner as the executives they so acutely criticise—members of the political elite and of political parties, and an essential part of the state and governments; and that hence they *do* influence the regional process through the policies they propose, advance or otherwise.

Returning to the existence of political will, it is important to underscore the support that is observable in the “data” here presented. When asked directly about the existence of political will in the region, only 20 participants expressed a positive reply. This outlook, I argue, arises from the interviewees’ self construction as outsiders. In other words, when the participants as “exogenous elements” of the political structure reflect on political will they do so in terms of the willingness of the Executive, the state, the government or party leaders. Their discursive practices indicate otherwise. From the latter, it is conceivable to argue that despite such an “outsider” self construction there is in Central America a fair degree of political will toward integration among the region’s political elites. Here political will is understood as the predisposition of political elites to advance or support integrative trends in a given region. Such predisposition emerges from the convergence of integrative ideas, regional identity and interests. In the first instance, from the regularities among the discursive practices of the participants, integrative ideas are advanced by the majority (51) of interviewees. The ideas proposed range from “teaching integration,” to developing “social

programs” to level the region’s societies, to creating diffusion mechanisms, among others. Such ideas are shared, as could be expected, by all the interviewees who are members of regional institutions. This trend is all the more striking as it is deeply ingrained in the discourse of national political actors who, conventionally in the study of regional integration in Central America, are conceived of as halting the process through their control of the regional agenda (e.g. Grugel and Payne, 2000). Specifically, integrative ideas are also shared and proposed by 32 of the 37 national political actors interviewed in this study.

With regard to the second dimension of willingness, that of a shared identity, from the findings I have discussed, it seems that there is a fair degree of regional identity. For instance, there are discursive regularities that employ “we Central American” expressions. In addition, in those discursive practices one easily detects that in the participants’ ideational underpinnings their nations are encompassed by a greater construction; that is Central America. As a high ranking official of Panama’s PRD puts it, the region’s “Political Borders are not equivalent to its social realities” (PP53). Furthermore, among those participants from countries traditionally considered as Central America, their discourse indicates that the shared history of integration generates a significant common identity (PP7). References to historical figures (e.g. Morazán¹⁵¹) who have struggled for the region’s union are made (e.g. PP7 and PP11). In the words of one of the participants (PP46):

“The possibility for integration does exist, but we need political leadership. What is needed is the formation of a legal entity, for instance, to create again the Greater Republic of Central America. The historic vision among our countries is ever present. The realisation of the need for a larger market gives rise to the need for

¹⁵¹ General Francisco Morazán, a central figure in the history of union in the region, was one of the early leaders of the Central American Federation. He was President of the United Provinces of Central America during the 1830s; on Morazán see Karnes (1961) and Woodward (1999).

political union, which means it conjugates material interest with the unionist ideal... Contradictions exist between the political will and the execution of the process. There cannot be a prosperous future without integration. Political parties must assume the initiative... In Central America we are striving to re-establish Union; we are not initiating the process as is the case in other regions. Morazán is important” (PP46).

Forty-six participants employ discursive practices that signal such a shared regional identity; among these there are 30 national political actors. Importantly, this identity is shared by six of the nine Costa Ricans interviewed; this is notable because the Costa Rican political elite traditionally has striven to remain aloof from integration (e.g. Costa Rica is not a PARLACEN member). There are, in addition, signs of a Central American identity in the countries relatively “new” members of the region which are included in the study (i.e. Panama and Dominican Republic). In the case of Panama, four of the five participants identify with the idea of Central America; in that of Dominican Republic, three of the four interviewees do likewise.

There are also notable findings that point to the existence of the final dimension of political will; that is, shared interest among political elites. Considering the nature of the sample, it would be largely redundant to state that the participants share political interests; although it is noteworthy that there are a few exceptions to this redundancy as two interviewees emphatically argue for reforms that protect only economic interests. It is more striking that the evidence from the discursive regularities I identified points to the convergence among interviewees around socio-cultural interests which are understood to potentially lead to successful integration. Fifty participants employ in their discourse arguments in support of reforms that entail: the participation of the general population in the process, the incorporation of ideas emanating from the common Central Americans, the need to generate a Central American culture and the use

of education as a socialisation mechanism, among others. The following table summarises the discursive findings regarding political will.

Table 4.4. Political Will in Central America

	Dimensions of Political Will		
	Ideas	Identity	Interests
Total number of participants	56	56	56
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	51	46	50
Percentage of the sample	0.91	0.82	0.89

Political will towards regional integration, therefore, exists in the intersubjective structure of Central America as the ideas, identity and interests of the region’s political elites included in this study interplay positively in the direction of regionalism. Such interplay has led to a normative “spillover:” while the political elites generate integrative ideas the focus of their interest is modified (e.g. from the political to the cultural) and, at the same time, their shared identity is strengthened; while this process occurs they propose alternative strategies to further integration and by doing so they become normative entrepreneurs. To put it differently, from the discursive evidence I have uncovered in this chapter, it seems that there is a fair predisposition among the Central American political elites towards the advancement of regional integration.

Disagreement may arise about the significance of my findings. It could be argued, for example, that perhaps due to the presidential nature of the region’s political system, the political will that the participants display has relatively limited weight in the conduct of politics. This is because my sample is composed largely of members of legislative bodies and high ranking party officials.

However, if we are to accept the presidential system argument, perhaps it is not lack of predisposition among the presidents that delimits integration as they are members of the same political parties and come from the same societal circles as the interviewees. In this sense, conceivably, they share the participants' discursive and intersubjective elements through which they construct the region. This is especially so when the link between the executives and the private sector, and the negative effect that such relation has on regional integration, is most strongly emphasised by an interviewee who is a former President of one of the region's countries and who was involved in the reactivation of regionalism in the early 1990s. Perhaps, then, it is in the interactions of political and social elites within networks that the predisposition of normative elites is superimposed. In other words, it is within that interplay that social will delimits what is regionally possible. The findings presented in this chapter, to conclude, seem to empirically corroborate the conceptualisation of the relationship between the state and normative networks, the normative power of the latter, in addition to the socialisation models and norm diffusion mechanisms; that is, the Central Americanised model of regional integration I propose.

Conclusion

Regional integration in Central America materialises in an ideational struggle within normative networks. The members of the political elites here interviewed seem to be actively involved in a process of norm elaboration and contestation: they propose a redefined conception of the region. The ideas offered by the participants point to attempts at generating new regional norms underpinned by the belief that integrative impulses originating from popular sectors are the key to

a successful regional process. To materialise such impulses, it is necessary that political elites strive to transform integration into a true agenda item; they must attempt to empower integrative ideas and norms. Seemingly, the participants have grasped the idea that by empowering new regional norms they can redefine the distribution of power in the region. In this context, national political actors increasingly converge with their regional counterparts. And in this convergence they perceive themselves as the redeemers of the region's political elites who have failed to consolidate a unified Central America; they can generate the dynamics needed to do so. In addition, the discursive practices of the interviewees suggest that this normative reconstruction is opposed by the region's executives and the normative elites. Through such construction of the "other" the participants construct themselves as the key integrationist actors who could "teach" others to be Central Americans. They are the vanguard of the process and as such they can design and implement a "real" regionalising strategy. This construction of the self as redeemer of the political elite and of the regional process signals the existence of political will in Central America.

At the outset of this chapter, I proposed that the counterfactual exercise here employed was beneficial because it would allow us to "test" assumed dictums and current hypotheses about the nature of integration in Central America. From the empirical findings of this chapter, Haas' (1967: 341) classic assertion that integration in the region is deprived of an integrative strategy and the political will to execute it, can be challenged. As we have seen, there is evidence of a latent integrative strategy and a significant convergence among the participants with regard to the three dimensions of "willingness;" namely, ideas, identity and interests. It is hence possible to argue that there is a considerable

degree of political will towards regional integration in Central America. What is more, there is a nascent integrative strategy among the participants; one that employs uncommon mechanisms to disseminate the process. With regard to the “unwillingness” (Sánchez, 2003b) and the “imposing vision” (Sánchez, 2003a) hypotheses, it is difficult to detect evidence in support of their premises. I have argued above that there is a fair degree of willingness among political elites. Based on the opinions expressed by the interviewees, it seems adequate to argue that their vision is not reflected by the current economic nature of the process: 50 interviewees assign a socio-cultural meaning to integration. Others may argue that the “unwillingness” and “imposing vision” propositions refer to the role of the presidents in the process and that some of the interviewees (30 participants) support that claim as they point to the overwhelming role of the region’s presidents. And yet, it is crucial to indicate that nineteen interviewees contend that there are other groups with the power to influence, if not outright determine, the presidents’ regional positions. Perhaps, then, the study of what I label social will can further our understanding of the process nature in that region. With this in mind, in the following chapter I assess social will in Central America.

Chapter 5. Counterfactual Exercise Part II: Social Will and Regional Integration in Central America

Introduction

In this chapter I assess the “existence” of social will, or the predisposition of normative elites to support or not support the regionalisation process. I do so through the study of the ideas, identity and interests of the Central American normative elites. As I argued in chapter two, business groups, and the organisations that represent them, are an important segment of normative elite networks. Their dominance of society’s economic space does not mean that they are isolated or separated from social elites. They are interconnected within the normative elite networks. For example, as I pointed out (see table 2.1), six Central American presidents in the last ten years have had direct links with some of the regional business organisations studied in this chapter. To refer to those organisations, in this chapter I employ terms such as “private sector” or “business elites” which may seem to go against my critique of the use of such functional terms. And yet, I deem that their use is necessary in order to “respect” the discursive practices of the participants as they use those terms recurrently. In a sense, such internalisation of a functional identity sheds light on the embeddedness of the modernity/corporatism discourse I have striven to question. To compensate for the employment of such terms, I assess if the participants in this study construct themselves as “normative.”

In the previous chapter we learned about the existence of political will in Central America and about the limited fit between the ideas, identity and interests of the interviewees and the nature of regional integration. Considering

those findings, I argued that perhaps as a background condition social will had a greater determinant role in the integration process. Indeed, the discursive patterns among normative elites identified in the present chapter parallel strategic shifts or trends that the process has experienced. The social will proposition is thus reinforced.

The first section of the chapter describes the normative elite sample. I subsequently divide the chapter into two further sections. One section traces social will in the “reactivation” of regional integration in the early 1990s. It argues that indeed, at that period, there existed a degree of social will in the region as the ideas, identity and interests among Central American normative elites converged. In the second section, I employ a discourse analysis (discussed in the introductory chapter) to assess the existence of social will in the isthmus during the period 2005-08. I identify a significant discursive difference in the construction of the region. One discourse conceives of the region inwardly or from a “Central Americanist” view: the end of integration is the development of the region, more explicitly, of the Central American people. The other discourse is outward-looking or “instrumentalist:” it aims at improving the region’s positioning in the global economy. This difference, I argue, points to a limited social will. I conclude by arguing that the determinant influence of regional business organisations (RBOs) as representatives of normative elite networks in the regionalisation process and their interplay with the region’s political elites, can be best understood by employing the Central Americanised model of integration developed in chapters two and three.

Central American Social Elites: A Note on Sources and Sample¹⁵²

The reactivation of regional integration in Central America in the early 1990s is considered by observers as a defining instance in the emergence of new regionalism in that area. In the following section, I argue that such reactivation could be further understood through the existence of social will. With that objective, I trace such existence through a detailed reading of available RBOs' position papers and proposals. For the assessment of social will in the 2005-08 period, the subject of the third section of this chapter, I conducted interviews in person and via telephone, and circulated a questionnaire among members of Central American RBOs. There are sixteen participants. This sample may seem "weaker" when compared to that of the analysis of political elites in the previous chapter. The sample is to an extent limited for two reasons. First, RBOs are "reticent." For example, the majority of them and their national member associations do not publish contact details of their high ranking officials; others do not have websites in which one can identify their officials or members. Despite repeated attempts (in written form and via telephone) to invite their members to participate in this study, some organisations simply did not respond to the invitations. Second, the sample is somewhat limited due to the availability of resources to further carry out my field research. It is also important to note that the individuals who preside over or who command these organisations are limited in numbers, and that perhaps to an extent this is reflected in the sample number.¹⁵³

¹⁵² All interviews and questionnaires were conducted and completed in August and October, 2005; February-April, 2007; and January-April, 2008. They were conducted in Spanish, and all printed sources from RBOs were also in Spanish; where textually quoted, they are my translation. The same caveat offered for the interviews in chapter four applies to this chapter (see fn. 26).

¹⁵³ Nonetheless, I have tried to compensate for the number of participants by "triangulating" their discourse practices with published reports, speeches and studies. These attempts, however, have

For those RBOs' members who accepted my invitation, I offered anonymity to entice them to be "open" in their opinions. For this reason and continuing with the practice of the previous chapter, I have assigned a code to each participant (e.g. SP1 refers to "social participant number one"). The sample includes current (at the time of writing) presidents, board members and executive directors of RBOs and of their associated national business organisation (NBOs).¹⁵⁴ It also includes "powerful" members of those NBOs: one participant is a former vice-president and congressman of his country while another is a close relative of a former president of his country, and of a former PARLACEN president. The sample includes, in addition, a chief economic adviser and a market adviser to RBOs. I have attempted to include at least one participant from each country member of SICA; see appendix VIII for the RBOs and countries represented in the sample. And appendix IX presents excerpts of the interviews (in Spanish) carried out in the development of this chapter.

Social Will and the Reactivation of Regional Integration

In this section, I intent to shed light on the existence and role of social will in the Central American region during the reactivation of the process in the 1990s. Observers have argued that the re-launch of integration in that region was not a process brought about by the end of the Cold War or by changes in US preferences, but in the historical integrationist patterns of the isthmus (Sánchez,

been frustrated by the availability of those publications. Some RBOs and their national members do not make public their position papers, proposals or other documents. When I contacted their "librarians," in the majority of cases my requests were at best accepted and never given follow up, or they were simply ignored.

¹⁵⁴ Regional business federations, or what I refer to as RBOs, are composed of the national federation of each Central American country, or what I labeled NBOs. For example, FECAMCO is the regional federation of Chambers of Commerce and it is composed of the Chambers of Commerce of each of the region's countries.

2003b: 34; Fawcett, 2005: 41). Regional integration, however, became an essential component of the liberalisation and privatisation programs implemented in the region and in the long run it became a “scapegoat” to deflect the political pressures that emerged from the implementation of those programs (Phillips, 2003: 329). Regionalism facilitated the region’s state participation in the global economy and hence reduced, if not eliminated, the possibilities of becoming isolated and also increased the state’s leverage (Grugel and Hout, 1999: 6). The aim of the process was the integration of the region into the international economy; hence integration became a process purposively structured by the region’s attempts to integrate itself into the global market where it conceived that its growth possibilities lay (Sánchez, 2003b: 35). I argue that in the background of such pursuit, was social will.

Indeed, RBOs’ integrative proposals, published commentaries by their members and those of NBOs point to the functioning and fundamental role of social will in the region during that period. After the decline of the Central American Common Market (CACM), efforts at reenergising the scheme during the 1970s were unsuccessful. There is evidence that the RBOs that represented the Central American normative elites such as FECAICA were not able to present a definite unified position regarding the restructuring of integration (Mariscal, 1983: 223). Those elites who benefited most (i.e. Guatemalan and Salvadoran) from CACM were reluctant to support reforms that would endanger their regional benefits (Mariscal, 1983: 204-216).¹⁵⁵

By the mid-1980s, however, a degree of social will was emerging: conditions in El Salvador and Guatemala were evolving positively towards the

¹⁵⁵ On the unequal distribution of benefits within CACM see also Fagan (1970) and Greiner (1991).

re-launching of regionalism. El Salvador's FUSADES, proposed a new regional economic model. The scheme would develop a diversified and efficient production structure, and generate higher profits through increased exports. It also proposed to increase the region's import capacity, level of employment, and expand its market (FUSADES, 1986: 4). Tellingly, the model required CACM's reactivation. As a FUSADES' official asserted, interdependence among the Central American states deepened to such an extent that when solutions to national issues could not be found independently, they had to be found regionally.¹⁵⁶ Such proposals marked a shift in the Salvadoran position, and some of El Salvador's NBOs proposed similar views. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for example, in its proposal for economic reforms indicated that it was essential to reactivate integration. Central America, according to the Chamber, was El Salvador's "natural market," to which a high percentage of Salvadoran products were already destined (CAMARASAL, 1995). With the decline of CACM, the role of the Central American RBOs had declined. The new integrative impulses emerging in El Salvador, however, led FUSADES to attempt at revitalising those RBOs (Lungo-Uclès, 1996: 135).

Social will was also evolving in Guatemala where the Chamber of Industry established that its essential purpose was to consolidate the regional market and to increase its negotiation leverage in the international market through the region's integrated action. It was argued that accomplishing this objective would allow the Guatemalan industrialists to increase their exports. In turn, such an achievement would produce economic growth for the country (CIG, 1999). According to Jacobo Tefel (1999), Director of the Chamber, the strategy

¹⁵⁶ Roberto Murray Meza, quoted in Lungo-Uclès (1996: 136). This inclination to search for regional solutions seems to point in the direction of the binary identity I proposed in the introductory chapter.

was directed at the attainment of “larger markets for a larger number of industrial and agro-industrial products with a greater local content;” the aim was to “strengthen the development of the integration process” and the modernisation of its institutions.

In the past, the reluctance of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan elites concerning integration reforms did not allow RBOs to produce a solid position regarding the process. Therefore, the existence of social will in the region should have reversed this condition and enabled those organisations to present such a position. Indeed, in a key position document, two RBOs, FEDEPRICAP and FECAICA (1991: iv-v), declared that the regional private enterprises organisations are working “in the same direction.” Their objectives in this joint endeavour were the improvement of regional productivity, export-led development, the exploitation of the region’s comparative advantage, increased regional competitiveness, and access to larger markets (FEDEPRICAP/FECAICA, 1991: ii-iv). The end product of this process was the formation of “business clusters” through which enterprises could take advantage of shared resources (e.g. large scale purchases of material) and increase their competitiveness (FEDEPRICAP/FECAICA, 1991: ii-iii). The “strategic objective” of regional integration was the “achievement of the global goals of development” of “each” country (FEDEPRICAP/FECAICA, 1991: 5). Importantly, the successful re-emergence of regionalism required that the old “totalising, linear and technocratic” traditional strategies and theories of integration be substituted by a “pragmatic” approach based on business entrepreneurship (FEDEPRICAP/FECAICA, 1991: 6). In addition, FEDEPRICAP (1990: 87-91) established that Central America must improve

regional efficiency and cooperation to obtain “greater penetration and participation in larger economic blocs.” These goals, according to FEDEPRICAP, could be accomplished through the utilisation of regional integration’s mechanisms. It was an “imperative necessity” that the private sector and the region’s governments begin joint efforts to confront the challenges presented by the international economy; if this convergence did not take place, the region’s future was to be limited and exacerbated by harsh economic conditions (FEDEPRICAP, 1990: 89). The strategic mechanism to ensure a regional success, for FEDEPRICAP (1990: 90), was the establishment of a “national inter-sectoral” mechanism in each country which would “elaborate the diagnosis and formulate regional proposals according to their conditions and particularities.” The objective of this—we may call—normative networks was to “strengthen and consolidate” the Central American “economic community” (FEDEPRICAP, 1990: 89).

Another RBO, FECAMCO, suggested that in order to achieve development (economic, political and social) it was necessary to facilitate deeper integration (FECAMCO, 1990: 95). FECAMCO expressed concerns about the levels of efficiency and quality control in the region; and it also advocated industrial modernisation and the promotion and diversification of exports (FECAMCO, 1990: 96). Moreover, FECAMCO underlined the need for an adequate level of competitiveness in the region. According to the Federation, these objectives could be accomplished through exports as the foundation for economic growth which would enable the region to better participate in the international economy (FECAMCO, 1990: 97-98). To this end, FECAMCO proposed CACM’s reactivation, and it emphasised the benefits of negotiating as

a bloc; it concluded that it was necessary to advance toward higher integration levels (1990: 98-99). It was fundamental, then, to dismantle the import substitution industrialisation (ISI) structure put in place during the early phases of CACM in order to exploit the productive potentials facilitated by the “new economic rules” of the international economy (FECAMCO, 1990: 97). The establishment of a “coordination and consultation” instrument between the public and the private sectors must “secure the adequate participation of the private sector in the design and formulation of Central American policies” (FECAMCO, 1990: 99).

Similarly, FECAICA (1990: 104) argued that economic integration must be one of the bases for economic growth. Integration had to be based on the increase of exports which would lead to larger markets. It was of vital importance that integration fomented free trade and that it established a common external tariff (CET). To this end, it was necessary to elaborate the “adequate legislation and financial support system” (FECAICA, 1990: 105). Integration’s “central objective” must be the equal development of all the Central American countries (FECAICA, 1990: 105). Subsequent treaties to reactivate regional integration in the isthmus expressed similar positions regarding development. For example, the *Tegucigalpa Protocol* (SICA, 1991: art. 3; emphasis added) established that Central America’s “fundamental objective” was to achieve its integration in order to “constitute itself as a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.” Article 4:e of the *Protocol* (SICA, 1991) went one step further in development and attempted to address the issues about the unequal distribution of benefits that had hindered regionalism previously. In this sense, it assigned “special treatment” to the region’s relatively “less” developed countries.

SICA, in short, was to promote a “harmonious and balanced” sustainable development (SICA, 1991: 3:h).

From this examination three points must be highlighted. First, it is significant to note that proposals reviewed here predate (i.e. FUSADES, 1986) or are contemporaries (e.g. FEDEPRICAP and FECAMCO, 1990) of President Bush’s Enterprise for the Americas (launched in mid-1990) and NAFTA (1994). The latter two are considered as the fundamental catalyst for the reactivation of regionalism in the Central American area.¹⁵⁷ This reinforces the argument that the re-emergence of integration was partially produced by the historical integrative tendencies in the region and not exclusively by the hegemony of the US.

Versions of such “innate” argument (see Sánchez, 2003b) take the position that the reactivation reflected the governments’ preferences which were constrained by domestic and international forces. From the previous discussion—and the “data” presented in the preceding chapter—it seems difficult to sustain this position. Seemingly, RBOs were not restraining government actions *per se* but were defining government preferences, strategies and policies. The RBOs studied in this section were rather influencing normatively the shape, extent and aims of regional integration through normative networks with which governments were to “consult” regarding regional policies. It is one of FECAICA’s proposals (1990: 106) that best illustrates this point: “The governments must set in a precise manner and immediately the modalities and deadlines for the restructuring” of the regional integration system, “taking into account the points of views of the industrial sector” and other sectors (e.g.

¹⁵⁷ See for example, Grugel and Payne (2000) and Gamble and Payne (2003). On the Enterprise see Payne (1996).

commerce) that participate in the process. The proposal continues, “Your Excellencies, Mister Presidents, this document presents our fundamental position regarding regional integration, and in any moment we can specify, discuss and negotiate the consolidation of our position into policies and measures leading to Central American development” (FECAICA, 1990: 107).

The third point to emphasise is that the discussion identifies the convergence of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan normative elites and how this convergence was articulated by the regional organisations that represent them around the three dimensions of social will: ideas, identity, and interests. Ideationally, these elites assigned an economic meaning to integration: integration is economic development. In addition, the documents examined reveal a high degree of awareness about a Central American “self:” they all perceive that the national and regional are inextricably linked. Regarding interests, these were underpinned by a common economic core: larger markets, increased exports, and economic efficiency; capitalizing these interests would, in turn, through regional integration, produce economic growth for country and region. It is interesting to note, in addition, that the evidence presented in this section suggests that Central America is being conceptualised as an “entity” that could be transformed into a competitive unit. In any case, causal relations among the components of social will are difficult to determine. It is possible, however, that as the Central American identity interacted with the interests dimension they generated integrative ideas among the members of normative elites leading to the reactivation of the process. Table 5.1 summarises this section’s findings.

Table 5.1. Social Will During the Reactivation of Regionalism, 1990s

<i>Ideas</i>	<i>Identity</i>	<i>Interests</i>
Economic meaning assigned to integration → integration is economic development	Awareness of Central American “self” → the national and regional are inextricably linked	Underlined by common economic core: larger markets, increased trade and economic efficiency
Articulated through neo-liberal model	It points to the existence of a binary identity	Lead to economic growth for country and region

Bull (1999) has noted that following the reactivation of integration, there emerged “two competing regionalisms:” one obedient to internal integrative impulses (e.g. historical links) and one responding to global and hemispheric integrative demands. Indeed, as I argue in the next section, these competing regionalisms have led to the strategic modifications and the stagnation of the process; the inability to establish an institutional framework with binding powers is a good example of the stagnant phase that the region is experiencing. I argue, in addition, that the competing regionalisms are the result of the decline of social will: discursive fault-lines have emerged in the narrative of normative elites. On the one hand, there is a pragmatic discourse, the “instrumentalist construction” of regionalism in which regionalisation leads to an improved position in the global economy for the region’s countries through the exploitation of competitive advantages, and ultimately to more profitable Central American enterprises. This construction seems to underpin the discourse employed in the RBOs’ documents and positions analysed thus far in this section. On the other hand, there is a “Central Americanist construct” in which regional integration does indeed facilitate and improve the participation of the region’s countries in the global market but its stated aim is the sustainable development of the people: it brings the region to Central Americans. I identify these constructs in the following section.

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Discursive representations, valuations and “self” and “other” constructs enable individuals to build a particular reality. More specifically, from these intersubjective elements, individuals determine key events from which the “meaning” of their reality emerges. It is thus the identification of these discursive elements in the participants’ narrative that this phase of the analysis targets. In the first subsection, I concentrate on the participants’ discursive representations of the process and its institutions (e.g. institutional capacity). The second subsection traces the participants’ “valuations” (e.g. social meaning is assigned to integration) about the process. The third subsection analyses the construction of “self” and “other.”

Discursive Representations of Regional Integration

All participants represent the process as vital, important or fundamental. The space in which integration is significant is the economic one. In that sense, all participants agree that regionalism is economic integration. The process brings increased competitiveness for the region as its economies can complement each other within regional integration (SP5), and also harmonises laws that facilitate investment (SP6 and SP7). The participants differ, however, in what the “end” of that economic space should be and who the major beneficiary should be; I will return to this point subsequently.

Integration is an intergovernmental process of cooperation in economic aspects which leads to the delegation of political power to regional institutions (SP16). For a Honduran member of FEDEPRICAP (SP6) the Central American

market is a “nostalgic market:” regional integration should become a mechanism to “increase and channel” foreign investment toward “productive and profitable projects,” and thus enable Central America to compete more efficiently in the international market. For others (SP8 and SP9) integration is simply equivalent to a common market. Regionalism is fundamental because it is an economic process that aims at achieving economies of scale leading to the successful participation of the region in the international economy (SP4). This is achieved by facilitating competitiveness:

“The most important fact is that [regional integration] facilitates the free movement of goods and services, improving the competitiveness of regional businesses through the coordination of norms and laws, and also facilitating the growth of businesses, improving their competitive position outside the region... The CAFTA is a multilateral treaty. For this reason, it is important to design regional integration to complement it but not to affect it” (SP4).

Integration, thus, must be structured in a manner that complements and does not interfere with trade schemes that lead to the region’s participation in the global market. A Guatemalan participant (SP5) agrees with such complementarity and adds that integration is an important process for the private sector but unfortunately, the process has been hindered by inefficient institutions and the lack of political will.

For a Panamanian member of FEDEPRICAP (SP13), integration is a process based on “democratic principles, poverty reduction and historical ties.” This process, however, has purely economic aims: it will lead to an improved regional infrastructure and to a better negotiating position for Central America in the global economy. The process is, nevertheless, limited by inefficient regional institutions (SP13). A Costa Rican FEDEPRICAP member (SP12) adds that integration is the “free exchange of goods and services” which aims at improving

the region's participation in the globalisation process. In this conceptualisation, integration is a “pragmatic” process (e.g. access to greater markets) and not an “institutional” process: existent regional institutions have achieved little and in any event, supranational institution should not influence the “destiny” of the region's countries; this participant concludes that political integration is not “convenient” (SP12). FECAICA members (SP1 and SP2) agree that integration is “pragmatic,” and add that its objective is eliminating economic “distortions” such as tariffs and quotas (SP1). Integration is about achieving “economies of scale” in order to better participate in the international system (SP10). Another member of FECAICA adds that integration goes beyond economics to political and social issues (SP3).

Eleven participants, however, indicate that regional institutions in Central America have limited capacity for action and hence are not capable of fully articulating integrative impulses originating from the ideas advanced by the private sector. Institutional limitations arise from the influence that certain groups exercise on those institutions and the lack of political will to empower them. The issue with Central American regionalism, simply put, is that governments have other interests directly linked to certain “sectors” that favour “certain tariffs” and thus the process is led to specific spaces from which integration is “kept” as a purely “economic dialogue” (SP1). Governments are reluctant, for example, to delegate the necessary political power to enable regional institutions to become the “binding and guiding political framework” for regionalism (SP16). Regional institutions are limited because they are overly dependent on the executives’ power for developing or implementing regional policies (SP14 and SP15). More to the point:

“Currently, regional institutions depend on the presidents’ power; institutional strengthening is necessary to move integration forward. Political will in the region must be constant. The process experiences disruptions with presidential changes which affects the regional agenda, or when the presidents ‘use’ integration to discredit their political opponents. A definite regional strategy must be put forward and promptly executed it” (SP15).

Other participants (SP8 and SP9) argue that regional institutions should *not* have capacity for action at all. Regional institutions are infringing the sovereignty of the region’s countries (SP8). There are limits as to what is desirable and what can be achieved institutionally:

“The integration process must respect the idiosyncrasies of each society and also how far we want and can go as a region; that is economic integration. Certain regional institutions are not feasible. The Central American Court of Justice is not viable, Costa Rica already has a Court and this type of institution is not viable; neither is the Central American Parliament. There are certain activities that tend to manifest themselves through integration, such as the case of freedom of movement, which are not viable...” (SP9).

For Costa Rica, they (SP8 and SP9) argue, greater integration would cause a fair degree of instability in its national social protection system. Therefore before integration could take place there is a need to bring the other countries “up to speed” in social matters (SP8). Regionalism is a “voluntary” process and should not be imposed by other regions or countries, and much less by regional institutions (SP12). “Supranational bodies,” a FEDEPRICAP member concludes, “should not dictate the destiny of the region’s countries” (SP12).

Despite institutional shortcomings or undesirability, all participants indicate that they use those institutions or find other channels to contribute to the regionalising process. A member of FEDEPRICAP indicates that her organisation attends “every possible” meeting in which the different integration aspects are analysed and discussed (SP5). According to a Salvadoran participant (SP15), his organisation contributes to the process by analysing and

incorporating into the national agenda integration-related issues through proposals to his country’s government. Those proposals range from measures designed to increase or to reinforce the competitiveness levels of the private sector, to proposals arguing for the “humanisation” of regional integration: to balance economic issues with the social issues implicated in the process. Another Salvadoran indicates that her organisation develops economic plans that are submitted to the government and which aim at increasing the country’s intraregional and extra-regional exports (SP16). In addition to such proposals, they support initiatives and projects that promote regional integration in general (SP15 and SP16).

Other RBOs have been able to directly contribute to the “design” of the process. FECAICA members (SP1 and SP2) indicate that they directly participated on the panel that negotiated the common tariffs during the 1990s. A FEDEPRICAP member (SP11) indicates that during the same period, they were actively involved in the process, and that more recently, his organisation was part of a “consultative body” formed by private sector members to participate in the CAFTA-DR negotiations. The findings of the discursive representations identified in this subsection are summarised in the following table.

Table 5.2. Summary of “Representational” Findings

	The Process is Fundamental/Important/Vital	The Process is Relevant for Organisation	Organisation Contributes to the Process	Regional Institutions have Limited Capacity for Action
Total number of participants	16	16	16	16
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	16	16	16	11
Percentage of the sample	1	1	1	0.69

Discursive Valuation of Regional Integration

According to a Guatemalan participant (SP4), the “motivating principle” behind integration is “economic;” even if this is not “openly accepted.” He quickly indicates that “other” factors cannot be neglected: the “social” becomes important to the extent that it facilitates the socio-economic stability needed by successful economic integration and for the private sector’s improved position in the global economy (SP4 and SP10); for example, through “a better trained labour force” (SP6). Integration is an “economic matter” that could be advanced only through an increased participation of regional organisations that represent the region’s private sector (SP5). Although this participant does admit that economic integration could lead to a degree of political integration which may bring the social and cultural aspects into the process (SP5). Integration, however, is negative for Panama (SP13) as the labour force of that country is more “expensive” than that of other Central American countries which, in turn, makes Panama less competitive. A Costa Rican participant (SP12) points out that integration should only be economic. This is because the social, economic, commercial and cultural differences among the region’s countries should be “respected” (SP12). For another Costa Rican member of FECAMCO (SP9), integration becomes social in order to avoid “distortions” to that country’s “stable social system.” Regionalism should address social issues such as better public schools and education, medical coverage, a “fair” minimum wage and improved workers’ benefits in general (SP9).

Others (SP1, SP2 and SP3), however, give a “different” social meaning to integration by arguing that the social aspects of regionalism are vital for the

successful and “sustainable development of Central Americans” and that, in this sense, the process should be “decentralised.” That is,

“Economic integration should lead to social integration. Integration is important for the sustainable development of the Central American society and this must be the force behind the process’ decentralisation. It is necessary that the process delivers a ‘product’ to the Central American people” (SP2).

Regionalism then should be “un-captured:” regional institutions should become independent from the “power groups” that delimit them in order to reach the region’s people (SP15). For a member of FECAMCO (SP7) integration is a political and economic process that “must be perceptible, especially the latter process, for the people of Central America.” Integration should mean a “better quality of life” for all Central Americans (SP15). Integration and its institutions articulate the historical links and identity shared by the region’s countries: within the process, Central America functions as a unity (SP7). The process is overtly focused on economic matters (SP7). Indeed, the political must become the “force” of that process, if the latter is to “impact” the people (SP7). The private sector together with the political elites must bring the process to the people (SP7). Regionalism, in short, goes beyond economic integration: it is social and it must aim at the welfare of the common Central American through sustainable development (SP7). Solutions to the region’s “social problems” should be “regional” not “national” (SP7). For a Salvadoran FEDEPRICAP member (SP15), leaders of the private sector should bring “real” social aspects to the regional agenda. Education, for example, could be used to increase the people’s awareness of the process. Education, in other words, can be used to “educate” people to become “true Central Americans” (SP7). This will eventually reinforce the economic side of the process (SP15). It will be, however, an economic

integration with a “face.” This participant (SP15) points out that only by pursuing such strategies, will regionalism lead to “better quality of life” for all Central Americans (SP15).

For an influential member of FECAMCO (SP8) the decentralisation of the process (e.g. bringing integration to the common Central American who is not represented in the process) is not an issue. To speak of the under-representation of civil society in the process, for example, is meaningless because of the vagueness of the meaning of civil society. He states:

“I do not understand what or who the civil society is. Nobody can define it. What is civil society? Who represents it? We are the civil society, the one that matters. We live in a regime in which we elect, we vote, democracy means to elect the people who represent us. But in civil society, of which we are all members, some individuals appropriate for themselves the representation role without going through any type of election process. Therefore, to talk about civil society lack of representation in the integration process does not make any sense...” (SP8).

If there are groups under-represented in the process it is because they have not used the electoral and democratic means available to obtain proper representation. Another participant admits that under-representation is an issue but that it could be tackled through education and the media (SP16). Educating the population to be Central Americans will increase their awareness of the process and thus their perceptions of the need to participate which could eventually lead them to search for institutions that would adequately represent them (SP7 and SP16). The media, through this strategy, could become an integrative agent by generating a regional “debate” among Central Americans (SP15).

Proposals advanced by the private sector, however, face a stifling institutional framework. Regional institutions are constrained by their dependency on the executives’ power and the lack of political will to give those institutions a degree of power as regards independent decision-making and

implementation (SP7, SP11 and SP15). The institutional performance is thus limited at best (SP14 and SP15). Another participant (SP7) adds that this is the case because there are powerful groups that benefit from an inefficient institutional framework, whom through their links with the presidents are able to influence the process:

“Unfortunately, the political will is generally deficient. It is sufficient to observe the consulting, non-binding, role of regional institutions to realise the existing level of political will in the region. Power groups with links to the region’s presidents benefit from this type of institution, and they are able to influence the presidents in order to maintain regional institutions in such consulting roles...” (SP7).

What is concerning about the institutional inefficiency is that it slows down the process and hence limits the development of the competitiveness necessary for the full exploitation of the opportunities offered by global markets (SP10).

Other participants indicate that there are certain institutions that do perform efficiently. For a member of FECAICA (SP3), SICA’s Council of Economic Ministers (COMIECO) has been highly efficient regarding customs union issues. Similarly, SICA’s Consultative Committee for Economic Integration meets regularly—occasionally meeting “seventeen times in a month”—while considering proposals and policies that COMIECO has submitted to the Committee for consultation (SP3). A Guatemalan member of FECAMCO agrees, and points out that the danger is the tendency to “overload” institutions such as COMIECO and the Committee because overloading may lead to their excessive bureaucratisation (SP10). In regional institutions, in short, the sources of disintegrative trends can be identified. Those sources are constructed in the participants’ narratives as the “other,” and in the next section, I trace that

construction. The following table summarises the finding of the discursive valuation of the process.

Table 5.3. Summary of “Valuation” Findings

	The Process should be Decentralised	Social Meanings	Educationg as Means to Integration	Regional Institutions are Efficient
Total number of participants	16	16	16	16
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	4	7	5	4
Percentage of the sample	0.25	0.44	0.31	0.25

Self and “Other” Discursive Identification

Constructing “otherness:” political elites and the private sector

For a Costa Rican participant (SP8) the political elite, and in particular the region’s presidents are the facilitators of the process; and accordingly, it is the private sector that knows how to “make” integration: they constitute the integrative engine. The region’s bureaucracy, he continues, is a “problem.” Certain members of the political elite are in agreement with integrative factions of the private sector as to what path the process should follow (SP9). Their conception of “region” and “integration,” however, is instrumental: both concepts are channels to improve their market position internationally (SP15). Put differently, they followed the instrumental view of regional integration I discussed earlier in this chapter. For a Guatemalan (SP4), there is a group—which remains unspecified—within the political elites that makes the process ineffective. For a FECAMCO member (SP5), the “others” are those who limit the process: the presidents, technocrats and the bureaucracies who do not give

proper follow up to the process at the national level. A FECAICA member elaborates the point by indicating that there is political will among presidents but other functionaries or governmental institutions do not “execute” regional agreements (SP3). The “others” are thus government officials in charge of implementing regional policy. Another participant (SP5) disagrees and indicates that there is no political will on the part of the governments and thus the process does not fully enable the private sector to take advantage of current, nor to generate further, integrative trends. A member of FEDEPRICAP (SP13) concurs and adds that the lack of a “clearly defined regional policy” negatively affects the process and specifically the competitiveness of the region’s economic elites.

Another FECAMCO member (SP7) is more specific: regionalism and its institutions are “only” partially functional because the region's presidents and the “power groups” behind them are reluctant to empower them. In this sense, a FECAICA member (SP1) indicates that some of the region’s governments in conjunction with “certain” groups of the private sector limit the process to a particular economic (or what I previously referred to as instrumental) space . He indicates, for example, that during the CAFTA-DR negotiations one of the region’s governments assenting to the pressures of a private sector group decided to unilaterally engage the US which in turn weakened the position of the other countries and led to competition within the region. For another member of FECAICA (SP2) the main constraint on the process is the lack of planning on the part of the governments. He adds that economic integration is limited by the focus with which different groups approach it:

“The private sector is divided about its focus on the internal or external market: Should we focus on the Central American market or on the global market? Honduras considers the external market more important while El Salvador

emphasises the Central American common market. This division benefits the legitimacy of local governments that are supported by business groups with local interests, as a result anti-integrationist groups remain in power...” (SP2).

In Panama, the inward view is perceived as negative. Private sector organisations in that country are overly focused on the national rather than on the regional which detracts from the “resources” that could be invested on regional initiatives (SP13).

A final point worth noting in this subsection is the inclination of FEDEPRICAP members from Costa Rica and Panama (SP12 and SP13) to represent Central Americans as their “others:” An integrated Central America means increased immigration of a “cheaper labour force” constituted by individuals looking to take advantage of more comprehensive social programmes. In a sense, those Central Americans become a disintegrative element for the regionalising private sector strategy.

Social elites as “Normative Elites”

Despite the preceding construction of political elites (eleven participants) and certain sectors of the economic elite (six participants) as the disintegrative “others” who possess a fair degree of power over regionalism, thirteen participants—albeit to various degrees—conceive of themselves as normative elites. And in so doing, they enter into an ideational struggle with those powerful “others” and thus are able to propose alternative integrative venues.

Integration must be refocused on the development of the Central American market as a means to reach “sustainable development” for the region’s peoples (SP2). In this sense, some of the participants have directly “discussed”

the necessary regional reforms to achieve such redirection of the process with their countries “presidents” and other members of the governments (SP1, SP8, SP14 and SP15). In some instances, the participants or other members of their organisations have been directly involved in the negotiations regarding the integration process (SP1 and SP11); or have participated in the formulation of particular regional policies (SP1). Other participants indicate that their NBOs have “forced” certain regional issues onto the “national agenda” (SP14). Some participants contend that their national business organisation compelled their country’s political elites (e.g. members of the National Assembly) to resolve a conflictive situation with a neighbouring country:

“In time of crisis, it is the business groups that defend the process; the private sector leads regional reforms. During the crisis between Honduras and Nicaragua, it was us who were able to build a coalition of deputies [in the national Congress] in order to solve the problems that were exacerbating the situation” (SP1).

Thus, to a fair extent, the private sector occasionally salvages the integration system.

Five participants argue that regional integration survives because the private sector promotes and encourages it (SP1, SP2, SP3, SP8 and SP9). They “know about doing business and thus about integration.” In this view, presidents, and governments become the “facilitators” of the process to the benefit of the private sector (SP8). Business organisations, regional and national, interact with governments during policy formulation (SP5). Moreover, private sector organisations maintain constant consultation exchanges regarding regional matters with governmental institutions such as COMIECO (SP3 and SP6). Those organisations, also, constantly interact with other “homologous” business organisations in order to coordinate ideas and proposals (SP14 and SP15) and

“exchange opinions and alignment strategies” (SP4). According to a Panamanian member of FEDEPRICAP (SP13), in that country the private sector has urged the government to define the country’s position regarding regional integration. A member of FECAICA (SP3) indicates that that organisation, since the process began in the late 1950s, has pushed regional integration. He adds, “the Central American industrial sector has been present during the entire process.” Regional integration thus has become a “synonym of industrial development.” This is justifiable because those organisations “make” integration (SP3). Hence, regional institutions need “input” such as “technical criteria” from the private sector which “shapes and advances” regionalism (SP12).

The private sector integration, for example, has had a series of by-products that “facilitate and dictate further integration” (SP2). Their integrative “demands and needs” have generated a type of spillover: a regional consortium of law firms that facilitates investment and in the end produces further integration by demanding from the region’s legislatures “homogeneous regional laws” and by “informally” modifying “investment norms” (SP2). Regional integration at all levels (e.g. SICA and CAFTA-DR) is to a large extent a “mechanism” to “channel investment” (SP6). For this reason, certain groups of the Honduran private sector associated to FEDEPRICAP have “lobbied” for a “true” stock market integration (SP6). They propose, however, that the necessary legislation be channelled through PARLACEN in a manner that signals the empowerment of that institution (SP6).

It is interesting to note that the entrenchment of “dominant” factions of the “other” private sector and the normative power of the participants is evident in the narrative of one of the members of FECAICA (SP1). He points out that:

“During the CAFTA negotiations, one of the region’s governments, under pressure from a segment of the business sector focused completely on the domestic market, decided to negotiate unilaterally with the US and was willing to accept all of the US demands... it was pointless to debate with these groups despite the fact that they weakened our position and increased the competition among our countries. Our organisation approached the US negotiator directly contending that the unilateral proposition would complicate negotiations by forcing the rest of the region’s countries to take similar positions and consequently damaging the integration process. The US negotiator was persuaded by our position and opted for a stance that forced the Central American countries to negotiate as a group. Despite the fact that integration is essential, such disintegrating tendencies exist in our region...” (SP1).

For this participant (SP1)¹⁵⁸, thus, it is much easier to influence a US negotiator than to discuss the issues with “entrenched” Central American “others.” It is also interesting how a member of the private sector can directly contact a US official without the need to consult with his country’s government officials who were supposed to be in charge of the negotiations and who are conventionally assumed to determine regional policy. I summarise this section’s findings in the following table.

Table 5.4. Summary of “Identification” Findings

	Political Elites as the "Other"	Private Sector as the "Other"	Social elites as "Normative Elites"
Total number of participants	16	16	16
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	11	6	13
Percentage of the sample	0.69	0.38	0.81

The discursive analysis presented in this phase of the analysis seems to support my argument concerning the existence of two discourses in the region: an instrumental discourse that focuses on the global economy as the end of

¹⁵⁸ Interestingly, SP1 also indicates that his organization “forced” his country’s government to establish relations with Cuba.

integration and a Central Americanist discourse that emphasises the importance of “sustainable development” for the Central American people. The data thus far also suggests that the level of social will in the region is limited. A faction of the social elites, for example, conceives of other factions as the “others” who have captured the process directing it to exploit the region’s competitive and comparative advantages neglecting along the way the development of the region’s people. I elaborate these points in the second phase of the analysis.

Social Will and Regional Integration, 2005-08—Discourse Analysis: Second Phase

This stage of the analysis aims first at identifying the key turning points in the participant narrative from which they organise and elaborate the meaning of their reality. And second, it aims at uncovering discursive patterns that form the intersubjective architecture from which the region is constructed. Social will is articulated in this architecture.

Syntagmatic Analysis: Implications of Discursive Turning Points

The key elements from which normative elites construct their regional reality seem limited. There is the “competing in the global economy” turning point and, related, the negotiations leading to the CAFTA-DR. This limited narrative, I argue, is because of the instrumental view underpinning the participants’ discourse. All participants agree that it is important for regional integration to enable the isthmus to compete from a better position in the international system. In such a construction, members of the private sector are in the vanguard of

society as they are the people who know business and hence know how to “make” integration. If the process stalls, it is because of the limitations imposed on integration by certain groups. This leads us to another key point; that is, institutional inefficiency. For the participants, this inefficiency is the result of the actions of “certain” groups who have “captured” the process through their links to political elites. The process advances to the extent that those groups achieve the sought benefits from regionalism. For example, lower tariffs for certain sectors while maintaining a high tariff for others.

Interestingly, a related fundamental point, albeit implicit, in the participants’ narrative is that the process demands to be centralised for the sake of efficiency. Regional integration must be managed by the governments and the private sector. For example, mention of decentralising the process in order to enter into a “dialogue” with the common Central American or civil society is limited at best. Furthermore, one of the participants (SP8) goes as far as arguing that civil society *is* the private sector; thus by implication that the process should only concern the participation of the private sector. As we have seen, it is the private sector that has achieved regional spillovers which in turn lead to further integrative trends. According to one participant (SP4), the decentralisation of the process, if necessary at all, would mean that the region’s governments should play the role of “facilitator” for the private sector’s participation in the process. For others (SP1 and SP2) it is the private sector that “defends and pushes” the process because it encompasses the groups with the highest level of regional consciousness. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in the participants’ construction of “otherness” the Central American identity of “others” is not questioned. The “others” may limit the process but they are assumed to be

Central Americans. Similarly, the presidents and political elites are presupposed to be Central Americans: they may be constrained by certain segments of the private sector and in the worst cases, members of the political elites and bureaucrats may be inefficient but they are Central Americans nonetheless.

Another key discursive point is that the Central American private sector is divided as to which market is their focus. As we have seen, for Hondurans it is the global market that matters and for Salvadorans the Central American market (SP2). This division seems to underline the instrumental and Central Americanist construction that I identified previously. However, it is important to indicate that, contrary to what the participant states, the Central Americanist position is upheld by Honduran members of the RBOs and that in the sample there are Salvadorans who follow an instrumentalist strategy towards integration. In short, it is difficult to pinpoint where the discursive fault-lines between instrumentalist and Central Americanist run.

The CAFTA-DR is important for the participants because it epitomises the events for which integration is necessary. Fifteen participants point out that in order to enter successfully into multilateral negotiations and treaties, their countries must do so as an entity. Only then, would they adequately “position” themselves in the global economy. FTAs, in addition, provide a degree of legitimacy to their proposals and policies. Acceptance in international circles, also, grants the region a “modernity” dimension: an improved position as members of the “first” world (SP15). One last interesting point to emphasise in this regard is that contrary to the opinion of the members of the political elites (see previous chapter) who argue that FTAs delimit the vision and the communitarian sentiments of the region, only one the participants in this chapter

indicates that the CAFTA-DR “somewhat threatens” integration (SP7). For others, FTAs are support mechanisms for the process (SP4), FTAs bring the region closer (SP13) or, importantly, integration should be designed to fit those schemes (SP4).

Paradigmatic Analysis: Implications of Discursive Regularities

In this section, I look at the discursive regularities employed by the participants to construct regional integration. Those discursive patterns and the ideas that underpin them are to a fair extent limited to the “classic” economic discourse, for example, of the lower tariffs and increased competitiveness necessary to successfully access and compete in international markets. In this sense, it seems redundant to discuss the existence of shared ideas and identity, or common economic interests among the participants. First, ideas originating in the economic discourse to increase global competitiveness are limited; for example, strive for economies of scale and technological learning and you will increase your opportunities to succeed. Second, membership in RBOs implies a degree of common regional identity, and third, it presupposes that they all share interests on regional economic matters. It is, however, fundamental to trace, in the ideational realm, if the participants go beyond textbook ideas. In the case of the shared identity, if the participants make any use of a “historical identity:” do they use images, events and symbols of the region’s history of integrative efforts or do they make reference to a common culture? In the case of interests, it is important to contemplate whether the participants’ interests go beyond those of a purely economic nature.

In the realm of ideas, some participants do not exhibit ideational elements beyond the “formal” discourse on economic integration (i.e. textbook definitions of international trade). They indicate for example that integration is “economic integration” and efforts to entice them to elaborate leads to an explanation of, for example, “lower tariffs” and “free movement of goods and services” and their importance for “competitiveness.” Recurrent ideas beyond such “formal” economic matters are, in other words, sparse. Eight participants endeavour to go somewhat beyond the increasing competitiveness narrative. Two of them do so out of their concern for the stability of their countries (i.e. Costa Rica and Panama). It is suggested that to strengthen economic regional integration, the social safety net in the region must be “coherent” to avoid overloading those countries with stable social protection systems. The state, for example, should provide improved childcare in public schools in order to free a “good proportion” of the labour force which in turn would generate economies of scale for certain sectors; or public schools should provide subsidised dinners for students (SP7). Other participants perceived the importance of identity for the process and contend that integration could advance if the region’s people become Central Americans. To this end, as we have seen earlier in the chapter, they propose to use the media and the educational system. Educating people to become Central Americans could eventually lead to improved economic integration but it would be a process with a “face” (SP15). Nevertheless, those participants indicate that by becoming “Central Americans” the people could greatly gain because they would be, at least, aware of the process and its benefits. In turn, such awareness could lead to an increased popular participation which would grant the process and its institutions a much needed degree of legitimacy.

Similarly, discursive regularities that point to a historical identity are scant. Participants implicitly discard the elements of such identity. Some participants indicate that the “traditional unionist” Central American market is a “nostalgic market,” if the success of the region depends on economies of scale, for example, that “romantic” market is not sufficient (SP6). More generally, all unionist symbols are “romantic” and with limited “conductivity” to “deeper” levels of integration (SP14). Other participants do not consider the Central American unionist experience at all and indicate, for example, that “regional integration began in the 1960s” thereby making regionalism equivalent to economic integration and purging any romanticism from the process (SP3). When cultural aspects of integration are discussed, they are conceived of as possible outcomes of economic integration (e.g. economic integration may lead to a common culture) not as an underpinning element of the economic dimension (SP5). Or, cultural aspects are accentuated because they are employed to construct differences among the region’s countries. There are significant “cultural differences” between Costa Rica and the other countries from the region:

“Regional integration cannot go beyond the economic aspects because of the extensive social, political, economic and cultural differences among the region’s countries, [differences] which must be respected” (SP12).

Therefore regionalism must be measured or restricted to the economic space (SP12). Those participants who have recourse to a historical identity in a more positive manner, do so implicitly by arguing that regional integration articulates the unionist experiences of Central America and that those experiences are sufficient foundations to generate “strong impulses” toward integration; for

example, that “our economies could truly become complements to each other”

(SP15). Specifically integration:

“... is also a continuation of the ‘Morazánico’ project to integrate Central America as the Union of Central America; we have customs, language, [and] ethnicities in common, it is the political and economic interests that divide us, if we can overcome these obstacles we can achieve it...” (SP14).

Importantly, a participant emphatically concludes that “our national history is history” but the unionist experiences cannot be “erased or ignored by those overtly focused on the economic dialogue,” he adds integration will not change our national history; on the contrary, “it will enrich it” (SP1).

Regarding the interest of the participants, they all exhibit economic interests but only seven show non-economic interests (e.g. are interested in the social dimension of integration), and some of those who are, perceived that social dimension as problematic. It may seem redundant—because of their “advanced” level of socio-economic development vis-à-vis that of others Central American countries—to point out that for Costa Ricans and Panamanians in the sample, the social dimension of integration is problematic. The social is incorporated in those participants’ narratives as a “concern” (SP9, SP12 and SP13). Integration means increased immigration from other Central American countries which in turn, they argue, will negatively affect their social “achievements” (e.g. in public education and health). As we have seen in the previous section, in those narratives the majority of the Central American people is constructed as the “others” allowing the participants to build integration in an economic, logical and efficient discourse. Others perceive the social as instrumental; as a support mechanism for the private sector’s strategy for competing in the global market. And in this strategy, the common Central American becomes a support agent for the private

sector in the global economy. People are important not as beneficiaries of integration but as a valuable asset that can be trained (and this is their gain from integration) to assist the private sectors in reaching greater levels of competitiveness. The private sector, in other words, is a job creator. This presupposes that with more and better jobs available integration will benefit the Central American people who will also have access to better and more products and services. The “social” that, for example, refers to economic inequality and access to education is the concern of the governments and is represented by poverty indices which occasionally influence the sought-after investment in the region (SP15). And thus, sporadically, the social dimension becomes part of the agenda. The private sector is “there to take the ‘economy’ not the people into modernity” (SP16). Only three (SP2, SP7 and SP14) participants propose to bring integration to the Central American people. They expand the idea of the “social” to encompass the welfare of the people through a sustainable economic development as the “end” of regionalism.

The findings here presented suggest that currently the level of social will in Central America is limited. Although all the participants exhibit common economic interests and their participation in the regional process presupposes a shared identity, such commonalities seem “pragmatically” undertaken: interests in achieving better terms of trade could lead to membership in regional organisations in which individuals internalise a particular set of ideas that may lead to integrative impulses. These commonalities, of course, in some cases may be sufficient to generate successful regionalising tendencies. The instrumentalist construction of the region which seems to underline the reactivation of the process during the 1990s may have resulted from such pragmatic commonalities.

Once the binary identity implicated in the reactivation of the process went deeper, reaching the historical dimension, an additional competing discourse emerged, the Central Americanist construction which is exhibited in some of the narratives studied in this section. Discursive fault-lines along the global and Central American market constructions, in other words, led to the decline of social will present at the reactivation phase and the limited levels exhibited by the participants in this section. Roughly, the number of participants is divided by half along the social will dimensions: eight participants make use of ideas that go beyond the “formal” economic discourse, six of them recourse to elements of historical identity employing traditional unionist images, and seven participants are inclined towards non-economic interests. The following table summarises these findings.

Table 5.5. Social Will in Central America, 2005-08

	Dimensions of Social Will		
	Ideas (Beyond Economics)	Identity (Historical)	Interests (Social Matters)
Total number of participants	16	16	16
Number of participants whose discursive practices support this dimension	8	6	7
Percentage of the sample	0.50	0.38	0.44

Interestingly, those participants who make reference to the historical integrative process or to its cultural aspects present a Central Americanist approach to integration. Those who employ a “pragmatic” identity (i.e. the process is generating the identity) are inclined towards the instrumentalist view. Historical and cultural aspects, in short, seem to be “correlated” with the emergence of the Central Americanist construction.

The participants in this chapter, just like the political elites interviewed in the previous chapter, point to the existence of “powerful groups” within the private sector which have “captured” the integration process. Such groups seem to exercise a fair degree of normative power over the process and, more generally, over the state. However, we cannot neglect the fact that the participants are members of the same social networks as those constructed as the negative “others” within the integration process. That otherness, to put it differently, is perhaps to a fair extent a “misconstruction” of reality; one that, nevertheless, sheds light in the existence of normative elite networks in the region. The interplay of the normative elite networks and the political elites is best depicted in a report released by a Salvadoran organisation member of FEDEPRICAP, the National Association of Private Enterprises (ANEP):

“The integration experience in Central America shows advances and relapses... When the private sector advances most determinedly, certain governments have felt threatened because they think they could lose power quotas and [thus] have blocked the integration process. Also, when governments have advanced swiftly, some [private sector groups] who have seen their markets threatened, have transformed themselves into pressure groups in order to maintain those markets captured, generating a vicious circle which has blocked the effective integration process...” (ANEP, 2002).

It is difficult to make sense of such normative interplay through the presidentialism argument or the intergovernmental preference explanations of the process. Based on the evidence I have traced, it seems difficult to simply assume that the integration process in the isthmus is an intergovernmental matter. There are normative groups with which the region’s presidents are linked and with which they consult on regional matters. It seems more helpful to approach this interplay through the role of the normative networks within the Central Americanised model of integration I developed: the interplay of the state and

political elites in general with social elites within networks could be further understood through the ideational drive model of socialisation in conjunction with the circumscribed-statist norm diffusion mechanism.

I have stated that the participants in this chapter come from the same social circles as those they, the participants, construct as the negative “others.” In this sense, and in the way the participants construct themselves as normative, it seems that the differences between both groups with regard to regional integration lay in the instrumentalist and Central Americanist divide. Those with an instrumentalist view seem to be in “command” of the process. Occasionally, however, Central Americanists come to the fore and the process experiences a strategic shift. These shifts, for example, may lead to what Phillips (2003: 348) calls “multi-thematic regionalism:” an all-encompassing process including environmental and social policy. Nevertheless, the process may remain within the “market-making strategy” that aims at positioning the region in the global economy (Phillips, 2001: 565 and 580). Occasionally, there are attempts at bridging these discursive fault-lines. It is worth noticing that on one of those occasions, it was one of the Central American Presidents (Saca of El Salvador) who attempted to do so. I have identified (see table 2.1 and appendix III) former President Saca’s links to one of the RBOs I have studied, and also to El Salvador’s ANEP and FUSADES. Interestingly, in one of Saca’s early speeches as President, he stated:

“Just as our regional history has demonstrated, Salvadorans’ destiny is to contribute with determination to the integration of Central America... We have [now] a realist vision and we comprehend the integration process *pragmatically*... [it is important] to globalise [our countries] outwardly and become cohesive inwardly... our integration must come out of the bureaucratic offices and *reach the common individual*... if the benefits of integration do not reach the people, there will emerge scepticism, and nationalisms and local visions will re-emerge...” (Saca, 2004; emphasis added).

One does not need to “push” the evidence in order to imagine whose attention Saca is attempting to draw: the pragmatically oriented instrumentalist group and its Central Americanist counterpart. It is also interesting, to wonder in what role this speech was presented: as the President of the country or as a member of the region’s normative networks. In any event, the evidence I have uncovered in this chapter points to the important role of social will in the Central American integrative process.

Conclusion

During the reactivation phase of the process, the existence of social will enabled the normative elites to construct a particular region based purely on economic premises. The process, in turn, experienced the proliferation of institutions unheard of in the region (e.g. consultative committees). Subsequently, however, discursive fault-lines surfaced among the normative elites. This split has led to limited levels of social will. In the ideational realm, one half of the participants propose ideas that go beyond economic matters. Roughly, only one third (six out of sixteen) of the participants share an identity based on historical elements. The rest of the sample assumes a regional identity exclusively in instrumental terms (e.g. economic region). With regard to interests, less than half (seven out of sixteen) of the participants give the process a social meaning. This lack of convergence about the region is indicative of the limited levels of social will. In turn, partial social will has led, for example, to the stagnation of the regional institutional framework identified by the majority of the participants in this study, political and social elites.

Within the instrumentalist construction of the region, the market “logic” that the underlying common interests among the normative elites implies, it seems, redefines the ideational meaning of the region (e.g. Central America) and, at the same time, overpowers the dimension of identity. Because the economic logic points to the search for greater markets, the “region” must be redefined as a greater region (e.g. multilateral agreements) and several “others” become “self-images” as the regional identity is reconstructed in order to encompass the region’s new meaning. In this space, the social interacts with the political but the former imposes its discourse on the latter. As the process occurs, the normative elites’ economic interests become preponderant and the social is articulated in an overarching economic discourse. Thus the political is devoid of meaning restricting the integration process to a limited economic space. The integrationist discourse is then seen as an “emptied” rational exercise employed to obtain economic benefits. Integration in the region seems a set of “dead words or hollow institutions” (Marques Moreira, 2000: 159) or “cognitive dissonances” (Malamud, 2005a). Considering the evidence of the existence of political will in Central America, and the evidence of the role of social will, it seems that such a phenomenon can be best understood by the interplay of the social and the political; a struggle in which the former superimposes itself on the latter.

Concluding Remarks: Main Contributions and Implications for Future Research

In this thesis I have striven to challenge a commonly held position in the study of regional integration in Central America. It is often argued that integration reflects the governments' preferences and that it is limited by overly zealous political elites not willing to lose their political clout. By implication, what the regionalisation process lacks is political will. When the political will argument cannot be sustained, it is conceived that the power of the political elites or the state is constrained by analytically ambiguous "social relations" particular to the society in question, or by equally ambiguous "real sources of power." After considering the history of integration based on the well-known commonalities among the region's countries, and the survival of the idea as embedded in the national constitutions, it seems somewhat inadequate that political will was lacking. This consideration led me to hypothesise about the constraining social relations and real sources of power by historically problematising the process. I quickly came to the realisation that disciplinary knowledge "bounds" our subject of study and that by abiding by these boundaries my study would have been "fruitless" (i.e. would conclude that the lack of political will was the all-important factor for the process). I therefore turned to multidisciplinary as it allowed me to broaden my analytical horizons.

I uncovered the existence of what I labelled constitutional regionalism or the constitutional granting of special citizenship status to other Central American nationals, and specific provisions conducive to the integration of the region. This

constitutional regionalism, I contended, articulates the binary identity of the region and to an extent detracts from the lack of political will argument.

In this context, I argued that the concept of social will allows for a better understanding of the regionalisation process. Social will refers to the predisposition or disinclination of normative elites to support the integration process. This statement begs some elaboration. Social will is generated by the interplay of three intersubjective elements: ideas, identity and interests. When these elements converge positively toward integration, for example, normative elites “influence” governments leading to integrative impulses. I developed this social will concept building on the conditions for “community sentiment” proposed by Haas (1958) and on Schmitter’s (1971b) concept of “elite value complementarity.” In this sense, I attempted to underline the continuing analytical value of neo-functionalism.

While surveying the classic and new regionalism literature, I identified the tendency, often implicit, to assume certain premises of modernisation theory. Central American elites are conceived of as functional groups (e.g. business, industrial and technocratic elites) vying for the “attention” of the state. This presupposition analytically weakens the power of these elites vis-à-vis the state, and is undertaken, in spite of evidence pointing to membership overlapping among the different elite factions. Technocrats, for example, could also be members of the industrial elite. Building on existing analyses, I argued—by taking the seemingly “anti-modern” position—that this overlapping could be understood through the existence of family and kinship networks in the region. I traced the importance of such social institutions for the political culture of Central America and identified several ways (e.g. marriage and business

alliances) in which those networks have been able to endure. In addition, I pointed out evidence that suggests that family and kinship networks, despite any modernising predictions, are still relevant for the political life of the region. This fact has been unduly neglected by integration studies. I went on to argue that these networks have become “modern” in the manner in which they exercise their power. Coercion may still be an option but the networks’ possession, albeit to a varying degree, of material, political and ideational power sources enables them to behave normatively towards the state. In this sense, I maintained that the state has been enmeshed.

I thus identified the need for a “Central Americanised” model of regional integration: one that revisited the interaction between the state and normative elite networks, and the channels wherein these interactions occur culminating in the articulation of the networks’ normative power through social will. To develop this model, I conceptualised the state as possessing a double structure: first, the *de jure* structure in which formal power (i.e. that obtained through electoral means) is exercised through state institutions; and second, a socially constructed structure in which normative power is articulated within informal mediums. This conceptualisation led me to focus on the interplay between normative elites and political elites within the socialisation and norm diffusion processes. While attempting to make sense of such interplay, I identified the inability of current norm socialisation models and norm diffusion mechanisms to adequately address the particularities of the region. I thus elaborated on those models by developing the “ideational drive” (ID) model of socialisation in which political elites look for the normative (social) elites’ sanction of particular policies through a “consultation” process that takes place in the socially constructed state structure.

In that process, ideas are gradually internalised as norms, which in turn must be diffused throughout society. To make sense of such a diffusion process in Central America, I elaborated the “circumscribed-statist” mechanism of norm diffusion. In this mechanism, political elites diffuse norms that have been empowered by normative elites. This is not to argue that political elites are mere “instruments” of normative elites. Rather, it is to argue that they and other elite members converge in networks from which normative power delimits state preferences and options. Political elites, for example, could generate new norms independently. If those norms, however, have the possibility of affecting other normative elite members’ positions, then ideational drive is activated and the “consultation” process begins.

To empirically assess this social construction, I employed a constructivist approach that followed a discourse analysis methodology. In so doing, first, I strove to overcome the limitations of neofunctionalism as regards operationalising intersubjective factors that underpin the discursive practices of the actors involved in the process; and second, to add to constructivist analyses a modified view of economic actors who are often overlooked and thus have their impact on social processes underestimated by that approach. I conceived economic actors as normatively active. They are part of the normative elite networks and provide material power to those networks and simultaneously, economic actors acquire political and ideational power within the networks. Through such methodology, I set out to trace the role and existence of political and social will in the regional integration process of Central America.

To “test” existing hypotheses and more traditional views of the Central American process, and the different elements of the Central Americanised model

of integration, I engaged in a counterfactual exercise by observing political will independently from social will. Evidence to substantiate the “lack of political will” view and the “unwillingness” hypothesis was difficult to find. First, the majority of the political elite members interviewed in this study offered evidence that supports the existence of political will in Central America. Ideationally, the interviewees share and propose ideas that could lead to integrative impulses (e.g. the design of educational programmes to include regional integration). With regard to identity, political elites converge around discursive practices that imply a shared identity. The observer can readily identify the tendency of those elites to talk about their countries and simultaneously, to refer to a greater underlying concept, that of the region. Political elites in Central America, in addition, often argue that they are not initialising an integrative process rather they are attempting to reunify a broken “whole.” Unionist historical experiences, put differently, greatly impact the identity of political elites. In the dimension of interests, the majority of interviewees converge around socio-cultural interests (e.g. construct a Central American culture) which they conceive of as conducive to further levels of regional integration. I concluded, based on this three-dimensional convergence, that indeed there is political will towards regional integration in Central America. Second, from this willingness emerges a vision of Central America that counteracts the dominant trends occurring in the process. Interviewees agreed about the need to take integration beyond the economic space and that, for this purpose, it is essential to reform the current framework so as to grant binding powers to regional institutions. Third, interviewees emphasised the existence of a non-state “other”—directly linked to members of the state—capable of shaping and delimiting what is politically possible; that is

normative elites. In this sense, it seems that my state enmeshment proposition and normative network concept have a fair degree of validity.

In the case of social will, I found evidence that suggests that in the 2005-08 period, the level of social will in that region was limited. Social will, however, offered a second space in which to analyse its role and existence: the reactivation of regionalism in Central America during the early 1990s. At that time, I argued, there were high levels of social will as normative elites converged in the necessity of finding solutions to national issues (e.g. civil conflicts and extreme poverty) at the regional level. Ideationally, normative elites shared the “meaning” of regional integration: the process was equivalent to economic development which was articulated through a neo-liberal model. In the identity dimension, normative elites shared a degree of awareness about a Central American “self.” They conceived, through that “self,” that the national was inextricably interlinked with the regional. The normative elites’ interests were underpinned by an economic core: larger markets, increased trade and competitiveness. It is important to note that in the economic construction, the region was being conceptualised as an entity that could be rendered competitive. The existence of such a degree of social will, for example, led to the establishment of several regional treaties that resulted in multi-thematic regionalism and subsequently led to the proliferation of regional institutions such as the Consultative Committee. Subsequently, however, discursive fault-lines among normative elites arose and two competing regionalisms emerged: the “instrumentalist” construction aiming at the efficient participation of the region in the global economy, and the “Central Americanist” construction whose direct objective is the development of the Central American people. In the participants’ discursive patterns, I identified

such fault-lines leading to limited social will in the current Central American process.

I uncovered that in the 2005-08 period, only about half of the participants shared ideas that go beyond economic matters; for example that the regions people could be taught to become Central Americans. The other half of the sample remained ideationally within textbook economic ideas, such as those of increased competitiveness through lower tariffs. In the identity realm, I identified a division among normative elites: one group undertakes a pragmatic identity for which the integration process is something relatively recent (i.e. it began with CACM in the 1960s) and the other group fixes its identity in the historical unionist efforts of the region. In the dimension of interests, normative elites are also divided in, for example, what they conceive of as being the beneficiaries of the process. Roughly, half of the participants show interest in social matters beyond the mere “job creation” function they perform. These factions seemed to be correlated with the “instrumentalist” and the “Central Americanist” constructions of the region, but it was difficult to determine where the fault-lines ran because members from different organisations that represent the normative elites shared certain dimensions while diverging in others. I concluded that in this period social will was limited in Central America and that that has led to institutional and strategic shifts in the process, and to periods of stagnation. For example, as the majority of the participants from both the political and social elites indicate, the regional institutional framework despite the early proliferation has reached a phase marked by the lack of institutional capacity to act.

The discursive patterns I uncovered in both levels of analyses (i.e. political and social) substantiate my argument about the existence of normative

elites and their role through “consultation” in the regional policy formulation process. One third of the members of the political elites and one third of the members of the normative elites indicate that there are certain groups within the region’s private sector who are able to influence, control and—in the words of one of the participants—have “captured” the integration process. In addition, over a quarter of the participants from the normative elite discursively construct themselves as “normative,” occasionally indicating that they may not be able to compete with the power of other rival normative factions. Simultaneously, however, they indicate that they are able to influence their governments, and on one occasion, to influence the decisions of high ranking US officials.

The interplay between social and political will cannot be conceptualised through a theoretical framework underpinned by economic and modernisation premises as they may not be able to capture such elite interactions. Moreover, social will and the normative power that it articulates cannot be conceptualised, as noted previously, by employing the current norm socialisation and diffusion models. It is thus important to interpret my empirical findings in the light of the Central Americanised model of regional integration I developed in the first part of this thesis. This brings me to the issues of comparability. Is Central America an “N=1” case? I argue that it is “not” but why the qualified “not”?

The perils of comparative regional studies have been underlined by Breslin (2006: 27-28). First, there is the “temporal” issue: one must find a moment in time in which the subjects of comparison are similar in a particular dimension (e.g. the “evolution of regionalism”). Second, experiences from one region could be universalised into benchmark cases. Third and related, comparative regionalism may generate “archetypal” cases that set the “norm and

expectation that other cases will emulate.” Finally, there is the risk of “biased theories” elaborated on the experiences of those benchmark and archetypal cases. These perils are indeed latent and worrisome for those aspiring to compare. In this regard, Rosamond and Warleigh (2006: 3) indicate that comparative regional integration “is not a search for uniformity” but “the search to uncover such general principles and practices as exist in a particular issue area, undertaken in the knowledge that divergence between systems and contexts can be practically significant and heuristically important.” It is then possible to “make generalising statements that take account of variations” (Rosamond and Warleigh, 2006: 4). In this conceptualisation the “N” becomes “plural.”

It is then my contention that the theoretical framework I have developed can be employed in the study of regions beyond Central America. It is difficult to establish *a priori* the symmetries among case studies; doing so “is an assumption” (Jackson and Nexon, 2002: 94). There are of course symmetries among regions involved in integrative processes. It is probable that they are implementing similar institutional frameworks. There are, nevertheless, many more differences in the contexts in which those institutional frameworks have developed. The political culture of Central American countries differs from that of other regions, for example. Dissimilarities, however, need not be regarded as irregularities unsuitable for comparative analyses (Stretton, 1969: 246). The most common use of dissimilarities is to “put questions to each other, to start a search for the causes of dissimilar effects and to measure the effects of dissimilar causes” (Stretton, 1969: 246). Comparative studies are “strongest as a choosing and provoking, not a proving, device: a system of questioning, not for answering” (Stretton, 1969: 247). Social will, for instance, has had an important

role in the construction of regional integration in Central America. Arguably, such a role is the result of certain particularities of the region's political culture (e.g. the socio-political impact of family and kinship networks). Political cultures differ even within countries. And yet, social will seems to possess strong analytical currency for comparison as a questioning mechanism. Why do certain factors play a significant role in political processes in one region and not in others? Do processes such as consultation between government officials and members of important social groups (elites) occur in other regions? If yes, should we dismiss the analysis of those processes because the political culture of that region differs from that of Central America?

Within such a comparative regional integration framework, I suggest two avenues for future research. First, my framework can readily be extended to empirically study other regions of Latin America; that is, to assess the existence and role of social will in the Andean Community and MERCOSUR. It is evident that, at least among the Spanish-speaking countries of the region, there are strong historical and cultural ties and hence some common ground from which a comparative framework could be developed. For example, there is evidence of the existence of family and kinship networks in those regions. In Chile, it is interesting to point to the role of the Frei, Aylwin, Valdés families and their interconnections with other families such as the Subercaseaux and Errázuriz (see appendix X). In Uruguay, the Batlle family and their long history in the politics of that country is also worth noting (see appendix XI). Second, in other regions in which elites "act" in a similar manner to the elites of Central America, my theoretical framework seems applicable. In Korea, for example, Kim (2007) has indicated that business elites have formed tight communities based on, among

other factors, marriage and kinship, which have established complex relations with state elites that impact policy making. In such a context, it seems analytically promising to endeavour in the assessment of the possible role of those networks in integrative processes.

An additional avenue for further research that is strongly suggested by my findings is the role of constitutional regionalism. Interestingly, its existence is not limited to Central America. Throughout the region, constitutions put special emphasis on the citizenship status of nationals from other Latin American countries. The emphasis ranges from assigning shorter time requirements (*vis-à-vis* nationals from other regions) to obtain citizenship by naturalisation (e.g. Venezuela), to establishing that those requirements for citizenship depend on reciprocity with other Latin American countries (e.g. Colombia). This emphasis, on occasion, is extended to Spanish citizens (e.g. Bolivia), and to citizens of the Caribbean (e.g. Colombia). Reference to the process of integration is also included in constitutions beyond Central America. For example, Colombia's constitution establishes that the country's foreign policy is oriented towards "Latin American and Caribbean integration" (ANRC, 1991 [2005]: art. 9). In Peru, it is the "duty of the state" to promote the region's integration (CRP, 1993 [2005]: art. 44). Cuba's constitution speaks of a "common identity" and declares the country's willingness to support regional integration (ANPPRC, 1976 [2002]: art. 12.c); while that of Uruguay asserts that the country strives for the "social and economic integration of the Latin American states" (PROU, 1967 [2004]: art. 6), and Ecuador's constitution declares that that country "advocates" the integration of the Andean region and that of Latin America (ANCE, 1998: art.

4).¹⁵⁹ What is the impact of such regionalism? Has it led to integrative tendencies in those countries? Is constitutional regionalism a vestige of the colonial or immediate post-independence period? If so, can we use it as a “measure” of the importance of history and culture for regionalism? Or, are the provisions of constitutional regionalism a recent development or inclusion? If that is the case, could we consider it to be indicative of increasing regionalising ideas among elites in the region?

At the outset of this thesis I stated that its aim was to “localise” regional integration theory to better reflect the Central American context and that in order to do so the analysis would revisit and adapt neofunctionalism to the Central American context. As regards the first aim, I strove to remain aloof from simply importing theoretical concepts to the analysis of Central America and thus remain attentive to specificities or area specific conditions; that is, cultural continuities. I did so by revisiting the interactions between the state and social elites, and the normative channels through which those interactions occur. To conceive of the power implicated in those interactions, I elaborated the social will concept by building on Haas’ “community” concept and Schmitter’s “elite value complementarity.” In so doing, I attempted to highlight the adaptability of neofunctionalism to current phenomena and its ability to exchange ideas and achieve constructive dialogue with other more recent understandings of political phenomena. Finally, I must emphasise that the Central Americanised model was developed to overcome analytical rigidity by questioning the negative heuristics that current studies assume. In turn, such practice enabled the model to capture the region’s unionist foundation beyond what statist and economic approaches

¹⁵⁹ Appendix XII maps the existence of constitutional regionalism throughout Latin America and also presents the year when the national constitutions were written and, if applicable, when they were last amended.

are able to assess. The model, in addition, strove to avoid uploading “external” meaning (i.e. characteristics of other regions) by incorporating variables—that is, putting the elites back into the analysis—that others may consider non-modern. In so doing, it attempted to emphasise that the study of Central American elites is not necessarily adverse to contemporary analysis. Such study, however, requires relaxing the set of assumptions that prevents us from achieving a synergistic account of the region’s process. Only by doing so, could we develop a hermeneutical toolkit that is able to more accurately “process” the regionalisation experiences emanating from Central America. I hope to have successfully achieved these aims.

One final thought. At the onset I also declared that my study was about Central American integration and about its regionalisation. On the regionalisation point, I remain steadfast: despite failed integrative experiences and disruptions to the process, Central America seems reluctant to abandon the ideal of integration; and in this sense, it remains on the path to regionalisation. On the integration point my view has been somewhat amended. Originally, by integration I meant the process of delegating power to a regional core which implied that regionalism encompassed the region’s people. A careful examination of the process has led me to conceive of integration as a form of “integrative inequality” in which some social groups (e.g. normative elites) enjoy a fair degree of integration (e.g. regional businesses) while other groups remain ingrained in notions of nationalism that preclude them from articulating the construction of *their* region. I hope that my study has shed significant light into the socio-political dynamics that underpin and hence make possible such processes of exclusion.

Appendix I. Regional Initiatives in Central America: 1823-2008

Date	Decree, treaty, event or actions to promote integration	Entity Established	Participants Nations
<i>Panel A: Sovereignty Protection</i>			
July 19, 1823 to May 30, 1838	Decree of the Absolute Independence of the Provinces of Central America	Provincias Unidas de Centroamérica	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
April 11 to July 17, 1842	Dieta de Chinandega	National Government	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
July 27, 1842 to 1945	Treaty of Chinandega	Central American Confederation	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
July 1846	Sonsonate Conference		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
October 7, 1847	Pact of Nacaome	Provisionally established a federal government	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
November 8, 1849	Treaty of León	The National Representation of Central America	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
September 14, 1850	Honduras' Decree calling for a Central American Congress		
October 9, 1852	Dieta Nacional	The Republic of Central America	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
1858	Costa Rica and Nicaragua's Proposal for a new federation		Costa Rica and Nicaragua
July 10, 1862	National Reorganization Covenant	The Republic of Central America	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
1862	Unionist project		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua

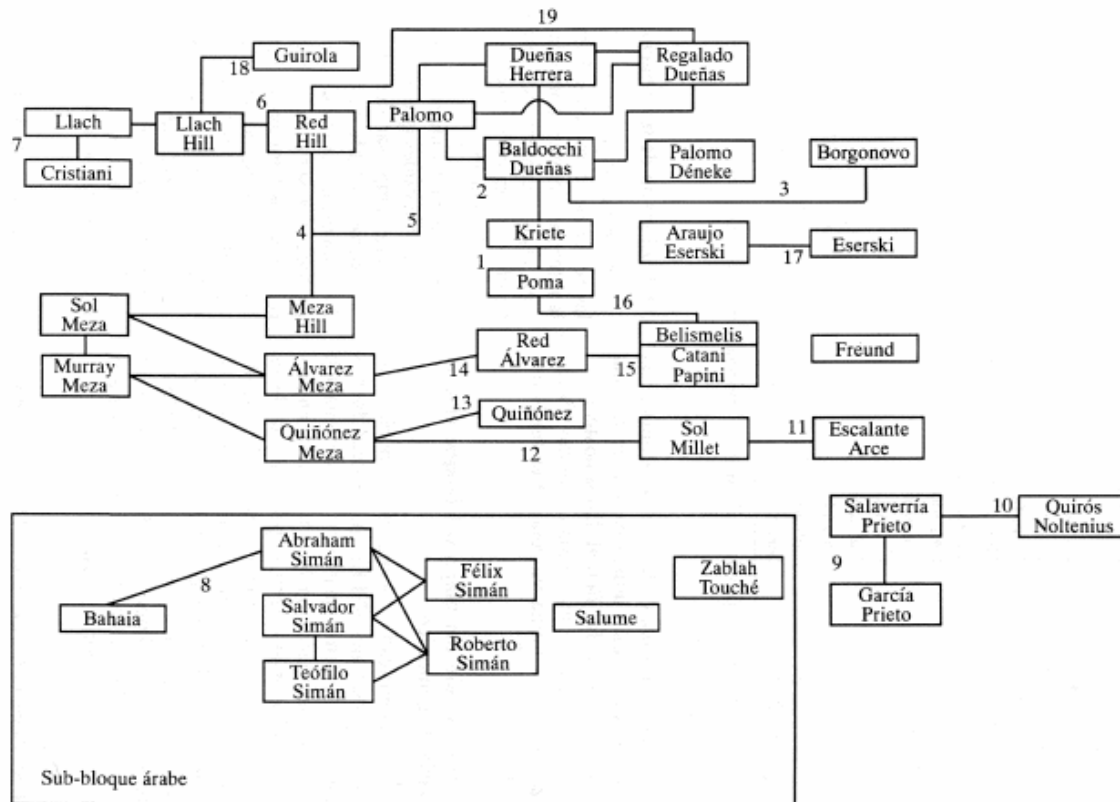
Date	Decree, treaty, event or actions to promote integration	Entity Established	Participants Nations
February 1872	The Agreement of La Union		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
October 9, 1873	Unionist Decree of the Government of Nicaragua		
1876	Unionist Congress in Guatemala		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
February 28, 1885	Decree of the Union of Central America	A unionist attempt by Guatemalan President Justo Rufino Barrios using military force; Barrios declared himself as supreme military commander of all of Central America and established the Central American Union	Guatemala and Honduras
1885	Initiative by Costa Rica	Defensive alliance	Costa Rica, El Salvador and Nicaragua
September 12, 1885	Exploratory Treaty of Union		El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
January 20, 1887	Peace and Friendship Covenant		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
October 15, 1889	Pact of the Provisional Union of the Central American States	The Republic of Central America	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
1892	San Salvador confederate meeting	Dieta de Centroamérica	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
June 1895 to November 1898	Treaty of Amapala	The Greater Republic of Central America	El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
June 15, 1897	Treaty of the Central American Union	The Republic of Central America	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

Date	Decree, treaty, event or actions to promote integration	Entity Established	Participants Nations
<i>Panel B: Consolidation of the State - Peace and Political Stability</i>			
1902	Corinto Pact	The Tribunal of Central American Arbitration	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua
September 1906	San José Conference	International Bureau of Central American and The Central American Pedagogical Institute	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
November 14 to December 20, 1907	Central American Peace Conference In Washington DC	Central American Court of Justice, International Office of Central America (Protect the Region's Interests), the Communication Convention.	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
1919	Unification Treaty	The Morazán Republic	El Salvador and Honduras
January 19, 1921	Pact of the Central American Union	The Federation of Central America	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
September 9, 1921	Federal Congress of Tegucigalpa (Political Constitution of the Central American Republic)	The Central American Republic	El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras
1923	General Treaty Peace and Friendship (Washington DC)	Conventions on the Unification of Labour Laws, Exchange of Central American Students, Trade of Natural and Manufactured Products, Establishment of Permanent Commissions on Economic and Social Issues	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
May 1934	Treaty of the Central American Fraternity		Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
September 12, 1946	Pact of Santa Ana	Permanent Commission to Study the Conditions for and the development of projects for the Political Union of the region	El Salvador and Guatemala
April 8, 1947	Pact of the Confederate Union of the Central American States	Confederate Union of the Central American States	El Salvador and Guatemala

Date	Decree, treaty, event or actions to promote integration	Entity Established	Participants Nations
October 14, 1951	Letter of San Salvador	The Organization of Central American States	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
<i>Panel C: Economic Integration</i>			
1960	General Treaty of Economic Integration Of Central America	The Central American Common Market	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
1993	Treaty of Tegucigalpa	System of Central American Integration	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

Sources: Adapted from Karnes (1961), Mata Gavidia (1969) and ODECA (1956).

Appendix II. Mapping El Salvador Family Network



- Families
1. Ricardo Poma / Florence Kriete
 2. Archie Baldocchi / Angelita Kriete
 3. Patricia Baldocchi /Mauricio Borgonovo
 4. Manuel Meza Ayau / Alicia Hill
 5. Roberto Palomo / Loly Meza Hill
 6. Francisco Llach / Maria Hill Bernal
 7. Alfredo Cristiani / Margarita Llach
 8. J. Elías Bahaia/ Eillen Siman
 9. Miguel Ángel Salaverría Alcaine /Rosa García Prieto
 10. Juan Federico Salaverría Prieto / Lucila Quirós
 11. Marta Sol / Escalante Arce
 12. Roberto Quiñónez Meza / Clelia Sol
 13. Emma Meza / Quiñónez
 14. Meza Ayau / Álvarez
 15. Belismelis Sandoval / Álvarez Vidaurre
 16. Poma / Ana Coralia Belismelis
 17. Armando Araujo / Sonia Eserski
 18. R. Llach Hill / L. Guirola
 19. Ernesto Regalado Dueñas / Hellen O'sullivan Hill

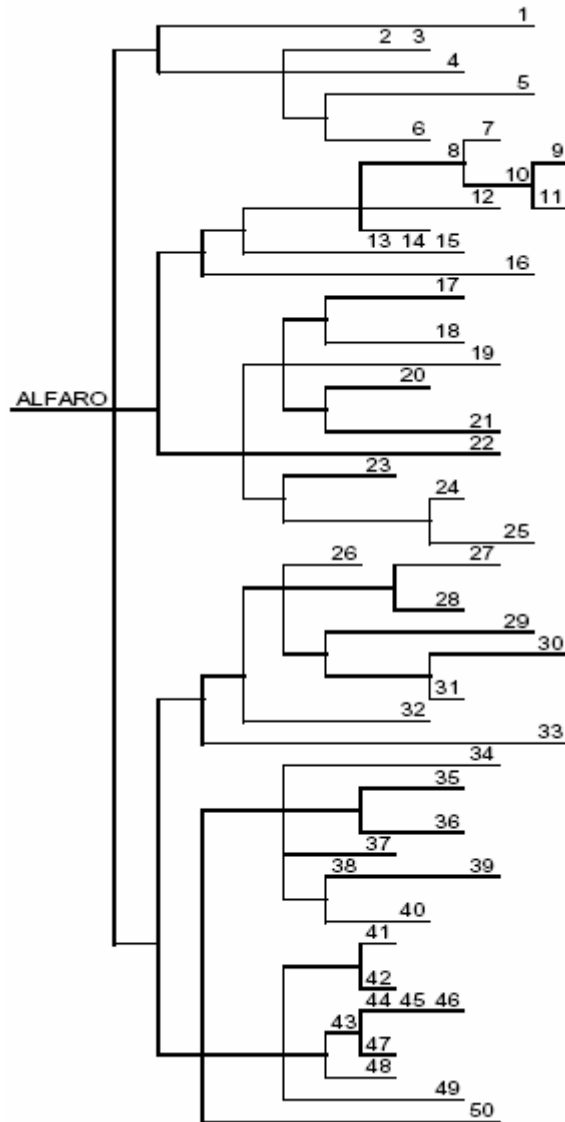
Source: Paniagua (2002).

Appendix III. FUSADES Founding Members (excerpt)

FUSADES Founding Members	
..... <i>Cristiani Burkard, Alfredo Félix</i>	Simán, Teofilo Jose
Cristiani, Héctor	Simán Dabdoub, Mario Alberto
Cristiani Llach, Alejandro Félix	Simán Dada, Alberto Jose
Quiñónez Caminos, Eduardo	Simán Dada, Guillermo Jose
Quiñónez Meza, Roberto	Simán Dada, Javier Ernesto
Quiñónez Sol, Claudia	Simán Dada, Miguel Ángel
Quiñónez Sol, Raúl Ernesto	Simán Dada, Silvia Inés
Quirós, Antonio	Simán Jacir, Jose Jorge
Quirós, Samuel	Simán Jacir, Roberto Jose
Quirós Céspedes, Arnoldo	Simán Siri, Gerardo Jose
Quirós Céspedes, Román	Simán Siri, Roberto F.
Quirós Noltenius, Jose Ángel	Simán Zablah, Jorge Jose
<i>Saca, Elías Antonio</i>	Sol, Ana Cristina
Saca, Rosa Maria Simán de	Sol, Carmen Elena Díaz Bazan de
Safie Hasbun, Oscar Antonio	Sol, Roberto Reynaldo
Sagrera, Edwin	Sol Bang, Guillermo
Sagrera Bogle, Ricardo	Sol Meza, Enrique Alberto
Salaverria, Jose Antonio	Valencia, Joaquín
Salaverria Alcaine, Miguel A.	Valiente, Eduardo
Salaverria Borja, Ana Maria	Valiente, Guillermo
Salaverria Prieto, Juan Federico	Valiente, Luis Alonso
Salaverria Prieto, Miguel Ángel	Valiente, Manuel Arturo
Salume, Adolfo	Valiente, Mario Eduardo
Salume Artinano, Adolfo	Yarhi, David
Santamaría Rojas, Jose Mauricio	Yarhi, Nassin
Santamaría, Oscar Alfredo	Zablah Kuri, Jose Arturo
Schildknecht, Alfredo	Zablah Siri, Ana Teresa
Schildknecht, Rodolfo	Zablah Siri, Jaime Roberto
Simán, Abraham	Zablah Siri, Jorge Alfonso
Simán Jacir, Félix Jose	Zablah Siri, Lucia Beatriz
Simán, h., Félix Jose	Zablah Siri, Paola Maria
Simán, Jose Eduardo	Zablah Siri, Rodrigo Jose
Simán, Ricardo	Zablah Touche, Eduardo A.
Simán, Rolando Jorge	Zablah Touche, Jorge
Simán, Salvador	Zablah Touche, Jose
Simán h., Salvador Jose	Zablah Touche, Jose Luis
Simán Jacir, Teofilo	Zablah de Rieger, Maria Pilar

Source: FUSADES (2003)

Appendix IV. An Intertwined Family Network in Central America: Presidents in Alfaro Family Tree



Guatemala

1. Laugerud García, Kjell Eugenio

El Salvador

3. Barrios Espinoza, Gerardo
2. Guzmán Ugalde, Joaquín

Honduras

4. Bonilla Vázquez, Policarpo

Panamá

5. Porras, Belisario

Nicaragua

6. Carazo Aranda, Evaristo
7. Sacasa Sacasa, Juan Bautista
8. Sacasa Sarria, Roberto
12. Solórzano Gutiérrez, Carlos
11. Somoza Debaile, Anastasio
9. Somoza Dabaile, Luis
10. Somoza García, Anastasio

Costa Rica

21. Acosta García, Julio
23. Alfaro Zamora, Jose Maria
28. Aguilar Barquero, Francisco
37. Aguilar Chacón, Manuel
50. Arias Sánchez, Oscar
39. Calderón Guardia, Rafael Ángel
30. Carazo Odio, Rodrigo
41. Carranza Ramírez, Bruno
42. Carrillo Colina, Braulio
44. Castro Madriz, Jose Maria
36. Cortes Castro, León
49. Echandi Jiménez, Mario
27. Esquivel Ibarra, Ascensión
31. Esquivel Sáenz, Aniceto
43. Fernández Chacón, Manuel
47. Fernández Orea muño, Prospero
26. Gallegos Alvarado, Jose Rafael
19. Gonzáles Flores, Alfredo
20. Gonzáles Viquez, Cleto
17. Guardia Gutiérrez, Tomas
32. Herrera Zeledón, Vicente
15. Jiménez Oreamuno, Ricardo
14. Jiménez Zamora, Jesús
33. Monge Álvarez, Luis Alberto
48. Montealegre Fernández, Jose M.
38. Mora Fernández, Juan
18. Mora Porras, Juan Rafael
25. Oduber Quirós, Daniel
13. Oreamuno Bonilla, Francisco
16. Orlich Bolmarcich, Francisco
35. Picado Michalski, Teodoro
40. Rodríguez Zeledón, Jose
24. Soto Alfaro, Bernardo
29. Tinoco Granados, Federico
34. Trejos Fernández, Jose J.
22. Ulate Blanco, Otilio
45. yglesias Llorente, Demetrio
46. yglesias Castro, Rafael

Source: Stone (1990).

Appendix V. The Arenales/Skinner-Klée Family (Guatemala)

Name	Post and Dates
Jorge Skinner-Klée	Member of Congress, Guatemala, 1986-1994; Member Constitutional Assembly of Guatemala and Member of the commission that wrote the project of Guatemala's Constitution, 1955 and 1964. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guatemala, 1956-1957. Member and Past President, Guatemalan Delegation to the United Nations (UN), 1964 and 1985.
Alejandro Arenales Catalan	Member of Congress, Guatemala, 1960-1963. Former Delegate, Ministry of External Affairs of Guatemala to the United Nations (UN). Former Member of the Board of Directors, Institute for Development of Production of Guatemala. Former Chairman, Board of Directors of Guatemalan Maritime Enterprises (FLOMERCA).
<i>Alfredo Skinner-Klée</i>	Former member Board of Directors of the Arbitration and Conciliation Centre of the <i>Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala</i> . Former Member, Central American Parliament, 1990-1995. Currently Director (Guatemala) of the <i>Central American Bank of Economic Integration -CABEI</i> . Member: Guatemalan Bar Association. Member of the Board of Directors of several leading corporations. Party Reform Movement (MR) Secretary General.
Jorge Skinner-Klée Arenales	Minister Counsellor and Alternate Delegate of Guatemala to the Organization of American States, OAS 1985-1986; Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Guatemala to the USA, 1987-1988; Guatemalan Delegate to the UN and OAS General Assemblies, 1985-1990. International Counsel and Alternate Delegate, National Coffee Association of Guatemala, 1990-1993. Ambassador of Guatemala: to Germany, 1993; to Canada, 1998; to Belize, 2002; to Honduras, 2003; Vice Minister of Foreign Relations of Guatemala, 2004. Currently Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, New York.
Alejandro Arenales Farner	Arbitrator: Commission for Resolution of Disputes and Arbitration of the Chamber of Industry of Guatemala; Arbitration and Conciliation Centre of the Chamber of Commerce of Guatemala; Member of the Board of Directors of several leading corporations.
Pablo Arenales Farner	Representative and First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guatemala in the United Nations (UN), New York City, USA (1994-1995). Legal Counsel to UNESCO 2001, 2002, 2003. Former Consul of the Guatemalan Embassy in Paris, France and Rome, Italy.

Source: Adapted from http://www.Arenales.com.gt/our_people.htm

Appendix VI. The Political Elites Sample

Participant Code	Country	Political Party or Institution	Spanish Acronym
<i>Panel A: PARLACEN Members</i>			
PP1	Dominican Rep.	Party of Dominican Liberation	PLD
PP2	El Salvador	Nationalistic Republican Alliance	ARENA
PP3	El Salvador	National Liberation Front Farabundo Marti	FMLN
PP4	Guatemala	Guatemalan Revolutionary Front	FRG
PP5	Guatemala	Guatemalan Revolutionary Front	FRG
PP6	Guatemala	National Action Party	PAN
PP7	Guatemala	Unionist Party	PU
PP8	Guatemala	Party of National Unity of Hope	UNE
PP9	Honduras	Liberal Party	PL
PP10	Honduras	National Party	PN
PP11	Honduras	Party of Innovation and Unity-Social Democrat	PINU-SD
PP12	Nicaragua	Sandinista Front of National Liberation	FSLN
PP13	Nicaragua	Sandinista Front of National Liberation	FSLN
PP14	Nicaragua	Sandinista Front of National Liberation	FSLN
PP15	Nicaragua	Liberal Constitutionalist Party	PLC
PP16	Nicaragua	Liberal Constitutionalist Party	PLC
PP17	Panama	Revolutionary Democratic Party	PRD
<i>Panel D: National Political Actors</i>			
PP18	Costa Rica	Party of Citizen Action	PAC
PP19	Costa Rica	Party of Citizen Action	PAC
PP20	Costa Rica	Party of National Liberation	PLN
PP21	Costa Rica	Party of National Liberation	PLN
PP22	Costa Rica	Party of National Liberation	PLN
PP23	Costa Rica	Libertarian Movement	PML
PP24	Costa Rica	Party of Social-Christian Unity	PUSC
PP25	Costa Rica	Party of Social-Christian Unity	PUSC
PP26	Costa Rica	Party of Social-Christian Unity	PUSC
PP27	Dominican Rep.	Party of Dominican Liberation	PLD
PP28	Dominican Rep.	Party of Dominican Liberation	PLD
PP29	Dominican Rep.	Party of Dominican Liberation	PLD
PP30	El Salvador	Nationalistic Republican Alliance	ARENA
PP31	El Salvador	Nationalistic Republican Alliance	ARENA
PP32	El Salvador	United Democratic Centre	CDU
PP33	El Salvador	National Liberation Front Farabundo Marti	FMLN

Participant Code	Country	Political Party or Institution	Spanish Acronym
PP34	Guatemala	Guatemalan Christian Democracy Party	DCG
PP35	Guatemala	Guatemalan Christian Democracy Party	DCG
PP36	Guatemala	Party of Authentic Integral Development	DIA
PP37	Guatemala	Guatemalan Revolutionary Front	FRG
PP38	Guatemala	Grand National Alliance	GANA
PP39	Guatemala	Grand National Alliance	GANA
PP40	Guatemala	Party of National Advancement	PAN
PP41	Guatemala	Unionist Party	PU
PP42	Guatemala	Party of National Solidarity	PSN
PP43	Guatemala	Party of National Unity of Hope	UNE
PP44	Guatemala	Party of National Unity of Hope	UNE
PP45	Honduras	Liberal Party	PL
PP46	Honduras	Liberal Party	PL
PP47	Honduras	Liberal Party	PL
PP48	Honduras	Liberal Party	PL
PP49	Honduras	National Party	PN
PP50	Nicaragua	Liberal Constitutionalist Party	PLC
PP51	Panama	Revolutionary Democratic Party	PRD
PP52	Panama	Revolutionary Democratic Party	PRD
PP53	Panama	Revolutionary Democratic Party	PRD
PP54	Panama	Solidarity	Solidaridad
<i>Panel C: SICA Officials</i>			
PP55	NA	SICA	NA
PP56	NA	SICA	NA

Appendix VII. Interview Excerpts-Chapter Four

PP1

Los presidentes de la región deben concientizar al pueblo acerca de la integración. Se debe concientizar e informar a la gente acerca del proceso por medio de los medios de comunicación así como también por medio del sistema educativo... Existe en la Republica Dominicana un programa educativo en las universidades sobre integración el cual posiblemente se extienda a la educación media. También se trabaja con las municipalidades para acercarse al pueblo. La televisión nacional habilitó espacios para desarrollar programas donde informa a la población sobre el tema. Además, existe un acuerdo con el ministerio de educación (superior y media) para llevar charlas sobre integración y hay también una propuesta sobre cátedra universitaria sobre integración... El proceso es muy lento y parece demasiado lejos del pueblo. Para su éxito los países deben ceder soberanía. Nuestros países están obligados a integrarse... La concientización del pueblo se ha descuidado. Debe entonces haber un compromiso de concientizar a la ciudadanía común y no solamente a la clase alta, para que entienda, acepte y trabaje en pro de la integración.

PP2

El Presidente Saca de El Salvador es el “abanderado” de la integración regional... La integración debe ofrecer soluciones a la problemática del pueblo centroamericano. El proceso debe entonces dar mejor calidad de vida a la población en general... El Parlamento debe convertirse en un sistema comunitario sin depender de los poderes ejecutivos de la región... Los diputados salvadoreños han desarrollado una iniciativa de ley para dar mayor poder legislativo a los miembros del Parlamento... Se debe establecer contacto con contrapartes dentro de las comisiones de los parlamentos nacionales... Es imperativo incluir lo social en la agenda regional, por ejemplo la cobertura del seguro social a nivel centroamericano.

PP3

Se debe dar pleno respaldo a las instituciones regionales de tal manera que existan mecanismos de ejecución de los procesos de integración. Es clave fortalecer el marco institucional centroamericano. También concientizar sobre el tema a nivel nacional buscando consenso entre los diferentes partidos... Instituciones regionales con poder vinculante pueden llevar a la práctica recomendaciones en el ámbito económico social... Existen propuestas para nivelar los asuntos sociales que incluyen los gastos de educación... Las cumbres presidenciales son peligrosas ya que no son democráticas, y por lo tanto el sistema regional no opera... Es necesario fortalecer aspectos de opinión pública que reposicionen el tema de la integración; la estrategia ha estado demasiada volcada a los temas de reforma institucional no al fortalecimiento... Hay actores dentro del sector privado dominante que están ligados a los intereses de los Estados Unidos. Esto ha permitido que el proceso de integración sea subordinado al tratado de libre comercio ya que la integración debe ser consistente con el tratado. El tratado entonces divide a la región centroamericana llevando a la

reducción de tendencias integracionistas... Por lo tanto, es necesario que el proceso refleje un equilibrio entre el papel del sector privado y el del estado.

PP4

La integración es una “piedra pesada” para nosotros por la ausencia de visión a nivel partido. Hay ausencia de preparación a los miembros del Parlamento previo a su ingreso a éste. Nuestros países no se deben encerrar en lo doméstico, sino buscar y desarrollar una estrategia real hacia la integración. La integración comienza en casa por eso debemos de predicar para convertir, los integracionistas electos popularmente no saben de integración, por lo tanto van se sientan, reciben salario y no comunican... En Guatemala el idioma de las comunidades es importante. Como primer paso se ha visitado el interior del país no con bandera de partido si no con bandera de integración a través de los medios locales y con la lengua de las comunidades. Los medios de información son importantes para difundir ideas integracionistas. El acercamiento con la prensa genera espacios fundamentales para la integración de nuestros pueblos... Nosotros como diputados centroamericanos debemos tomar la iniciativa señalándonos a nosotros mismos para salir a las comunidades para informales de la existencia de las instituciones regionales como espacios de dialogo. Empoderarse acerca de que es la integración, que hacen los miembros del Parlamento y que podrían hacer. Éste [el Parlamento] debe ser el interlocutor entre los congresos nacionales y las comunidades, es entonces necesario darle facultades vinculantes. Debemos trabajar por la centroamericanidad, hasta ahora solo hablamos de la integración pero no actuamos.

PP5

La integración centroamericana es lenta por la falta de voluntad política y de disposición de parte de los sectores dominantes. También el pueblo no conoce el proceso de integración. Esto es incomprensible ya que la supranacionalidad significa el bien común de la región, el bienestar de nuestros pueblos. Los partidos de la región tienen conciencia limitada sobre la integración por lo que se necesita la participación de la dirigencia de los partidos en las instituciones regionales. Se puede usar programas educativos para incentivar la conciencia regional. Existe cierto temor entre los ejecutivos de la región de ceder parte de sus facultades y soberanía a las instituciones regionales, y por otro lado los grupos de poder no desean que se integre Centroamérica. Los que venden pollo, los que venden cemento, los que venden cerveza prefieren tener su propio “gallinero” en cada país para no compartir y competir en ese gallinero a nivel centroamericano.

PP6

El proceso de integración debe fortalecerse. Los partidos se enfocan en la temática nacional no en la regional. Al mismo tiempo, la gente se enfoca en problemas nacionales. Las instituciones regionales no han logrado transmitir la idea que la integración genera un horizonte nuevo de posibilidades para poder superar los problemas actuales. La población no ha visto beneficio real de la integración... Los problemas reales del pueblo centroamericano son la

inseguridad, la pobreza y el desempleo. La integración no va a solucionar estos problemas inmediatamente pero puede sentar las bases para que en el futuro podamos alcanzar un grado de prosperidad... Las instituciones regionales deben ganar protagonismo ganar imagen... No hay consistencia en políticas internas de los partidos políticos. Los partidos deben ser el vehículo para llevar propuestas regionales a los congresos nacionales. Carecemos de mecanismos para proponer agenda regional... La gente puede apreciar los beneficios de la integración pero debemos trabajar en la voluntad política. Las instituciones regionales como el Parlamento se "esconden" por la falta de facultades vinculantes... Se debe acercar a la población con temas de impacto social como temas de migración. Estratégicamente si hay programas y proyectos que impacten a la población nacional, estos generarían un cambio de actitud en la población lo cual mejoraría la imagen de las instituciones... Debemos tratar de llegar a quienes debemos de llegar, a la gente porque la gente no conoce el proceso. Nuestra meta debería ser dejar sentadas las bases, un esquema básico establecido y ejecutándose para allanar el camino al fortalecimiento de la postura centroamericanista. Necesitamos acciones regionales concretas.

PP7

Los problemas de la integración se originan en la actitud de "no importancia" de los partidos políticos hacia el proceso lo cual repercute en la actitud de los gobernantes... No existe visión comunitaria a nivel estado... se debe dar seguimiento a los acuerdos regionales a nivel nacional... Existe una oficina para la integración en el partido y se le ha recomendado a otros partidos de la región a adoptar dicha medida institucional... Lamentablemente algunos miembros del Parlamento no son miembros "de primera fila" dentro de los partidos, lo cual reduce la importancia que los partidos le dan al Parlamento... Grupo parlamentarios multipartidarios son importantes para el desarrollo de políticas regionales, éstos pueden ser ideológicos pero no cave la visión nacionalista. Se debe fomentar la integración en lo interno de los partidos. Al Parlamento le han "cortado las alas." No tiene facultades vinculantes en temas regionales y carece de intervención en lo local... Es importante desarrollar programas de contenido sobre integración a nivel educativo, así como también proyectos comunitarios que expliquen al pueblo centroamericano el proceso, sus logros y beneficios.

PP8

En Guatemala la población no sabe lo que es la integración, no sabe que hacen las instituciones regionales, desconoce totalmente lo que es integración, y los espacios que la gente puedan tener por medio de las instituciones regionales... He presentado una iniciativa de ley para la creación de una agencia de promoción, divulgación y desarrollo de la integración en Guatemala y después propondré replicar agencia en todos los países miembros del Parlamento. También se debe trabajar con los medios de comunicación directamente para lograr que la sociedad civil tome en serio al proceso y sus instituciones, se debe trabajar en la idea de que el Parlamento esta sirviendo las necesidades del pueblo... En el Parlamento no se debe votar por estado, lo cual lleva a un separatismo estado sin avanzar la conciencia regional. Se debe votar desde otra perspectiva.

PP9

La integración económica no es perceptible para el pueblo centroamericano. El proceso socio-político debería ser la vértebra del proceso. Lo político debe ser la columna vertebral de la integración. Entonces el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de las instituciones políticas es importante para el proceso... Centroamérica funciona como conjunto desde siempre. Siempre ha existido una política centroamericana, aun entre dictaduras militares existió coordinación regional... El Morazanico fue un esfuerzo político con incidencias militares, el error fue el establecimiento de la federación política carente de una federación militar... La percepción en cuanto a la integración política es que esta retrocediendo aun cuando la integración económica avanza... El pueblo de Honduras es hondureño pero se siente centroamericano ya que tiene una vocación centroamericanista. Es mas, los pueblos centroamericanos tienen vocación integracionista. El problema es cuando se entra a la praxis del estado, del manejo del estado. Los gobernantes conceptúan que la integración lleva a la disminución de poder. Por lo tanto se desarrollan modelos al interior del estado, es decir de integración intergubernamental que no tienen la capacidad de crear instituciones que conlleven a la unidad centroamericana si no que allí, en las instituciones, cada quien defiende su nicho... Se necesita presentar soluciones de región no de país para evitar la falta de estabilidad en Centroamérica... Existe problema de representatividad en lo político y también con los medios de comunicación. Se debe prestar mayor atención a la producción social de la información.

PP10

Los problemas que afrontan los países de la región son similares. La integración es entonces necesaria para resolverlos. El Parlamento es la institución que estudia y propone solución a los problemas de la región... Sin embargo no goza de poderes vinculantes. Se debe tratar que los congresos nacionales acepten las proposiciones del Parlamento. Unidad entre los miembros de éste es fundamental para el éxito de sus propuestas. No se debe permitir que ciertos sectores políticos y económicos interfieran con nuestro trabajo... Debemos trabajar en el desarrollo de la conciencia regional a nivel del pueblo. La integración debe empezar en lo social. Se debe dar repuestas a los problemas que afrenta el pueblo centroamericano a través de programas sociales, y el Parlamento es clave en este tema... la inseguridad ciudadana puede incluirse en la agenda... Existe en Honduras un canal directo con la gente en el cual se tratan temas de la integración llevando así aunque sea de una manera inicial el proceso al público en general.

PP11

La integración trae crecimiento económico a la región. Nuestra visión es recuperar el terreno perdido para alcanzar una Centroamérica única y unida para que no existan fronteras entre estos países hermanos... Existen diferencias de grados de conciencia regional entre los estratos populares. En El Salvador el pueblo es integracionista, el más integracionista de la región. Por otra parte hablar de integración en Costa Rica es hablar de algo que es enemigo del pueblo, en Honduras la clase media alta está interesado y Guatemala hay bastante interés, en Nicaragua es limitado. Por lo tanto no parece existir una conciencia

integracionista entre nuestros pueblos... La integración no ha avanzado como debiera porque el proceso pasa por las manos de los presidentes y en la medida que hayan presidentes que nos les interese, la integración va a estar en precario. Hemos realizado una propuesta a través del Parlamento de formar un comité especial de ministros de educación (incluido el de Costa Rica) quienes firmaron un acuerdo de incluir en el currículo escolar el contenido de paz e integración, en Honduras ya se está dando. Legalmente los ministros de educación sentaron las bases para estos programas.

PP12

En el nuevo contexto de la integración se entra en diálogo económico, social y político. En materia económica el avance es a nivel de los Ejecutivos no a nivel partido y los Ejecutivos toman la batuta del proceso y dejan de lado lo político. Lo social se convierte en un apéndice de lo económico. Falta evaluar y reformar el tratado de integración social. En lo político se ha desperdiciado el espacio que el Parlamento puede proporcionar para construir propuestas de integración verdaderas que muestren la región compacta y clara en su dirección. Sin embargo estamos marcados por los celos políticos. La integración necesita del desarrollo político e ideológico del pueblo centroamericano. Los partidos no han tomado con responsabilidad la delegación centroamericana y ser miembro del Parlamento se ve como turismo político... En el Parlamento debemos dejar de actuar como bancada nacional porque así se mantienen los localismos característicos de nuestros gobiernos. Se debe votar como bancada ideológica para generar un mayor sentimiento comunitario y generar una visión de región. Nuestra visión actual es generada por factores exógenos como el plan Puebla-Panamá y el tratado de libre comercio. Falta compromiso de parte de los miembros del Parlamento de dar seguimiento a las acciones de éste dentro de los partidos políticos... Falta una estrategia adecuada de comunicación de parte del Parlamento, no se necesitan factores vinculantes si se sabe vender ideas. La falta de facultades vinculantes se ha convertido en un extraordinario pretexto para la falta de dinamismo dentro del Parlamento, para que éste no se dinamice ni cumpla con la función que debería estar cumpliendo... Se debe divulgar información para vender la integración. Las actividades y debates regionales generalmente no se incluyen en las agendas de discusión de los partidos, se necesita un mecanismo que cumpla esta función... Existen secretarías interparlamentarias o de relaciones exteriores dentro de algunos partidos, pero no tienen relevancia. Éstas podrían ser los vínculos entre los partidos y las instituciones regionales en especial el Parlamento. La integración necesita cambio de actitud, un mayor interés, compromiso y convicción.

PP13

La integración centroamericana no debe seguir patrones de intereses extranjeros como los de las empresas multinacionales. La tragedia de Centroamérica es depender de los intereses extranjeros. Esta es una tragedia ya que los beneficios son también extranjeros. Los beneficios de la integración deben ser públicos, en el sentido de ser públicos para los centroamericanos... La colaboración y cooperación entre los estados es fundamental para la integración... En nuestra visión geográfica del mundo, primero debe ser el "sur." Nuestra visión debe ser

la defensa del “sur.” La integración debe hacer propuestas concretas a Centroamérica. Puede haber apertura de mercado entre Centroamérica pero no hacia el “norte” si no al “sur”... No hay debate o discusión sobre la integración en el seno del partido... y los presidentes y el gobierno de nuestro país carecen de una identidad integradora.

PP14

Las ideas son fundamentales para el proceso de integración. Por esta razón es necesario que se generen al seno de los partidos políticos, ideas acerca de como fortalecer el proceso. Los partidos deben crear secretarías para la integración, de esta manera se lograría canalizar de una manera eficaz la información sobre el proceso... Nuestro partido tiene una posición integradora a nivel Centroamericano y Latinoamericano... El proceso hasta ahora ha sido paralelo a lo financiero y comercial pero no es paralelo a lo social, lo cual no le permite “hablar” con la mayoría del pueblo Centroamericano. La integración debe de salir de la fase de privatización en la que se encuentra... Las oligarquías centroamericanas son anti-integracionistas. Esta es una explicación simplista pero históricamente real.

PP15

Las facultades vinculantes de las instituciones regionales como el Parlamento deben aumentar de acuerdo con las iniciativas y recomendaciones que éstas hacen... Es necesario concienciar a los partidos políticos y al pueblo sobre la integración regional... El Parlamento representa una cooperación basada en intereses regionales... Se ha realizado una propuesta para que se incluyan estudios de integración en los estudios primarios de la región. Centroamérica debe entender la importancia de la unión. Los partidos políticos no difunden información regional ni tampoco tienen programas de capacitación sobre integración para sus miembros. Por lo tanto hace falta concienciar a los partidos políticos sobre el tema... La Comisión de Educación y Cultura del Parlamento logro que los ministros de educación se comprometieran a incluir el tema de integración en los programas educativos... La integración es una necesidad y la concientización del pueblo es necesaria. Se debe usar los medios de comunicación para darle publicidad al Parlamento y al proceso regional en general... Debemos asumir responsabilidades regionales.

PP16

Con la historia integracionista en la región y las características que unen a estos países, la unión aduanera debería de existir... Hay tendencias en la región que limitan la lógica del proceso, por ejemplo el tratado de libre comercio debió haber sido negociado en conjunto para aprovechar ventajas comparativas. Debemos darnos el valor como una patria, la cual merecemos... Para facilitar el proceso, necesitamos establecer el pasaporte único centroamericano. No importa si los Estados Unidos están de acuerdo, debemos pensar en si el pueblo centroamericano esta de acuerdo... A la institucionalidad regional le faltan facultades vinculantes. Se cree que instituciones regionales sólidas significa una pérdida de poder para los presidentes. Los presidentes deben asumir una

responsabilidad política... Todo partido político debe comprometerse a incluir la discusión sobre la integración entre los temas más importantes en su agenda... Los organismos regionales han estado muy aislados del pueblo. Las instituciones regionales deben tocar a la gente; también debe haber mayor acercamiento entre los organismos regionales... Dirigentes políticos deben hacer de la integración un punto prioritario, exigirlo con acciones no solamente por la venta de palabra... Se le debe de dar soluciones a la gente por medio de la integración. Los dirigentes políticos deben creer en acciones de integración no solamente usarlo como tema de campaña. Ellos deben llevar el mensaje no solamente político sino también económico, nuestras naciones no van a desarrollarse mientras no obtengamos la integración.

PP17

Panamá es la “bisagra” entre Centro y Sur América. Para Panamá la integración es el camino hacia la unidad latinoamericana. No todos los sectores productivos (industriales, comerciantes y empresariales) de la región participan en la integración y por eso no se comprometen más con el proceso... La relevancia que se le da al proceso depende del papel de los partidos. En la medida que se asuma mayor conciencia acerca de lo necesario para el éxito del proceso, se va a influir en los órganos legislativos y ejecutivos de cada país lo cual llevará a mayor rapidez y fortalecimiento del proceso... El proceso es lento porque los sectores intergubernamentales ven a lo supranacional como un rival. Por esta razón se necesita crear conciencia integracionista entre los presidentes y gabinetes a través de los partidos. Pero el proceso no debe estar exclusivamente en manos intergubernamentales.

PP18

El consejo consultivo dentro del SICA es un espacio que no ha sido articulado ya que es difícil llevar el trabajo de las bases a lo regional. Entonces se debe trabajar las bases de otra manera, ya que el proceso tiene poco impacto. La sociedad civil ha tenido poco impacto para incidir en la integración centroamericana... Para avanzar la integración se necesita un “diálogo social” en el cual el Parlamento se convierta en un agente primordial al establecer audiencias con la sociedad en general y así disminuir las brechas que existen. Pero antes el Parlamento debe de reconstituirse ya que al no ofrecer ningún “producto” definido a la sociedad se convierte en un costo demasiado alto... Los obstáculos que limitan la integración son el exceso de individualismo, miopía de los países, incapacidad de entender el proceso, el desconocimiento total del proceso que lleva al estereotipo negativo (ignorancia) y el enfoque en los aspectos económicos sacando así de la integración la “integración” de los pueblos. Estos problemas se pueden solucionar al generar una cultura centroamericanista y constituir el proceso como una agenda de desarrollo... Los partidos políticos pueden servir como “punta de lanza” para tratar de cohesionar el proceso en lo político, y aquí el Parlamento es clave, y la integración de los pueblos o sea de la gente centroamericana. La gente de la región debe conocer más a la otra gente centroamericana para que se de cuenta de todas la coincidencias que existen, solamente así se podrá integrar a los pueblos centroamericanos... Se necesita una campaña de información integracionista para que a partir de esta información se genere una mayor

conciencia centroamericana. También es necesaria una estrategia político-cultural paralela a la económica en la cual la región se vea como región... La integración regional es una herramienta de desarrollo. Para lograr el fortalecimiento del proceso, en el consejo de ministros deberían de existir mecanismos de diálogo con la sociedad civil, como por ejemplo una audiencia en la que participen directamente el pueblo centroamericano. El Parlamento puede funcionar como este mecanismo si se acerca al pueblo. Se requiere de profundizar más la participación del pueblo y tratar de disminuir las brechas en el interior de las sociedades que generan las propuestas regionales. Si no se logra esto el pueblo no apoyará el proceso... El Parlamento no tiene legitimidad. La concepción de éste no ha causado un cambio en las relaciones políticas de los países miembros. Al contrario ha significado costos altos y ha dado privilegios a un segmento de la clase política; se ha generado una burocracia que no funciona ni produce. Las discusiones que allí se dan no tienen eco ni resonancia a nivel nacional, el Parlamento entonces no tiene credibilidad política para su funcionamiento. Se debe crear un espacio legislativo regional... Se debe tomar la integración como la agenda de desarrollo nacional pero esto requiere un gran compromiso... El pueblo desconoce la integración y el único conocimiento que tiene esta basado en los estereotipos de la clase política tradicional local que dicen “somos mejores” que el resto de Centroamérica. Muchas veces el pueblo toma partida en contra de la integración sin saber que es lo que están confrontando.

PP19

A través de una campaña de información la integración podría convertirse en tema de discusión y debate en Costa Rica. El obstáculo principal para dicho cambio estratégico es el “malinchismo” existente en este país y el desconocimiento de la población acerca de las raíces del país... Costa Rica no es indispensable para la integración del resto de los países del istmo pero es un elemento importante... La integración económica con institucionalidad económica renovada son urgentes, fundamentales; estas pueden generar la profundización del proceso.

PP20

La problemática de la integración está en las diferencias con respecto a avances educativos y de salud. Lo económico integra pero es necesario aprovechar la integración de una manera global. Se trata de alcanzar la cohesión de todas las sociedades de la región y no de afectar negativamente los logros sociales de algunos de los países. La integración debe democratizarse llevándola a todo el pueblo... Existe una visión positiva del proceso con respecto a los términos comerciales ya que estos son percibidos como foráneos a otros aspectos de la sociedad. La percepción en Costa Rica de temas como el migratorio es negativa.

PP21

Por su importancia Centroamérica penetra la mentalidad de los países de la región... Se debe de sincronizar las políticas sociales de todos los países del istmo. La percepción de las instituciones regionales, especialmente el Parlamento

es negativa. Éste es considerado una “isla” de impunidad para políticos “retirados.” Por esta razón debe de procederse con una reforma institucional que lleva al marco regional a ser efectivo y trascendente para todos los Centroamericanos... En Costa Rica no hay conciencia regional, todo se concibe a la “tica” ya que algunos sectores políticos solidifican la imagen nacional y se crea así un sentimiento diferente al de Centroamérica. Se debe explicar al pueblo lo que la integración significaría para el país. Se debe también aclarar nuestra posición en la región... El aislamiento de Costa Rica es ilógico.

PP22

Debe explicársele a la población centroamericana el tema de integración... El proceso puede tomar la perspectiva económica ya que es una realidad que lo económico integra... Lo esencial es que la integración debe de esforzarse por llevar la problemática social paralelamente a los aspectos del mercado.

PP23

Soy un unionista pero anti-PARLACEN, la diplomacia parlamentaria debe ser conservada para los congresos y asambleas nacionales... Diputados nacionales deben socializar con sus contrapartes en los países de la región... La integración se puede avanzar por medio de proyectos que faciliten el comercio como por ejemplo un ferrocarril centroamericano así como también proyectos culturales como de fútbol... La diplomacia parlamentaria necesaria para avanzar el proceso esta reservada para los ejecutivos.

PP24

Se necesita descentralizar el proceso. Instituciones regionales como el Parlamento podría establecer un mecanismo para incorporar en sus propuestas las ideas de las bases, es decir, el pueblo debe participar en el proceso para que de esta manera se “apropie” del proceso y por ende lo impulse... Se deben encontrar puntos de coincidencia entre los países.

PP25

El pueblo no conoce los logros las instituciones regionales... Los diputados nacionales no saben que hacer con la integración, las asambleas nacionales están atomizadas lo cual aumenta la falta de control sobre el Ejecutivo. En Costa Rica se creó una imagen del Parlamento basada en las percepciones que se tenían del resto de los países del área caracterizadas por conflictos internos, por ejemplo. Esta percepción ha generado recelo en la sociedad costarricense. Costa Rica puede aprender de la integración regional de los otros países centroamericanos. El proceso se puede fortalecer a través de la distribución de información de lo logrado. La falta de información acerca de las “bondades” de la integración, ya que los ejecutivos no informan, afecta negativamente. Se debe habilitar procesos que aumenten la interacción entre la clase política centroamericana... Los diputados nacionales están desconectados de lo que están haciendo los ejecutivos a nivel regional, los congresos nacionales están atomizados, excepto en El Salvador y Honduras. Por lo tanto la integración debe pasar por una integración

de las fuerzas políticas y de allí ser llevado a un proceso amplio que incluya al pueblo por medio de consejos económico-sociales que representen a los diferentes sectores de la sociedad. Estos podrían generar interés y conciencia regional en el pueblo... Se necesita dar ejemplos de éxito en la integración para poder fortalecer el proceso; ya hay acuerdos exitosos pero que son desconocidos por la población. Si se dan a conocer se entendería que la integración genera beneficios. No se han divulgado las bondades de la integración.

PP26

Se debe encontrar la manera de transmitir e impulsar las propuestas regionales a lo nacional. La clase política de algunos países renuentes a fortalecer el proceso y el electorado de estos países se preguntan ¿que hacen las instituciones regionales? Sin embargo, esta percepción de falta de efectividad es el resultado de la falta de información que existe. La integración debe convertirse en una estrategia de desarrollo para los países del área: se debe tener como objetivo el nivelar los países en los aspectos sociales y económicos; y dentro de cada país se debe nivelar las sociedades, es decir, reducir las diferencias sociales. El empezar a trabajar hacia la conquista de dichos objetivos hará a las instituciones regionales más visibles para los pueblos quienes al tener un beneficio tangible apoyarán el proceso de integración, lo cual obligará a la clase política, y por ende a los ejecutivos, a profundizar el proceso... La integración regional representa problemas para Costa Rica, por lo migratorio y el sistema de protección social, los cuales podrían ser puestos en peligro si Costa Rica se convirtiera en un miembro completo del sistema regional. Por lo tanto, es difícil que Costa Rica entre al sistema y se mantendrá como un actor pasivo en la región.

PP27

Algunas instituciones regionales como el Parlamento no tienen una agenda que lleve al fortalecimiento de la integración, se necesita de una agenda dinámica. Se debe dotar de recursos a las instituciones para mejorar su eficiencia, pero lo más importante es determinar si ese mejoramiento de la eficiencia se refleja igualmente en un aumento de su eficacia, lo cual no está determinado solamente por la capacidad de gestión institucional sino que, sobre todo, por la voluntad política de los países y el grado de cumplimiento de los compromisos acordados, así como por la visión y actuación de las instituciones regionales sobre la base de la visión de sus máximas autoridades.

PP28

Se debe cambiar la forma de elección para los representantes ante el PARLACEN. Se debe informar al pueblo de la existencia de estos puestos y se debe explicar al electorado las funciones de los parlamentarios regionales... El sistema educativo puede servir para socializar el proceso. Podemos generar así una conciencia integracionista que allane las dificultades que enfrentamos al proponer la integración. Tenemos que proyectar el proceso hacia toda la sociedad. Es cierto que la integración es económica, pero esto no significa que no pueda ser democrática.

PP29

La integración es global, parte de una decisión política y se desarrolla en los ámbitos político, económico, social, ambiental y cultural debiendo existir una adecuada correspondencia entre los avances de un ámbito con los otros, las prioridades las determina en forma necesaria el proceso mismo... La participación de la sociedad en el proceso de la integración se debe de incrementar, la proyección del proceso hacia la mayoría es prioridad... Lo económico y otros aspectos sociales como la educación dentro de la integración regional no son políticas excluyentes entre sí, se puede desarrollar conocimiento y a la vez incrementar el comercio, en ambos casos se pueden desarrollar.

PP30

El contexto nos obliga a la integración. Las necesidades de supervivencia llevan a la integración regional. El tratado de libre comercio ha venido a forzar la región a unirse. Cualquier tratado, por ejemplo con la Unión Europea, nos une más, ya que nos lleva al diálogo. Lamentablemente algunos de los presidentes de nuestros países no piensan en Centroamérica como región capaz de acciones puntuales. En nuestros países no hay continuidad en los gobiernos y nuevos gobernantes piensan con revanchismo hacia el gobierno anterior, esto le resta estabilidad a la integración. Como región debemos entrar en áreas más palpables para el pueblo, como la temática migratoria. Deberíamos de hablar como Centroamérica con Estados Unidos sobre el tema migratorio.

PP31

Centroamérica va caminando hacia la integración. El tratado de libre comercio favorece la integración. Debe de haber más integración en materias palpables para la sociedad centroamericana en general lo cual le dará más relevancia a las instituciones regionales... En temas de política exterior los consulados deberían de conformarse como Centroamérica y no como países individuales.

PP32

La integración no es un tema de discusión en los partidos políticos, ni siquiera se logra que sea tema de la Comisión de Relaciones Exteriores e Integración centroamericana. Aquí el PARLACEN puede ser clave... Existen divergencias sobre el análisis que hacen otras personas. El Parlamento es 100% eficaz porque no está obligado a hacer nada: Votaciones no son importantes solamente se genera camaradería. El PARLACEN se ha convertido en "ente" extraño, las resoluciones de los presidentes sobre el número de diputados del Parlamento son las importantes. Por eso no importa la representación que exista allí, y esto quita atribuciones al Parlamento... El Parlamento se ha convertido en el "patito feo" de la integración pero el peso no cae solamente sobre el parlamento sino también sobre los presidentes quienes no aceptan nada que "huela" a supranacionalidad. Los parlamentarios centroamericanos no tratan de convencer a sus partidos sobre la importancia de la integración. Por ejemplo, en El Salvador ARENA no acepta la supranacionalidad, sin embargo sus miembros del parlamento son "centroamericanistas." El PARLACEN no puede acercarse a la gente porque sus propios partidos bloquean cualquier intento... El tratado de libre comercio no

tiene espíritu de integración real. Existe pesimismo sobre la actitud integracionista de los gobiernos. Por otra parte, necesitamos crear interés sobre la integración dentro de los partidos políticos. Los “centroamericanistas” cuando llegan a los gobiernos no incluyen el debate sobre la integración en sus agendas. Además el proceso no tiene diseño, no existe un plan de como generar la supranacionalidad en la región. Existe mucha retórica sobre lo vital de la integración regional, pero no responde a una pregunta fundamental: ¿que forma va a tener la integración? Se necesita determinar un ente con personalidad centroamericana, por ejemplo una confederación centroamericana. Desgraciadamente no existe un pensamiento integracionista agresivo, creativo y que asuma lo que somos como región. Se debe de pensar en otras dimensiones como la de sociedades “desterritorializadas.” Las nacionalidades existentes no son explicables desde el espacio territorial. La integración debe ser construida sobre la realidad de nuestra gente... La integración regional es vital para la sobre-vivencia de Centroamérica, se debe pensar en la integración política... Una confederación es más aceptable ya que su efecto en ciertos poderes es menor. Necesitamos dar los primeros pasos, dar funciones vinculantes a los órganos regionales. El PARLACEN debe generar debate real sobre el tema... Todos los presidentes de Centroamérica están ligados al mismo capital, este capital es especulativo el cual no necesita integración, muchos menos órganos que posean supranacionalidad como la Corte Centroamericana.

PP33

Existe una visión favorable para la integración dentro de la Asamblea Nacional de El Salvador. Pero se necesita mayor acercamiento entre el las instituciones regionales y el pueblo, se deben proyectar las oficinas regionales hacia la comunidad... El futuro de Centroamérica esta en la integración pero no es suficiente lo que se ha hecho. En el Parlamento no debería de haber votación por país o ideología, sino mejor por una identidad de región... Falta una buena campaña de comunicación que impulse la integración en todos los países, que informe al pueblo sobre el proceso. También, se necesita un programa educativo sobre integración que sea consistente, es decir que tenga el mismo contenido en todos los países. Si no hay integración, no hay desarrollo, no hay bienestar, no hay felicidad para nuestros pueblos de Centroamérica.

PP34

Se debe buscar un foro de cooperación que lleve a la integración. El mayor obstáculo para la integración regional son los grupos empresariales que quieren controlar el estado y participar en un proceso de integración económica con el mínimo de regulaciones; o sea una integración controlada por ellos. El PARLACEN con poderes vinculantes elegiría los ejecutivos de SICA, SIECA y BCIE; lo cual resultaría en instituciones regionales fuertes que regulen el proceso de integración, en especial el económico. Los grupos empresariales no quieren tales instituciones, no es una cuestión económica si no de control. Al mismo tiempo la relación de las instituciones regionales con la prensa es deficiente. Los medios de comunicación no conocen o entienden el Sistema de Integración y se dedican a representar al PARLACEN como un ente no productivo. Ellos no conocen la realidad. Por ejemplo desconocen que el Parlamento inicia procesos

que serian beneficiosos y que son los Ejecutivos que deberían de hacer de esos proyectos leyes. Sin embargo es en este punto en el que el proceso llega a un callejón sin salida y sufre de estancamiento. Esta situación es aprovechada por los grupos empresariales que desprestigian al Parlamento... Debemos de reconocer que no está institucionalizada la importancia de la integración como vehículo de desarrollo. Para esto necesitamos aprender a ser región y así reducir la desintegración de lo nacional y lo regional.

PP35

La integración existe pero es histórica, es una tradición buscar la integración Centroamericana. Pero no existe una conciencia clara sobre la integración como un mecanismo para el desarrollo de nuestros países. Aún las dictaduras buscaban la integración, por ejemplo fueron ellos quienes fundaron ODECA y CONDECA. Las dictaduras siempre tuvieron una vocación integracionista... Los partidos políticos están demasiado enfocados en problemas de la vida diaria de sus países y los conflictos internos. Por ejemplo, se espera de Guatemala un liderazgo regional. Sin embargo el Presidente Berger no tiene liderazgo regional, no entiende el proceso. Por eso él está en contra de la integración precisamente por que sus asesores se oponen a lo regional... Existe en la región un compromiso histórico pero no es "militante." Si existe una base sólida para el proceso... Si conocemos los beneficios de la integración, si somos centroamericanistas, pero entonces ¿porqué no se consolida el proceso de integración?... A los Estados Unidos no le importa la integración regional de Centroamérica, no la apoyan pero no están en contra; a ellos les interesa negociar bilateralmente esa es su política hacia la región, aun con la Unión Europea eso es lo que buscan entonces no es problema hegemónico. Los que se oponen al proceso son los grupos privados de empresas, los grupos económicos poderosos, las oligarquías locales. Por razones objetivas las oligarquías de Centroamérica quieren integrarse sin integración. Es decir quieren integrarse, tener alianzas de bancos, por ejemplo el Banco Cuscatlán. Dichas alianzas deben de realizarse bajo sus condiciones y sin regulaciones y leyes, sin compromiso con los países. La integración formal implica la formación de organismos con poderes vinculantes. Si existe este tipo de instituciones entonces se limitarían la integración informal (el Parlamento establecería normas vinculantes de carácter regional). Entonces los grupos se dedican a desprestigiar aun a los congresos nacionales. La empresa privada se opone por razones objetivas a la integración formal, ellos también critican a los congresos locales porque ellos no quieren normas.... Los bancos están integrados, las empresas se están integrando, ¿se necesita entonces instituciones regionales fuertes? Este es el dilema pero depende de los políticos quienes deben de tomar la decisión de integrarse y funcionar como una confederación con leyes locales para ciertos temas y leyes regionales para otros, con una autoridad central (como la autoridad suiza). Concibo la integración regional de Centroamérica (para los próximos 20 años) con un comité ejecutivo colegiado entre los presidentes (como el suizo), un parlamento centroamericano que establezca normas, que reciban iniciativa de los presidentes y que sean ratificadas por los presidentes, los congresos locales legislarían temas que no son regionales sino locales y la Corte Centroamericana de Justicia fuerte. Se necesita un sistema de integración fuerte para fortalecer el desarrollo de la región. El camino para el desarrollo es la integración. ¿Cómo lograrlo? La Unión Europea puede motivar, propiciar

actividades a través de entidades gubernamentales y de la sociedad civil para ir generando conciencia acerca de la importancia de la integración para el desarrollo de la región... Se deben tomar decisiones independientemente de Costa Rica, esto no significa pelear, es simplemente tomar decisiones independientes.

PP36

Instituciones regionales como el Parlamento no son vinculantes y por lo tanto no pueden afectar o cambiar las políticas internas de los diferentes países... Los sistemas políticos de la región no son independientes de los sectores económicos poderosos. La dependencia financiera que existe lleva a esos sectores a ser dueños de los espacios políticos. Por lo tanto los políticos no tienen la libertad de desarrollar la política. Existe una dependencia de lo político en lo económico. Los presidentes de la región no tienen la libertad política de desarrollar una verdadera agenda integracionista. Debemos pensar como naciones y no como intereses económicos. Por dicha dependencia y pensamiento los organismos regionales no llegan a tener el poder que deberían. El vínculo entre lo local y lo regional se pierde en el momento en que los representantes de los partidos políticos llegan al Parlamento... Oficinas regionales debería de existir dentro de los Comités Ejecutivos de los partidos políticos. Dicha oficina debería de ser la encargada de los temas regionales... Los políticos usan las instituciones regionales como chivo expiatorio lo cual debilita los organismos regionales porque la gente empieza a percibirlos como una carga que no es útil y los gobernantes amenazan con remover la representación regional... Se necesita la creación de un ente centroamericano con personalidad política que establezca de una vez la región como unidad.

PP37

La integración regional debe ser global, debe de empezar en lo mínimo, como por ejemplo en el asunto de mujeres o minorías. Se debe dar espacio a estos grupos... El obstáculo para la integración es la falta de compromiso, se debe dejar el romanticismo por un lado y tener una mayor pro-actividad... Se debe revisar el acta constitutiva del PARLACEN. Se debe de ir limando los aspectos negativos del Parlamento para irle dando un poco de factores vinculantes. Es preocupante que en las votaciones de Guatemala la papeleta más anulada es la del Parlamento... Los partidos políticos deben revisar la manera en que eligen sus representantes al Parlamento... La gente que conoce un poco sobre el tema si apoyan al proceso, pero si se les mencionan las instituciones regionales no las apoya... El obstáculo mayor es la falta de compromiso dentro de las instituciones regionales.

PP38

La integración centroamericana sigue su proceso y parece encaminarse hacia la unión aduanera. Pero, considerando la globalización de los mercados, Centro América ya debería pensar en trabajar hacia el mercado común. La liberalización de los factores productivos es un hecho, además ya hay un CA4 [pasaporte] que permite un libre tránsito de personas... Por definición, la integración es parte de

un proceso de descentralización funcional de los gobiernos pero éste debe ser paulatino. Hay casos en que funciona solamente a nivel nacional, y en el plano regional se manifiesta frágil. La normativa “supranacional” es una condición esencial para eficientizar el proceso descentralizado regional y lograr así la participación de la mayoría de los miembros de nuestras sociedades.

PP39

No hay comunicación entre lo local y lo regional en lo absoluto. Los miembros del Parlamento deberían de desarrollar un programa para concienciar a las bases y convertirse así en difusores de la integración... La clase económica tiene miedo del proceso. Entonces, el proceso debe ser escalonado vendiendo la idea a los diferentes sectores sociales paulatinamente... La integración es una herramienta para enfrentar la globalización.

PP40

La comunicación entre lo regional y lo local no es buena. La velocidad en los procesos es diferente: en los congresos nacionales es un proceso diario en el cual el rol de la política partidaria es más fuerte. El PAN tiene un capítulo de integración en su constitución, tiene una secretaria de integración, el partido ha hecho sus avances en la materia, es uno de los partidos políticos más progresistas en la materia de integración... La prensa de la región tiene un espíritu destructivo hacia la integración. Ellos no entienden el proceso, no salen de las últimas décadas del siglo pasado... El Parlamento es una de las instituciones que no es comprendida en Centroamérica ya que la gente no percibe su utilidad. La prensa ha tildado y señalado al Parlamento como un nido de políticos sin darse cuenta, como resultado del subdesarrollo político nuestro, que el Parlamento es el organismo con mayor representatividad política en la región (unos 54 partidos políticos son miembros, mientras que en el Congreso Nacional de Guatemala hay diez partidos representados, por ejemplo). El Parlamento tiene en sus miembros un gran potencial ya que en su mayoría son gente con una gran experiencia. Lamentablemente el Parlamento ha sido atacado y socavado por la prensa. En el caso de Guatemala la prensa presenta al Parlamento como un gasto, mientras que en realidad el Parlamento trae ingresos al país debido a que su sede se encuentra en Guatemala. La prensa solo destruye, actitud que demuestra todas las frustraciones y conflictos que existen en lo regional... A pesar de toda nuestra historia no nos vemos como región todavía. La actitud de los cafetaleros no refleja ninguna voluntad hacia la integración. No existe cultura de integración, no hay percepción ni comprensión de los beneficios de la integración... Existe una gran falta de identidad, se debe trabajar la conciencia regional de la juventud... El gran obstáculo es la falta de credibilidad de las instituciones y el enfrentamiento entre el sector económico y la clase política. El sector económico ha desarrollado sus lazos, por ejemplo ellos se comunican entre cámaras de comercio o de industria. El poder económico cree que la clase política no pueden ser sus interlocutores. Por lo tanto no utilizan los canales institucionales de la integración. Como son estos grupos quienes controlan la prensa, la alimentan con argumentos que tiende a desprestigiar a los organismos regionales. Por ejemplo, se argumenta que el Parlamento tiene demasiados diputados. Destruyen así algo

que no entienden. Depende entonces de la clase política saber aprovechar las instituciones regionales.

PP41

Las instituciones regionales son organismos ideales pero no tienen “dientes” y algunas de ellas se han convertido en “cementorios” para políticos retirados. Los medios de comunicación tratan de descalificar las funciones de las instituciones. El Parlamento por ejemplo cumple función de intermediación en la sociedad. Al no actuar, el Parlamento está generando un espacio que es ocupado por otras fuerzas... El poder económico llena este espacio tratar de alguna forma de descalificar aquellos órganos de los cuales ellos no tienen el control. Afortunadamente los grupos económicos no tienen el control de las decisiones de los Parlamentos... La integración es de proceso y evolución. Pero falta compromiso para lograr integración... El mayor obstáculo para avanzar el proceso es el “paroquialismo,” la imposibilidad de tener visión amplia y el subdesarrollo cultural... Por las condiciones que existen entre ellos, se debe crear un ente político por lo menos entre El Salvador y Guatemala. Estos países deben tener la audacia de declarar su unión declarando un punto de partida y estableciendo una presidencia simbólica. Esta sería constituida por el Presidente de Centroamérica pero no por el jefe de estado el cual seguiría siendo el presidente de cada país. Pero estaríamos rompiendo así barreras y estableciendo una sola política internacional. La voluntad política es clave es este aspecto pero siempre debe estar precedida por un sólido aparato cultural y nosotros no hemos hecho una cultura centroamericana, ni entre los sindicatos y gremios, ni entre los grupos estudiantiles, deportivos y artístico. Esto se debe a que lo que ha prevalecido en la integración es lo económico lo cual implica un grado de competencia y rivalidad entre los países centroamericanos pero que a pesar de ello el proceso ha avanzado. Los líderes políticos en general gozan de muy poca integración.

PP42

Los gobiernos se abstienen de aprobar resoluciones que dan poder vinculantes a las instituciones regionales ya que perciben que al hacerlo estarían “soltando” el poder. Cada “cacique en Centroamérica quiere ser el gallo en su rancho”... Costa Rica ha sido un freno difícil de penetrar, pero debemos seguir adelante sin ellos... No hay comprensión acerca del tema, no existe la visión de lo que puede ser la integración trabajando desde una realidad centroamericana, o sea de lo que significa y sería la unidad de nuestros países... Algunos círculos políticos, incluyendo algunos presidentes, quisieran “desaparecer” instituciones regionales como el Parlamento a pesar de que este es el organismo ideal para la integración, que ya está formado con una gran inversión es su establecimiento, por lo tanto es necesario darle “dientes.” La falta de facultades vinculantes es lo más importante a enfrentar.

PP43

Las instituciones regionales están lejanas de la población. Para ellos es claro que si no se logra la integración se experimentará la “distorsión” en los niveles

económicos, políticos y sociales. Es importante unificar todas las ventajas comparativas de los países de la región pero el proceso debe ser integral y abarcar todas estas dimensiones no solamente la económica. La integración no debe ser solamente económica sino integral. Esto significa que debe acaparar todo lo social, lo cultural, lo político y lo económico... Es necesario que la integración continúe desde el siguiente punto: debemos capacitar a los líderes comunales sobre lo que son los temas integracionista a si ellos pueden convertirse en actores diseminadores de la integración. Los esfuerzos regionales son muy aislados, entonces no se ha sentido el efecto, el fruto de la integración.... Una oficina para la integración regional eliminaría el aislamiento de los partidos políticos dentro del proceso, eliminaría la posibilidad de quedarse fuera del entorno regional. UNE tiene dicha oficina la cual tiene enlace directo con el comité ejecutivo nacional del partido a través de su Secretario General Colóm... La integración significa competitividad. Existe una ideología de consenso entre los países en este respecto... Se debe buscar el traslado de los beneficios que genera la integración hacia el pueblo en la forma de desarrollo económico y social. Guatemala debe ser el pivote, la cabeza, la punta de lanza regional. Guatemala debe dar la pauta... El Parlamento es un grupo de personas que esta allí, algunos creen en el proceso y están preparados, pero lamentablemente esto no es suficiente. Se necesita apoyo de programas que capaciten a los políticos. Con este fin se necesitan proyectos de educación a nivel regional, pero tenemos que saber canalizarlo. Se debe avanzar a nivel gobierno. Solamente ellos pueden implementar la integración a corto plazo. Si no hay integración habrá distorsión regional lo cual traerá problemas sociales serios. Tenemos un analfabetismo tremendo en el tema de integración. Para hacer conciencia en el pueblo se necesita conciencia a nivel político entre los partidos políticos quienes son lo que generan el proceso... Los diputados no saben a que van al Parlamento. Entonces, aun los miembros del Parlamento deben ser capacitados en materia de integración, para así crear conciencia entre ellos... No existe un reconocimiento del trabajo efectivo que las organizaciones regionales como el Parlamento hayan hecho por los pueblos centroamericanos. La conciencia regional se debe trabajar a nivel político primero para que posteriormente los señores diputados del Parlamento actúen como agentes concientizadores a nivel de la población... Con todos lo elementos culturales que nuestros pueblos comparten entonces ¿cómo es posible que todavía estemos debatiendo como avanzar de integración? Es posible que existan otros intereses a quienes no les interesa la integración... Las organizaciones regionales deben tener poderes vinculantes.

PP44

Nos fue muy difícil la consolidación del Parlamento centroamericano en Guatemala. La oposición del gobierno del Presidente Serrano lo hizo dificultoso. Los pueblos no se oponen pero algunos gobiernos y en especial algunos presidentes han tenido una actitud negativa hacia el Parlamento y la integración en general; ellos han propiciado que los medios de comunicación social se dirijan agresivamente en contra del Parlamento. La población no veía mal al Parlamento en Costa Rica... Se necesita trabajo constante de los directivos hacia los ejecutivos, los partidos políticos olvidan a sus representantes en el Parlamento, se les ha olvidado que ellos son miembros de los partidos por lo tanto estos deben estar pendiente de sus representantes y es a través de los partidos que se puede

lograr la presión sobre los Ejecutivos para lograr poderes vinculantes para las organizaciones regionales... Los obstáculos para el proceso empiezan al no haber una persona interesada verdaderamente en darle apoyo a las organizaciones regionales. Los ministros de relaciones exteriores de cada país tienen su propia agenda y no existe un vínculo entre el Parlamento y los asesores de los ministros quienes tienen poder de agenda. Tenemos entonces que “enamorar” a esos asesores por lo tanto el Parlamento debe tener constantemente dos o tres personas en cada país íntimamente vinculados con estos asesores. Se necesita que los diputados aporten, que participen (antes no lo hacían cuando era miembro) y aun así eran reelegidos. Algunos diputados no tienen conciencia regional, ni tienen el deseo de mejorar. ¿Cómo mejorar la actitud pasiva en el Parlamento? Se puede crear sentido de responsabilidad... El Presidente Maduro [de Honduras] usó al Parlamento para fines personales. Él se había peleado con el presidente del Parlamento y en cada reunión proponía eliminar dicha institución... Se puede desarrollar volantes cortos con información sobre las tareas de las instituciones regionales en general. Lo más importante es que los miembros del Parlamento se perciban como actores regionales encargados del destino de Centroamérica... Se debe insistir mucho en los ejecutivos. Se requiere de muchos esfuerzos para que no se cercene lo logrado hasta ahora.

PP45

Existe una gran falta de entendimiento con respecto al proceso de integración... Se necesita una moneda centroamericana y el libre movimiento de recursos. La legislación regional debe ser vinculante. La integración legal es importante incluyendo la regulación de bolsas bursátiles y monitoreo bancario... Existe descontento entre la gente pobre y clase empresarial porque se percibe que la integración (representada por el CAFTA- DR ya que este es el entendimiento) beneficia a las empresas multinacionales. Es necesario entonces explicar a la gente que la integración es diferente al dicho tratado.

PP46

La integración ya no es un sueño, es una exigencia. Hay compromiso de parte de los partidos políticos hondureños sobre la inclusión de la integración en el debate de la campaña política en el país. La unidad política de los partidos de Honduras toma la iniciativa en esta dirección... La integración es una necesidad política, social, económica y cultural. La integración económica debe reformar mercados, por ejemplo, debe dar poder adquisitivo a toda la economía. No debe unir mercados pequeños y pobres. Las instituciones regionales necesitan un giro. Éstas no son sino la política de los estados que las forman por lo tanto dichas instituciones carecen de identidad. Necesitamos cambio de actitud en los estados. Necesitamos órganos con potestad legislativa... La integración es imperiosa. La unidad política es la meta. El Tratado de Nicaragua así lo establece pero el proceso debe ser gradual y sucesivo, aun Costa Rica lo ratificó... Necesitamos unidad política. Tenemos que “irrigar” la conciencia centroamericana para cosechar frutos ya que el proceso ocupa un segundo plano en nuestras preocupaciones; irrigar por medio del encuentro de todas las fuerzas políticas para abordar el tema. En Honduras todos los partidos están de acuerdo... Aun cambios en el sistema educativo necesitan unión política. La posibilidad para ésta

existe pero necesitamos liderazgo político. Se necesita la creación de una persona jurídica, por ejemplo, volver a crear la Republica Mayor de Centroamérica. La visión histórica entre nuestros países existe. El convencimiento de la necesidad de un mercado mayor nos lleva a la necesidad de la unión política, es decir que se conjuga el interés material con el ideal unionista... Existen contradicciones entre la voluntad política y la ejecución del proceso. El futuro no se puede concebir brillante y prospero fuera de la integración. Los partidos políticos de la región deben tomar la iniciativa... En Centroamérica estamos tratando de restablecer la unión, no estamos iniciando el proceso como en otras regiones. Morazán es importante.

PP47

Existe mayor deseo por la integración a través de los volúmenes comerciales, aranceles y unión aduanera. Sin embargo, hay falta de voluntad política y resistencia en el campo político. La funcionalidad de los órganos regionales es deficiente. El grado de concreción del proceso debe ir acompañado del fortalecimiento de los órganos de integración, lo cual se demuestra por medio de dicha concreción. El proceso tiene un gran potencial con muchos beneficios para la región por lo tanto necesitamos agilizarlo con más voluntad política, no debemos pensar que ceder poder a la integración es renunciar al poder, nuestra soberanía e identidad nacional, sino que significa la búsqueda de posibilidades mayores de desarrollo económico y social conjunta la cual seria beneficiosa para todos los países de la región.

PP48

La integración es generalmente mal entendida, y entre ciertos segmentos de nuestra sociedad, desconocida completamente. Sí se conocen los aspectos históricos que nos unen pero estos deben ser fortalecidos por las fuerzas integracionistas del presente. Lo económico del proceso aísla a muchos centroamericanos ya que no les beneficia... Ciertos sectores económicos de la región condicionan el proceso y por esta razón la integración es percibida como algo ajeno por la mayoría de centroamericanos... La difusión del conocimiento sobre el proceso es clave para el fortalecimiento de la conciencia histórica centroamericana. Tenemos que dejar a un lado la retórica y actuar regionalmente. Debemos asumir la responsabilidad histórica de reunir a nuestros pueblos. Sí articulamos y proponemos adecuadamente la integración, y hacemos evidentes los beneficios que se pueden derivar de ésta, aun los sectores dominantes más renuentes apoyaran el proceso.

PP49

Centroamérica debe integrarse como bloque económico, se necesita una mayor voluntad dentro de los partidos para fortalecer los órganos regionales. Esto nos llevará, en las instituciones regionales, especialmente el Parlamento, a tratar asuntos judiciales, económicos y políticos. Se debe vender la idea de integración por medio de las decisiones políticas... Representaciones centroamericanas como consulados ante países amigos serian más representativas y dignas. La integración implica más capacidad económica y de negociación, con mayores

beneficios para Centroamérica... Las Cumbres Presidenciales deben recibir el debido seguimiento. Debemos ser centroamericanos respetando la identidad de cada uno de los estados miembros. Necesitamos vender la idea de la integración para generar voluntad. Por eso las organizaciones regionales deben socializarse entre los grupos organizados de Centroamérica, entre los partidos políticos, para llevar adelante la integración. Se necesitan alianzas entre los órganos complementarios regionales y nacionales, es decir una verdadera integración institucional con mayor vinculación a través de objetivos comunes para facilitar decisiones que generen mayor integración.

PP50

Centroamérica es latente. Lamentablemente la visión de “aldea” tan común en nuestros países frena la integración. Se habla sobre integración del “diente al labio.” La falta de ahínco de parte de algunos de los países de la región limita las posibilidades de integrarnos. Préstamos culturales, como adaptar elementos de la experiencia Europea, tratan de imponer el ritmo a nuestro proceso lo cual reduce aun mas las posibilidades de éxito... Algunas de las instituciones regionales se han desvirtuado. Necesitamos ser sinceros y dejar aun lado los intereses personales. Las instituciones, en particular el Parlamento, no han sabido generar la dinámica para convertirse en abanderados del proceso, deben darle continuidad al proceso. Los gobiernos usan solamente la retórica de la integración. Los instrumentos regionales más visibles, como el SICA, son simplemente mecanismos para recomendaciones. Falta beligerancia de parte de los miembros del Parlamento, de que le den seguimiento dentro de sus partidos a las recomendaciones del parlamento para que nosotros, miembros de congresos nacionales, las incorporemos como leyes para ir dando la razón de ser a una legislación centroamericana aunque sea embrionaria. De la pasividad de los miembros del Parlamento no podemos culpar a los ejecutivos. Se puede orquestar un enchufe por medio del Parlamento Centroamericano con otros órganos legislativos sobre legislación uniforme, por ejemplo en lo ambiental, lo cual podría establecer las bases para avanzar la integración real. Podríamos ir estableciendo talvez una agenda legislativa que vaya creando un marco jurídico centroamericano... La política es de símbolos, y la integración necesita símbolos. Muchos políticos se desmotivan porque la integración es solamente retórica, conferencias y seminarios; nuestros pueblos necesitan agendas más beligerantes. Se necesita presencia real de las instituciones regionales en Centroamérica, lo cual generará un sentimiento regional. Tenemos que cambiar el rostro de las instituciones. Se podría tener representación centroamericana ante organismos internacionales, para dar imagen de región pero para esto se necesita voluntad política. Los gobiernos solamente usan la integración por lo tanto a decaído el proceso. Hay que motivar a los gobiernos... Se necesita conocer sobre las acciones de las instituciones regionales y crear mecanismo de información directa entre estas y los órganos nacionales, por ejemplo entre el Parlamento y los congresos nacionales.

PP51

Se necesita beligerancia, documentar el proceso para distribuir el conocimiento hacia el pueblo centroamericano. El pueblo quiere un producto, pero las

instituciones regionales no pueden ofrecerlo ya que no existe vocación integracionista entre algunos de sus miembros. Algunos de estos no tienen ni idea del concepto de integración, y representan un retroceso para el proceso... Es necesario que se cree un sentido de responsabilidad, se podría establecer un informe a la nación cada determinado tiempo en el cual miembros de instituciones regionales presenten sus actividades ante los congresos o asambleas nacionales. Lo cual daría mayor visibilidad al proceso.

PP52

El Parlamento debe de articular el proyecto de integración primordialmente. El proceso tiene diferente sentido para los partidos políticos de la región, pero en general no tiene incidencia para el pueblo o la clase política; se necesitan resultados materiales, asentar lo sustantivo... El pueblo no percibe ventajas derivadas de ciertas instituciones regionales o de la integración en general... Si el proceso es económico el pueblo panameño lo rechaza. Se debe aprovechar la complementariedad entre Centroamérica y Panamá, no se trata de repetir el comportamiento de los otros países de la región en Panamá.

PP53

Las instituciones regionales tienen las suficientes capacidades para generar resultados positivos para la sociedad centroamericana y así empezar a reducir la percepción negativa que se tiene del proceso. No se ha sabido “vender” la integración y así se ha contribuido a tal percepción... Los partidos políticos son fundamentales para el proceso ya que si pensamos a éstos como entes racionales que velan por el beneficio de los países, entonces dados los beneficios de la integración deben trabajar dentro del proceso... La velocidad de algunas instituciones regionales es muy lenta pero el marco institucional existente es el adecuado para el proceso... Entre ciertos sectores existe una actitud irresponsable que ha llevado a un proceso condenatorio hacia algunos aspectos del proceso, como por ejemplo el establecimiento y papel del Parlamento Centroamericano. Dicha actitud puede ser el resultado del criterio miope de algunos forjadores de opinión. No hay instituciones perfectas pero debemos trabajar hacia la efectividad de estas... La imagen del proceso y sus instituciones se pueden mejorar con resultados para lo cual si hay potencial... Normalizar las reglas de tránsito en el área como proyecto para la integración podría contribuir... También se debe avanzar en los aspectos sociales como los de salud y seguridad ciudadana.

PP54

Las instituciones regionales sirven como mecanismo de socialización para políticos. En Panamá la gente no piensa en Centroamérica, la integración no tiene eco. No existe un plan educativo para crear conciencia centroamericana. Pero estoy interesado en dicho programa educativo... El comercio ya existe entre Panamá y Centroamérica pero la gente no está conciente acerca de la integración. La consolidación de acuerdos políticos es fundamental para que el pueblo se de cuenta de la importancia del proceso. Las decisiones deben ser tomadas a largo plazo, no se debe buscar capitalizar, es decir pensar en las siguientes elecciones,

las decisiones regionales. La decisión de Panamá de entrar en la integración es pragmática, alguna gente piensa que es más rentable entrar en esquemas regionales de Suramérica que en el proceso de Centroamérica. La socialización de políticos miembros de las instituciones centroamericanas ayuda a influenciar las decisiones que se toman dentro del gobierno con respecto a la región.

PP55

Para avanzar en la integración centroamericana se requiere por sobre todo un pleno interés y compromiso de las más altas autoridades del conjunto de países miembros, convencidos que la integración es una forma adecuada para, en conjunto, atender las necesidades de desarrollo sustentable de la región. Dando lineamientos claros y precisos tanto a las instituciones regionales como a los entes nacionales responsables de la ejecución de los mandatos y resoluciones. El instrumental jurídico de la integración establece quiénes son los que participan directamente del proceso... La integración marcha hacia donde los tomadores de decisión la impulsan, en este momento es claro que hay prioridades claramente identificadas como la unión aduanera en el ámbito económico, la cooperación regional para los temas de seguridad, la atención de los riesgos a desastres naturales y a la preservación de los recursos naturales, el fortalecimiento del sector turístico, el desarrollo del sector pesquero sobre la base de una política regional de pesca, la coordinación y desarrollo del sector energético, etc. Siendo ese el marco en el que se identifican las iniciativas y actividades para avanzar en la integración... El conocimiento de lo que es un proceso de integración entre la población general es determinante para generar empatías hacia el mismo, no puede esperarse que sea exitoso si no se conoce y dirige con suficiente propiedad.

PP56

La debilidad de la SG-SICA en su papel de coordinador general resulta de la autonomía funcional de las instituciones del SICA... Lo intergubernamental del SICA dificulta su accionar inmediato y también hay dificultad para la coherencia institucional del SICA debido a otros programas regionales, como por ejemplo el Plan Puebla Panamá... Falta de mayor claridad de los objetivos de la integración regional, cuando los hayan habrá una mayor incidencia de las instituciones regionales... SICA ha contribuido mediante la facilitación de recursos para los encuentros convocados a través de instrumentos de trabajo como la matriz de seguimiento de los Acuerdos Presidenciales y Ministeriales los cuales han permitido el vínculo intersectorial con ejes temáticos asociados a la agenda común... Contribuiría a concienciar a estas instituciones en la importancia del modelo integracionista como un valor agregado en el PIB de cada país, resaltar valores de solidaridad, cooperación, complementariedad entre la institucionalidad regional, el facilitar la fluidez de lo regional a lo nacional e incluso local. Hay necesidad de un mayor acercamiento con los diversos sectores de la sociedad civil y del sector público clave, como las asambleas y órganos de justicia, para un debate abierto y franco y sus implicaciones... Trabajar en una homologación de leyes laborales afines a los países miembros y una reforma al Tratado de Tegucigalpa para delimitar de mejor manera las competencias en los órganos superiores, la necesidad de acomodar la normativa regional al plano nacional con el fin de dar certeza jurídica, y que la Corte Centroamericana de

Justicia aborde con propiedad su quehacer. El Parlamento como el principal interlocutor de los ciudadanos centroamericanos debe velar por que la población mejore su calidad de vida a través del proceso de integración... En la dialéctica del desarrollo humano, el intelecto y la producción de satisfactores materiales están íntimamente vinculados. De tal manera que las políticas deben comprender la totalidad de un proceso, en este caso, “la integración regional”, razón por la cual vemos que los programas de cooperación abarcan múltiples temas. Desde una tríada: derechos humanos, libertad, democracia, pasar a la integración económica, sin omitir las características del regionalismo abierto que trae consigo nuevas políticas en materia exterior, de lucha contra el narcoterrorismo, de justicia, etcétera. Pero, una sociedad disminuida en conocimientos, máxime hoy día con la tecnología de la información, su capital humano se torna no competitivo ante la globalización del mercado mundial y, sus efectos negativos en el marco del capital social, y por ende, en el capital productivo. Por lo tanto, los gobiernos centroamericanos deben definir claramente que se pretende con “la integración regional” y sobre esta base establecer prioridades resaltando aquellos intereses de orden intrínseco conforme a la ruta trazada. Porque no es el comercio por el simple comercio, de nuevo, hay que verlo como una totalidad... La participación del pueblo centroamericano se torna cada vez más imperativa. La credibilidad de los gobiernos es cada vez más cuestionada.

Appendix VIII. The Social Elites Sample

Participant Code	Regional Organisation	Country
SP1	FECAICA	Honduras
SP2	FECAICA	Honduras
SP3	FECAICA	Guatemala
SP4	FECAICA	Guatemala
SP5	FECAMCO	Guatemala
SP6	FECAMCO	Honduras
SP7	FECAMCO	Honduras
SP8	FECAMCO	Costa Rica
SP9	FECAMCO	Costa Rica
SP10	FECAMCO	Guatemala
SP11	FEDEPRICAP	Guatemala
SP12	FEDEPRICAP	Costa Rica
SP13	FEDEPRICAP	Panama
SP14	FEDEPRICAP	Nicaragua
SP15	FEDEPRICAP	El Salvador
SP16	FEDEPRICAP	El Salvador

Appendix IX. Interview Excerpts-Chapter Five

SP1

El sector privado es el agente de integración. La integración en Centroamérica es una forma natural, Centroamérica desunida no es más que un grupo de países rebeldes. Nuestra historia nacional es nuestra historia pero la historia unionista de Centroamérica no la debemos ignorar. Mucho menos podemos permitir que los que vuelcan la integración hacia un dialogo puramente económico ignoren o borren nuestras experiencias unionistas. La integración de Centroamérica no va a cambiar nuestra historia nacional por el contrario la enriquecerá... Los industriales Centroamericanos se han apropiado del proceso de integración. La integración real es la integración de la inversión y de la banca. Los grupos centroamericanos grandes de negocios están mas concientes sobre la integración regional, la apoyan y empujan. La empresa privada gana con la integración por eso la apoya pero necesitan y quieren mecanismos de resolución de conflictos a nivel regional. La integración económica en Centroamérica es informal y está pasando; por ejemplo, la banca centroamericana está integrada. Nosotros generamos propuestas como la de establecer un salario mínimo centroamericano que seguramente llevarán a un mayor grado de integración... En los momentos de crisis son los grupos de negocios quienes defienden el proceso, es la empresa privada que lidera la reagrupación regional. Durante la crisis que surgió entre Honduras y Nicaragua, fuimos nosotros quienes logramos formar un bloque de diputados para solucionar los problemas que ahondaban la situación... El CAFTA no es enemigo de la integración ya que obliga a los países de Centroamérica a adoptar las mismas reglas y regulaciones. El CAFTA sin embargo es conflictivo para Centroamérica ya que estos países producen los mismos productos lo cual los lleva a competir entre ellos, creando entonces diferencias artificiales entre nuestros países. Durante las negociaciones del CAFTA, uno de los gobiernos de la región, urgido por la presión de cierto segmento de la empresa privada totalmente enfocado en el mercado local, decidió negociar unilateralmente con los EEUU estando dispuesto a ceder a todas las demandas de los EEUU... era inútil debatir con dichos grupos a pesar de que ellos debilitaban nuestra posición y aumentaba la competición entre nuestros países. Nuestra organización interfirió directamente con la negociadora en jefe estadounidense argumentando que la propuesta unilateral complicaría las negociaciones al forzar al resto de nuestros países a tomar posiciones similares y que paralelamente se estaría causando serios daños a la integración. Ella persuadida por nuestra posición optó por una posición que nos forzaba a negociar en grupo. Tendencias desintegradoras como esta existen en nuestra región a pesar de que la integración es indispensable... Por otra parte, a través de la integración regional estos países pueden optar por la complementariedad de sus industrias y economías en general... La integración es lógica pero la falta de uniformidad, como por ejemplo la arancelaria y de tarifas, favorecen a ciertos sectores que se encuentran ligados directamente a los gobiernos de la región. Los gobiernos tienen intereses diferentes a los de la integración y sus estrechas relaciones con sectores económicos mantienen la integración en un nivel específico de diálogo económico y paralelamente, los aspectos relacionados al desarrollo de las comunidades centroamericanas son descuidados.

SP2

Los industriales avanzan la integración y asumen la lógica del proceso. El sector privado elimina o absorben las “distorsiones” del proceso. Los industriales de Centroamérica quieren que se incorpore en la agenda regional el tema de la moneda única... El sector privado está dividido en el enfoque del mercado interno con relación al externo: ¿se debe enfocar en el mercado centroamericano o en el global? Honduras considera más importante al mercado externo mientras El Salvador enfatiza el mercado común centroamericano. Esta división favorece a los gobiernos locales ya que éstos, apoyados por empresarios con intereses y enfoque local, ganan legitimidad y los sectores anti-integracionistas mantienen el poder... Es dignificante que la integración del sector privado ha generado resultados que fortalecen, facilitan y dictan la pauta a la integración como por ejemplo nuestras demandas y necesidades de inversión han llevado al establecimiento de consorcios de abogados con alcance regional los cuales instan a los parlamentos nacionales a instituir la homologación de leyes regionales de inversión. La inversión en Centroamérica está siendo facilitada por dichas firmas de abogados quienes trabajan directamente con sectores industriales y a través de esta colaboración informalmente se modifica las normas de la inversión... El sector industrial centroamericano apoya el establecimiento de un pasaporte único para los países de la región. Lamentablemente algunos de los gobiernos de la región bloquean dicha propuesta. Uno de los mayores obstáculos es la falta de planificación de los gobiernos y su falta de voluntad la cual se refleja en el papel meramente consultivo de las instituciones regionales y su renuencia a reformar el sistema... La integración económica debe llevar a la integración de lo social. La integración es importante para el desarrollo sostenible de la sociedad centroamericana y esto debe ser causa para la descentralización del proceso. Es necesario que el proceso de un “producto” a la población Centroamericana en general.

SP3

La integración de los países, tanto económica, como política y social, no es un fin en sí misma, tiene un solo objetivo, ser un instrumento de apoyo al desarrollo de los países que se involucran en un proceso de esta naturaleza. Esta aseveración es válida para cualquier grupo de países que emprendan esta tarea (tal el caso de la Unión Europea), pero es mucho más importante y significativa, cuando el proyecto se realiza por un grupo de países de un menor grado de desarrollo de sus economías, (el caso de los países situados en el istmo centroamericano)... Los fenómenos políticos, económicos y sociales, no pueden encasillarse en modelos rígidos, la región como fortaleza desde mediados del siglo pasado ha incrementado su comercio intra-centroamericano... Esto estuvo acompañado también de muchos logros, suscripción de convenios, facilitación del comercio fronterizo, facilitación de movilidad de personas, facilitación de transporte terrestre y aéreo, avances en infraestructura, homologación de normas de fitosanitarias, medicamentos, alimentos, agroindustria, y seguridad entre otros. El proceso es debilitado por el hecho de que si bien ya se ha firmado por los cinco gobiernos de la región el Convenio Marco para la Unión Aduanera, no se ha desarrollado la institucionalidad que pudiera hacerla funcionar adecuadamente... FECAICA promueve el diálogo entre el sector industrial centroamericano y los Gobiernos de los cinco países, instituciones regionales e

internacionales, para encontrar soluciones válidas y duraderas a los problemas en el Mercado Común Centroamericano y en las relaciones económicas externas, a fin de salvaguardar los intereses del aparato productivo centroamericano. Impulsa, fortalece y plantea el perfeccionamiento del proceso de integración económica centroamericana, vigilando el cumplimiento de los compromisos internacionales adquiridos, con los plazos establecidos y la correcta aplicación de los convenios y protocolos suscritos... FECAICA, desde su fundación en 1959, siendo la federación regional empresarial más antigua, ha sido la organización privada regional que mas ha impulsado la integración regional, el sector industrial centroamericano ha estado presente en todo el proceso, y se ha identificado el crecimiento de la industria a la integración... Dentro del sector público, el funcionamiento regular del Consejo Económico (COMIECO) ha contribuido grandemente a la integración. De los entes consultivos puedo mencionar especialmente al Comité Consultivo del Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (CC-SICA); el Comité Consultivo de la Integración Económica Centroamericana (CC-IE); y de las entidades regionales del sector privado, a las Federaciones Centroamericanas del Sector productivo. Ya que estas son las entidades diseñadas para ese objeto y porque son quienes hacen la integración regional... En los últimos años, ha habido voluntad política expresada por los Presidentes de Centroamérica en las Cumbres Presidenciales, especialmente en cuanto a la constitución de la Unión Aduanera Centroamericana. Lo que ha faltado es ejecución por parte de los funcionarios, Ministros de Finanzas y autoridades fiscales, par ejecutar con prontitud los mecanismos de armonización fiscal... Tanto en el Protocolo de Tegucigalpa como en el Protocolo de Guatemala, instrumentos internacionales vigentes, se conviene en como objetivo central el constituir una unión económica, lo que conlleva una armonización de diversas políticas, entre las que se significan las políticas, comerciales, sociales, ambientales, de derechos humanos, etc... El proceso de integración regional centroamericana, se considera un proceso irreversible que ya lleva casi medio siglo. Los logros obtenidos por Centroamérica son considerables, aunque luego de la etapa de normalización del proceso, ha seguido con alguna lentitud el de perfeccionamiento de la infraestructura legal e institucional... El CAFTA-DR, no se considera otro esquema de integración regional, es un acción regional, es un acuerdo eminentemente comercial, que si bien con respecto a la integración regional tuvo la virtud de que se negoció por Centroamérica, como un conjunto, pero en su formalización y en la elaboración de listados, se hizo por cada país de Centroamérica por separado, tal el caso de Costa Rica cuyo parlamento lo aprobó varios meses después que los otros cuatro países. Se estima que el Acuerdo de Asociación con la Unión Europea, con sus tres pilares el político, el de cooperación y el Comercial, y los condicionamientos de una Unión Aduanera, de una Vocería Única y la constitución de un órgano jurisdiccional de resolución de controversias, se acercan mas un apoyo a la integración, pero mas que un esquema de integración, es un Acuerdo de Asociación... Si se desea avanzar en el proceso regional, no debería de descuidarse ninguno de los aspectos, ya que tanto el político, el social, el desarrollo sostenible, ambiental deben de mantenerse en la Agenda regional para poder ir perfeccionando el sistema de integración centroamericano. No obstante el enfoque es el económico, puesto que por este aspecto se han iniciado los procesos de integración. En una zona de libre comercio, no se consideran los otros aspectos, pero al avanzar hacia etapas de mayor integración, como la Unión Aduanera, se debe como parte esencial incluir

aspectos políticos, jurídicos e institucionales... Al hablar de las instituciones de la integración regional es muy difícil incluir a todas las instituciones en un mismo análisis. Dentro de las instituciones del sistema de integración, le daría una mayor calificación a las Cumbres Presidenciales y al Consejo de Cancilleres. En el Subsistema Económico, le daría una mayor calificación al Consejo de Ministros de la Integración Económica (COMIECO), a los grupos técnicos que han avanzado en temas específicos de la Unión Aduanera y muy especial a la Secretaria General (SIECA)... El Comité Consultivo de la Integración Económica, (CCIE), desde su constitución se ha reunido mensualmente, habiendo llevado a cabo 17 reuniones mensuales, y ha evacuado la consulta de todos los Reglamentos que ha sometido a su consideración el COMIECO, por lo que se considera un órgano que merece una calificación alta, por la eficacia en las labores que ha desarrollado.

SP4

Entendiéndose integración regional como el logro de una región económica, ésta aumenta las probabilidades que Centroamérica se inserte en la economía global con mayores probabilidades de éxito. Centroamérica integrada presenta una región con un tamaño de mercado más interesante, mayor diversificación, mejores economías de escala para la producción de bienes y servicios y mayor eficiencia en general. Implica que cada país de Centroamérica adopte y acepte instituciones suprarregionales para la toma de algunas decisiones, muy similar a la Unión Europea con lo que se minimizan los riesgos de politización de las decisiones económicas y técnicas. La integración implica la descentralización del poder político hacia instituciones regionales y un conducto para la inserción de Centroamérica en la economía global... Lo más importante es que facilita el libre movimiento de bienes y servicios, mejorando la competitividad de empresas regionales en cuanto a homologación de normas y leyes y también facilitando que las empresas puedan alcanzar mayor tamaño, lo que las coloca en una mejor posición para competir afuera de la región... El CAFTA constituye un tratado multilateral. En este sentido es importante diseñar la integración regional para complementarlo y no para afectarlo. La integración regional es un acuerdo mutuo entre los países y que cada país analiza y compara con los otros acuerdos y tratados que ha firmado... La integración es de muy alta importancia debido a los múltiples beneficios que el sector industrial de la región obtendrá al poder mover libremente los productos por la región y tener al alcance un mercado mucho más grande que sólo el de Centroamérica... Aunque no sea aceptado plenamente, el motivador principal de cualquier acuerdo es el económico. Como ejemplo, hay que comenzar con la unión aduanera y la homologación de normas y tarifas. Sin embargo, es importante tomar en cuenta los demás factores pues no pueden descuidarse... La Cámara de Industria de Guatemala ha sostenido reuniones con los sectores productivos de otros países para el intercambio de opiniones y el alineamiento de estrategias regionales... El Protocolo de Tegucigalpa y muchas veces la cantidad de participantes en las instituciones regionales las vuelven inoperantes. Diría que la institución más eficiente ha sido SIECA, seguida, aunque no muy de cerca por el COMIECO. El Comité Consultivo de la Integración se ha reunido frecuentemente y con alguna eficacia. El Parlamento Centroamericano está aislado y pareciera que sin responsabilidades específicas en el tema. Al final, mi evaluación institucional se relaciona con la lentitud del

proceso, la percepción de avances lentos, la politización del proceso y muchas veces la búsqueda por parte de los países de sus propios intereses sobre los regionales (poca flexibilidad a la hora de ceder)... El proceso debe llevar a una unión más allá que sólo la económica. La integración política será difícil de alcanzar pero es importante que sea un objetivo. Lograr la integración social es de vital importancia para la sostenibilidad de la integración económica... La lentitud en el avance es preocupante. Esta integración debió estar lograda antes de negociar el Tratado de Libre Comercio entre México y el Triángulo Norte (Guatemala, El Salvador y Honduras), el CAFTA- DR y el Acuerdo de Libre Asociación con Unión Europea. Centroamérica hubiese podido negociar mejor ya integrada y mejorar los beneficios obtenidos.

SP5

La integración regional centroamericana, es un proceso político- económico que lleva más de 40 años de estar en fase de negociación, teniendo por etapas avances sustanciales y en otras que se mantiene detenida... Integrarnos como un territorio único, nos ofrecería muchas ventajas ante el resto mundo, en cuanto a negociaciones comerciales e intercambios de productos. A partir de la integración económica nos convertiríamos en un territorio único, lo que conlleva conjugar muchos aspectos y condiciones los cuales podrían ir alcanzado una cultura centroamericanista... Mientras no haya voluntad política de los gobiernos de los 5 países de Centroamérica, va a ser imposible concluir la integración Centroamericana. La falta de voluntad política limita los espacios en los que la empresa privada puede actuar para avanzar el proceso... Las instituciones regionales de la empresa privada (como FECAMCO y FECAICA) son fundamentales en este proceso, porque se fija una única posición en los temas, lo que facilita las negociaciones así como también los diversos foros y mesas de trabajo en donde se analizan los diversos componentes de la integración... Uno de los aspectos que afectan en forma negativa la integración es la falta de voluntad política de los gobiernos y la falta de continuidad del proceso de negociación, cuando existe cambio de gobierno en cualquiera de los países de la región centroamericana... La integración centroamericana se ve complementada por otros esquemas de integración económica como el CAFTA-DR... A nivel centroamericano se deben fomentar la armonización arancelaria (unificar arancel externo común) y aspectos jurídicos así como también la homogenización de documentos únicos de identificación... El avance del proceso es obstruido por un marco institucional escasamente eficaz.

SP6

La integración regional debe ser comunicada a todo nivel. Necesitamos incrementar la competitividad y el conocimiento en materia de integración. El sistema educativo se vuelve importante para estos objetivos... La integración no es entendida, se trata de canalizar la inversión. Los empresarios no tienen acceso completo a los mercados de la región. La integración “tradicional” representa un mercado “nostálgico.” El proceso debe de atraer y canalizar la inversión extranjera. La integración es en términos generales un mecanismo para canalizar esa inversión. Si queremos mejorar nuestra posición en el mercado internacional la inversión debe dirigirse a proyectos regionales productivos y rentables. Dentro

del proceso nuestras organizaciones interactúan con los gobiernos en la formulación de políticas regionales... El Tratado de Libre Comercio no representa una mayor dependencia de la región centroamericana en los Estados Unidos. Si no más bien significa incremento de capital para la inversión el cual llevará a un mayor desarrollo y mayor conciencia regional... Nosotros hemos presionado por la realización de una verdadera integración de las bolsas de valores. Nuestra propuesta es que se le de al PARLACEN poder de vinculación y derecho a legislar lo cual agilizaría la integración legal de la región y por ende contribuiría a la integración de los mercados de valores... La integración es económica y precisa un eficiente flujo de recursos pero también una fuerza laboral capacitada que sepa encarar los retos de la economía mundial.

SP7

Hemos tenido, y este ha sido en general ajeno a la sociedad centroamericana, el proceso de integración económica y comercial. Pero la voluntad política de los gobernantes, generalmente es deficiente. Es suficiente observar el papel de consulta, no vinculativo, que juegan las instituciones regionales para darse cuenta del grado de voluntad política existente en la región. Grupos de poder ligados a los presidentes de la región se benefician de este tipo de instituciones y logran influenciar a los presidentes para mantenerlas en ese papel de consulta... La conciencia regional entre la población en general es débil. Programas educativos que nos enseñen a ser verdaderos centroamericanos pueden medrar esta situación. Pero tampoco ha existido entre los políticos conciencia que la base principal del proceso de integración es lo político, es decir la integración es política, y entonces los gobernantes consideran que lo económico es la fuerza de la integración. Esta percepción fue la causa del colapso del mercado común [CACM]. Cuando lo económico necesitó de la base política para resolver sus conflictos, dicha base no existía... El proceso del mercado centroamericano debe marchar paralelamente sobre aspectos económicos, sociales y políticos. Para impactar a la gente centroamericana, a nuestra sociedad, los aspectos políticos deberían convertirse en la fuerza principal del proceso. El sector privado puede colaborar con los gobiernos en la proyección de la integración hacia la sociedad. El objetivo del proceso debe ser el desarrollo sostenible de la región. Los problemas sociales debemos enfrentarlos como región no individualmente.

SP8

La integración es importante, tenemos que ir abriendo más nuestras fronteras... El libre comercio representado en tratados como el CAFTA-DR y otros convenios como el de asociación de Centroamérica-Unión Europea, son importantes para la inserción de la región en el orden mundial, en el mercado global. En este proceso el papel del sector privado es crucial, otros sectores de la sociedad evidentemente participan, pero es la empresa privada la que da la pauta... No entiendo que o quienes son la sociedad civil, nadie lo puede aclarar ¿Qué es la sociedad civil? ¿Quién representa a la sociedad civil? Nosotros somos la sociedad civil, la sociedad civil que importa. Vivimos en un régimen en el cual nosotros elegimos, nosotros votamos, la democracia es elegir quien nos representa. Pero en la sociedad civil, la cual esta compuesta por todos nosotros, algunos individuos se arrogan la representación sin haber pasado por ningún tipo

de votación, ni nada parecido. Entones hablar de falta de representación de la sociedad civil en el proceso no tiene ningún sentido... La empresa privada lleva el peso de la integración. En primer lugar son los gobiernos los que negocian y facilitan el proceso, pero nosotros en los “cuartos adjuntos” somos los que conocemos y sabemos de los negocios, nosotros somos los que hacemos la integración. Cada una de las compañías que están asociadas a las diferentes cámaras lleva y desarrolla los negocios con otros países y estas actividades son la materia prima de la integración. En última instancia, son las cámaras como FECAMCO las que llevan el proceso, porque es la empresa privada la motora de todo esto, de todo el proceso... El enfoque de la integración, es decir el mercado centroamericano o el global es determinado por cada convenio que se firma. Lo importante es que los tratados favorezcan a todas las partes involucradas, las dos partes de un convenio tienen que ganar. Nosotros somos un mercado pequeño y al entrar en convenios con otros mercados mucho más extensos como la Unión Europea no podemos perder de vista el mercado regional y actuar conjuntamente en las negociaciones para maximizar los beneficios derivados del acceso a grandes mercados... Las instituciones regionales son muy burocráticas lo cual es un problema, pero entiendo que cada una de esas instituciones contribuye al proceso dentro de lo que permiten sus recursos, y espero que a nuestro lado, al lado del sector privado, que cabe recalcar es el motor del proceso, podamos llegar a los acuerdos necesarios para el éxito de Centroamérica. La burocracia regional debe de actuar y hacerse sentir en la región, pero algunas instituciones regionales como el Parlamento infringen la soberanía política de nuestros países. Todos estamos de acuerdo que el proceso requiere abrir nuestro mercado, entonces tenemos que seguir caminando.

SP9

La integración es un proceso económico el cual es impulsado por el sector privado. Sin embargo, la integración puede expandirse a aspectos políticos y sociales. La empresa privada junto algunos miembros de los gobiernos entiende cual es el camino hacia la integración... En Centroamérica la parte política del proceso debe de ir haciendo a los países del área más similares ya que existen grandes diferencias entre éstos. Costa Rica va muy adelante del resto de Centroamérica en los aspectos sociales, entonces otros países tienen que irse poniendo a tono... En el pasado Centroamérica tuvo un mercado común sólido y debemos recuperarlo. Pero nosotros no hablamos de integración, hay cosas que no son posibles como la libre migración. Entonces hay aspectos que nosotros no podemos abrir lógicamente hasta que los otros países centroamericanos vayan avanzando en éstos. Porque si no tendríamos, por ejemplo, un caso de migración masiva y el proceso no se trata de eso, no se trata de crear desequilibrios enormes en nuestras sociedades... Tenemos buena voluntad así que el proceso tendrá éxito a largo plazo, nos falta mucho por lograrlo especialmente en lo social. Costa Rica tiene una red social fuerte. El proceso de integración debe de respetar las idiosincrasias de cada sociedad y también hasta donde podemos y queremos llegar como región, es decir lo económico. Ciertas instituciones regionales no son factibles. La Corte de Justicia Centroamericana no es viable, Costa Rica ya tiene su corte de justicia, este tipo de instituciones no es viable. El Parlamento Centroamericano tampoco es posible. También existen actividades que tienden a manifestarse a través de la integración las cuales no son viables, tal es el caso de

la libre movilidad de personas... FECAMCO esta interesada en el comercio regional porque es la manera de superar nuestras industrias. FECAMCO es un facilitador del proceso. Otras organizaciones que representan al sector privado se dedican a proteger los productos de sus miembros arguyendo que el mercado regional es reducido y por lo tanto debemos enfocarnos exclusivamente en su desarrollo. Este es un detrimento para la región y limita los beneficios que obtenemos de la integración porque nuestro objetivo debe ser el mercado global.

SP10

La Federación tiene el tema de integración entre sus principales prioridades. Además, se han sostenido reuniones con los sectores productivos de otros países para el intercambio de opiniones y el alineamiento de estrategias... Considero que el COMIECO es importante, especialmente el CC-SICA que es el Comité Consultivo del Sistema de Integración y en general las federaciones centroamericanas del sector productivo pues son entidades que ha sido formadas principalmente para el objeto de la integración. Hay que tener cuidado de no sobrecargar a las organizaciones con participación excesiva de instituciones. Instituciones deficientes frenan el proceso y afectan el desarrollo de la competitividad regional necesaria para aprovechar el mercado global, la burocratización del marco institucional no es la solución... Voluntad política ha habido, especialmente en Guatemala y El Salvador. Sin embargo, algunos países defienden en exceso puntos de beneficio específico para ellos o intentan revisar temas sobre los que ya se ha avanzado. Ha faltado ejecución por parte de funcionarios de los gobiernos como ministros y autoridades fiscales.

SP11

Las instituciones regionales al no poseer poder de decisión son deficientes. Hasta cierto punto falta voluntad política para fortalecerlas... La federación ha creado instituciones que ayudan a facilitar una estructura empresarial que sirva de contraparte a los funcionarios oficiales encargados de negociar y aplicar las políticas de negociaciones comerciales regionales e internacionales de forma ordenada y eficiente... Para el logro de este objetivo es necesario la efectiva participación y comprensión de la comunidad empresarial de la agenda de las negociaciones. Así como también que los empresarios, pero sobre todo las instituciones y asociaciones empresariales, manejen pleno conocimiento de los temas y los alcances de los acuerdos regionales, y una vez estos son logrados que la empresa privada pueda aprovechar al máximo los beneficios de esos acuerdos... El objetivo es integrar constructivamente los puntos de vista de la empresa privada en la formulación de las posiciones nacionales, y que los empresarios con la información apropiada y oportuna pudieran tomar las decisiones de corto, mediano y largo plazo concerniente a su empresa.

SP12

La integración es el proceso mediante el cual un grupo de países se han puesto de acuerdo para el libre intercambio de bienes y servicios. La integración se debe fundamentar sobre los principios de respeto entre los países pero con un objetivo claro de facilitación de comercio. La integración facilita la libre circulación de

bienes y esto aumenta el flujo comercial tanto dentro como fuera de la región. Sin embargo la falta de infraestructura adecuada (física, aduanas, controles fitosanitarios, etc.) en los países de la región limitan el desarrollo pleno del proceso... Trabajamos de cerca con criterios técnicos y proporcionando insumos con las entidades públicas que lideran el proceso para avanzar la integración... El tema de la integración es analizado en una comisión de la Federación la cual tiene representación de todos los sectores productivos... Para reforzar la integración debe fomentarse la participación de los ministerios de Hacienda, Salud, Seguridad, Comercio Exterior y Agricultura en el proceso... La integración es negativamente afectada por la falta de infraestructura institucional adecuada y un acuerdo regional sobre los diversos e importantes aspectos de la integración, por ejemplo, controles fiscales... Debido a las grandes diferencias sociales, políticas, económicas, comerciales, culturales de cada uno de los países de la región, las cuales se deben respetar, la integración regional no puede ir más allá de lo económico... El proceso de integración es una consigna propia no por imposición de terceros... La integración la concebimos con un enfoque pragmático no institucional. No creemos en entidades supranacionales que rijan los destinos de cada uno de los países de la región. Además, debido a las diferencias existentes en la actualidad, principalmente en legislación, no es conveniente una integración política. Hasta la fecha las organizaciones del sistema de integración centroamericano han tenido pocos resultados.

SP13

El proceso de integración centroamericano se basa en varios principios y propósitos económicos. Entre ellos, el de la democracia, la disminución de la pobreza y los lazos de historia que nos unen como región. Entre sus ventajas, están las de poder fortalecernos entre nuestros países, al igual que regionalmente frente a los otros países... En la realidad, fuera de los gobiernos, los organismos privados en Panamá, están algo distanciados del proceso, pues no se percibía hasta hace muy poco, y es conocido por pocos, el respaldo decidido a este proyecto por parte de Panamá... La integración ofrece la posibilidad de negociar como bloque de países ante naciones más poderosas o llevar a cabo negociaciones y/o acuerdos ante instancias internacionales en forma unificada tomando en cuenta que nuestros votos conjuntos tienen un peso relativo más importante. En lo macro económico, nuestras economías pueden ser grandemente fortalecidas, utilizando el centro de logística que tiene Panamá y sus facilidades y frecuencia de buques para llevar los productos de la región al mercado global, entre otros... Históricamente, Panamá no ha dado suficiente apoyo a la integración, tal vez por no haber definido su estrategia internacional con claridad y no haber sido hasta ahora que se compromete con la firma del protocolo de Guatemala. En consecuencia, nuestra organización, tampoco le ha dado la relevancia del caso. Adicionalmente, en algunos sectores, se percibe que la integración, sobre todo económica, desfavorece a Panamá por tener mayores costos de salario que los otros países centroamericanos, lo que nos hace menos competitivos y esto podría afectar a nuestra industria. Por otro lado, la economía de servicios de Panamá, bastante desarrollada, contrasta con la economía de varios de los otros países y la protección que le dan a ciertas áreas como los seguros. No habiendo una política clara, nuestra organización, tampoco ha definido presupuestos relacionados con la integración... El tema de la integración

tiene mucho que ver con la empresa privada. Sin embargo, las organizaciones privadas, que generalmente están inmersas en los problemas nacionales, no hemos destinado recursos para participar en las distintas reuniones que se dan, sobre todo en Centroamérica. Es probable que un mayor apoyo en este aspecto permita una participación más frecuente y dedicada con las organizaciones privadas de Centroamérica en que se trabajan estos temas de integración con mayor fuerza... Hemos instado al gobierno a definir su participación en este proceso ya que la falta de definición política clara sobre la integración, afecta, definitivamente el proceso y limita el grado de competitividad que la empresa privada puede alcanzar... Tenemos que avanzar en la integración aduanera y en la normalización de procesos de transporte de productos y mercancías. La protección de los países a los medios de transporte nacionales no favorece al proceso. La exclusión de entrada de vehículos de carga de uno u otro país o restricciones, hacen más difícil el comercio. Por tanto, debemos trabajar en un sistema que facilite el intercambio en forma más eficiente. El temor de la migración por parte del sector laboral panameño es percibido claramente, por la posible contratación de mano de obra más barata y el consecuente desplazamiento de trabajos por los nacionales... El tratado de libre comercio Centro América-República Dominicana y los Estados Unidos tiende a acercarnos más como región.

SP14

Creo que la integración facilitará una mejor perspectiva económica para negociaciones como región Centroamericana, de cara al mundo. Centroamérica tiene mucho potencial como región, no como países individuales. Es también una continuación del proyecto Morazánico de integrar a Centroamérica como una Unión Centroamericana, tenemos costumbres, idioma, etnias comunes, lo que nos separa son los intereses políticos y económicos, si logramos vencer estos obstáculos lo lograremos... La integración dará una mejor oportunidad a la región y a los países que la integran para potenciar sus posiciones de negociación ante terceros y también ayudará a limar asperezas y diferencias entre países... La integración complementa los tratados de libre comercio, aunque éstos hayan sido negociados individualmente, tendrán que redefinirse éstos tratados a la luz de una integración económica. El Tratado de Libre Comercio con la Unión Europea, potenciará la integración puesto que se hace como región y no como países... No se le ha dado la dimensión correcta a la integración por falta de apoyo político de los gobiernos Centroamericanos, no se ha visto como algo factible, debido a los intereses políticos creados a nivel de la región. Ejemplo de ello es el Parlamento Centroamericano, la Corte Centroamericana de Justicia y la Secretaría de Integración Centroamericana, que no tienen mayor incidencia en el desarrollo de las políticas integracionistas... Hay que fomentar la integración y unificación de los factores políticos, económicos y sociales, de forma tal que se logre una unidad de criterios alrededor del tema integración, para poder lograr los objetivos de unificar la región y hacer ver la importancia que ésta tiene de cara al futuro... Las instituciones del Sistema de integración no realizan su objetivo por trabas burocráticas y políticas. Las instituciones de integración centroamericanas son más vistas como un refugio de políticos pasados de moda y de tiempo que utilizan estas instancias para sus propios intereses... Por lo antes mencionado, estas instancias no tienen mayor incidencia en el desarrollo de la región y mucho

menos como instancias que promuevan la integración, carecen de autoridad moral y autoridad real, nadie les da oportunidades, ni ellos las promueven, ni se dan el lugar que deberían de tener y mucho menos jugar el Rol que les corresponde... Desde la empresa privada no se tiene mayor oportunidad de incidir en las políticas de gobiernos... Se manifiesta la falta de verdadera voluntad política y de intereses regionales, siempre se ven los intereses particulares como los más importantes, menospreciando aquellos intereses regionales, que al largo plazo podrían traer mayores beneficios a la región y a los países individualmente... Ayudaría al avance del proceso el desarrollar más conciencia de región y mayor integración social de nuestros pueblos, los cuales tienen raíces, costumbres e idioma comunes.

SP15

La empresa privada es la vanguardia de la integración centroamericana. Los símbolos integracionistas actuales son históricos y románticos, no tienen gran conductividad hacia una mayor integración. Pero pueden servir como base para una integración verdadera. La integración es un proceso económico conducido por medios intergubernamentales. El proceso necesita de una buena dosis de voluntad política. Lo político debe de ofrecer bases sólidas a los aspectos económicos. Actualmente las instituciones regionales dependen del poder de los presidentes, se necesita el fortalecimiento institucional de la integración para que ésta se encamine adecuadamente. La voluntad política en la región debe ser más constante. El proceso sufre cuando cambios en administraciones repercuten en la agenda regional, o si los gobernantes “usan” la integración para desprestigiar a sus rivales políticos. Se debe plantear una estrategia regional definitiva y ejecutarla puntualmente. Es evidente, y esto los señores gobernantes no lo pueden negar, que la integración permitiría que nuestra región aproveche las ventajas competitivas de que disponemos. Con respecto a las negociaciones en bloque son sin lugar a duda necesarias ya que nos permiten alcanzar mejores términos de intercambio comercial y nos posicionan mejor en la arena internacional como miembros del primer mundo... Las organizaciones regionales como FEDEPRICAP son importantes porque ayudan a la inclusión de temas regionales en las agendas nacionales así como también al planteamiento de la agenda integracionista. Hemos propuesto medidas que nos ayudan a explotar nuestras ventajas competitivas, pero también medidas que buscan un balance entre lo económico y social, que humanicen a la integración, que le den un rostro a la integración económica. Las instituciones regionales sirven de vínculo entre los actores gubernamentales y el sector privado. Éste es el dialogo que debemos de sustentar, sin él la integración se convierte en un “náufrago” en las “aguas” burocráticas de nuestros países. La integración debe ser des-capturada, las instituciones regionales deben independizarse de los grupos de poder a los cuales están ligadas para poder acercarse a la población en general. La integración regional debería convertirse para todos los centroamericanos en una mejor calidad de vida. Una vez la integración sea fortalecida, sus beneficios podrán ser llevados a la sociedad en general. No se puede compartir algo que no se haya alcanzado. El proceso no debe politizarse en este sentido. No podemos permitir que la integración sea usada como herramienta retórica, empleada desde un punto de vista ideológico, para acusar a la empresa privada de explotar a nuestros trabajadores. La integración debe ser a-ideológica, si cabe una ideología

en el proceso pero esta debe ser el “centroamericanismo”... La conciencia regional debe fortalecerse. Es preocupante que mientras algunos actores políticos acusan a la empresa privada de instrumentalizar la integración, ellos carecen de una conciencia regional y por lo tanto no contribuyen al proceso. La conciencia centroamericana debe enraizarse en nuestras sociedades a través de los sistemas educativos y medios de comunicación. La prensa puede hacer de la integración un debate entre la población. Hasta entonces podremos hablar de integración social y cultural.

SP16

La integración regional es la cooperación gubernamental en aspectos económicos y la descentralización del poder político hacia instituciones regionales. La integración facilita la movilidad de personas, el transporte terrestre y aéreo, avances en infraestructura, y la homologación de normas industriales entre otras y también proporciona a la región un mayor poder de negociación ante terceros, y complementa otros esquemas de integración económica como el tratado de libre comercio con los Estados Unidos... El proceso recibe una gran relevancia en el seno de nuestra organización... Los aspectos económicos de la integración se deben fomentar para avanzar en el proceso regional, por eso debemos determinar los costos que tiene no integrarse, determinar si se obtendrían mejores volúmenes para la exportación... Las instituciones del sistema (especialmente SICA, PARLACEN, y la Corte de Justicia) de la integración centroamericana no son eficaces o adecuadas ya que no son vinculantes sus decisiones en la mayoría de los casos. El proceso tiene “demasiada cabeza para un cuerpo tan pequeño”... No son vinculantes sus resoluciones en el ámbito Ejecutivo, Legislativo y Judicial. En el caso gremial se participa activamente por parte de El Salvador coordinando proyectos regionales financiados por organismos financieros... Como el gremio que aglutina a los exportadores, en la parte productiva, pues en realidad son nuestras empresas las que venden a los mercados regionales. En el aspecto gremial, estamos como vigilantes del proceso de integración y participamos como miembros en algunas organizaciones como son el CC-SICA, proponiendo iniciativas de apoyo regional al sector. Nuestra organización también propone iniciativas y lleva a cabo proyectos para incentivar, promover y promocionar las exportaciones... La integración no avanza porque hay certeza de costo de oportunidad al no hacerlo, poca cobertura en el sistema educativo y de los medios de comunicación del enfoque regional y falta de verdadera decisión política... También no todos los sectores están representados adecuadamente ya que muchas personas no conocen la integración. La prensa y el sistema educativo pueden ser útiles para resolver estas cuestiones... La integración se beneficiaría si se garantizan las cuotas por nacionalidad en los organismos de la integración, y se racionaliza la superestructura de la institucionalidad. Solamente entonces las instituciones regionales obtendrán poderes vinculantes y se convertirán en un marco político guía. El sector privado podrá en ese contexto liderar la modernización de la economía regional.

Appendix X. Example of a Chilean Family Network

Name	Post and Dates	Relationship
<i>Panel A: Subercaseaux/Valdés Family</i>		
Ramón Subercaseaux Mercado	Merchant; owned hacienda El Llano y Colmo, currently el Llano Subercaseaux; one of the main stockholders of Ferrocarril de Valparaíso	
Ramón Subercaseaux Vicuña	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cult y Colonization 1915-1916; Deputy 1879-1882; Senator 1906-1912	Son of Subercaseaux Mercado
Gabriel Valdés Subercaseaux	Minister of Foreign Affairs 1964-1970; Senator; Sub-secretary General of the UN on charge of UNDP	Grandson of Subercaseaux Vicuña
Juan Gabriel Valdés Soubllette	Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1999-2000; Ambassador to Spain, 1990-1994; permanent representative to the UN under Pre. Lagos, 2000-2006.	Son of Valdés Subercaseaux
Blanca Subercaseaux Errázuriz	Link between Subercaseaux and Errázuriz families	Daughter of Subercaseaux Vicuña; Mother of Valdés Subercaseaux;
<i>Panel B: Errázuriz Family</i>		
Fernando de Errázuriz y Aldunate	Regidor of Cabildo of Santiago 1810; Vice-President 1831; provisional President Mar 1831 - Sep 1831	
Federico Errázuriz Zañartu	President, 1871-1876	Nephew of Pre. Errázuriz y Aldunate
Federico Errázuriz Echaurren	President, 1896-1901	Son of Pre. Errázuriz Zañartu
Germán Riesco Errázuriz	President, 1901-1906	Cousin of Pre. Errázuriz Echaurren
Jorge Errázuriz Tagle	Deputy 1915-18 & 1918-21; Senator 1921-27	Grand-grand son of Pre. Errázuriz y Aldunate
Jorge Errázuriz Echenique	Deputy 1945-49, 1949-53, 1953-57 & 1957-61	Son of Errázuriz Tagle
<i>Panel C: Frei Family</i>		
Eduardo Frei Montalva	President, 1964-1970	
Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle	President, 1994-2000; Senator, 2006-2014	Son of Pre. Frei Montalva
Carmen Frei Ruiz-Tagle	Senator, 1990-1998 & 1998-2006	Sister of Pre. Frei Ruiz-Tagle
Erwin Arturo Frei Bolívar	Deputy, 1970-1973; Senator 1990-1998	Cousin of Pre. Frei Ruiz-Tagle
Francisco Ruiz-Tagle Portales	Deputy, 1811; Senator 1812-1814; Minister of Hacienda; provisional President, 1830	Uncle of Pre. Frei Ruiz-Tagle
<i>Panel D: Aylwin Family</i>		
Patricio Aylwin Azócar	President, 1990-1994	
Mariana Aylwin Oyarzún	Deputy Florida 1994-1998; Minister of Educación	Daughter of Pre. Aylwin
Andrés Aylwin Azócar	Deputy 1965-1969, 1969-1973, 1973-1977, 1990-1994 & 1994-1998	Brother of Pre. Aylwin
Guillermo Eliseo Azócar Alvarez	Deputy 1921-1924; Senator 1926-1930; Minister of Agriculture 1931; Senator 1933-1937 & 1937-1945	Uncle of Pre. Aylwin

Sources: Adapted from Cahoon (2008) and Pilleux Cepeda (2007).

Appendix XI. The Batlle Family of Uruguay

Name	Post and Dates	Relationship
Lorenzo Cristóbal	President, 1868-1872	
Manuel Batlle y Grau		
José Batlle y Ordóñez	President, 1903-1907 & 1911-1915	Son of President Batlle y Grau
Luis Batlle Berres	President, 1947-1951; President of National Council of Government, 1955-1956	Nephew of President Batlle y Ordóñez; grand-son of President Batlle y Grau
Jorge Batlle Ibañez	President, 2000-2005; Senator; presidential candidate 1966 & 1971	Son of President Batlle Berres; grandnephew of President Batlle y Ordóñez
Cesar Batlle Pacheco	Member of the quincenistas majority in the colorados; opposed Luis Batlle faction (list 14) within the colorados	Son of President Batlle y Ordóñez
Lorenzo Batlle Pacheco	Member of the quincenistas majority in the colorados; opposed Luis Batlle faction (list 14) within the colorados	Son of President Batlle y Ordóñez
Jorge Pacheco Areco	President, 1967-1972	Member of Battle Berres' List 14; former editor of "el Día" newspaper owned by the Batlle Family
Cesar Rodriguez Batlle	President of the Central Bank, 2001- ?	Cousin of President Batlle Ibañez

Sources: Adapted from Alexander (1982) and Cahoon (2008).

Appendix XII. Mapping Constitutional Regionalism

	Special Mention of Citizenship	Support/Promote/Favor Latin American Integration	Year of Constitution and Last Amendment
	<i>Article in National Constitution</i>		
Bolivia	Article 37*		1967 - 2002
Colombia	Article 96.9.b**	Article 9**	1991 - 2005
Costa Rica	Article 14.2*		1949 - 2007
Cuba		Article 12.c**	1976 - 2002
Ecuador		Article 4.5	1998
El Salvador	Article 92*	Article 89	1983
Guatemala		Article 150 (support for Central American Union)	1985 - 2002
Honduras	Article 24.2*		1982
Nicaragua		Article 9**	1987 - 1995
Panamá	Article 10.3*	Preamble (mentions "regional integration," no mention of Central or Latin america)	1972 - 1994
Perú		Article 44	1993 - 2005
República Dominicana		Article 3 ("in favor of economic solidarity with the countries of America")	2002
Uruguay		Article 6	1967 - 2004
Venezuela	Article 33.2***	Preamble (article 102 mentions "Latin American vision")	1961 - 1999

* = also applies to Spanish citizens

**= also mentions the Caribbean

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