

“Modernity and Freemasonry in 19th Century Central America”¹

Ricardo Martínez Esquivel²

If there is a category of analysis that allows us to understand Freemasonry it is the concept of modernity, as explained by José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli and Margaret Jacob,³ Masonic lodges were the avant-garde in building a modern civil society in Europe since the 18th century.⁴ In this process Freemasonry played a significant role in the breakdown of indelible traditions of the Ancient Regime society, expanding democratic sociability and promoting religious, political and ideological pluralism.

In the case of Latin America, François-Xavier Guerra has explained that the Independences processes induced the transition of the Ancient Regime to Modernity.⁵ These processes were motivated principally by exogenous factors, especially the invasion of Napoleon in Spain, the Spanish revolution of the period from 1808 to 1810 and the subsequent enactment of the Cortes of Cadiz (1812).⁶

¹ The results of this research were presented during the *Liberalism and Religion: Secularisation and the Public Sphere in the Americas* (Institute for the Study of the Americas, School of Advanced Study, University of London, London, United Kingdom, April 18th 2012).

² Professor of History and Research at the University of Costa Rica. Director of REHMLAC (*Journal of Historical Studies of Freemasonry in Latin American and Caribbean*, ISSN: 1659-4223, rehmlac.com). Email: ricardo.martinezesquivel@ucr.ac.cr.

³ José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería, Iglesia e Ilustración. Un conflicto ideológico-político-religioso* (Madrid, España: Fundación Española Universitaria, 1976-1977), IV Volumes; Margaret Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (New York, U.S.A.: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴ Similar conclusions have had Agustín Cochín, François Furet, Maurice Agulhon, Reinhart Koselleck and Steven Bullock, specific about the cases of France, Germany and United States. Cochín, *Les sociétés de pensée et la démocratie* (Paris, France: Plon, 1921) and *La révolution et la libre pensée* (Paris, France: Plon, 1924); Furet, *Pensar en la Revolución Francesa* (Barcelona, España: Petrel, 1980); Agulhon, *Le cercle dans la France bourgeoise (1810-1848). Étude d'une mutation de sociabilité* (Paris, France: Armand Colin, 1977); Koselleck, *Critique and crisis. Enlightenment in the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, England: MIT Press, 1988); Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood. Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (Virginia, U.S.A.: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill & London, 1996).

⁵ François-Xavier Guerra, “De la política antigua a la política moderna: invenciones, permanencias, hibridaciones” *19th. International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Oslo, Norway: University of Oslo, 6-13 August, 2000): 1-13. oslo2000.uio.no/program/papers/s17/s17-guerra.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012); “De la política antigua a la política moderna: algunas proposiciones”, *Anuario IEHS* (México D.F., México) 18 (2003): 208-209.

⁶ With respect to the Cortes of Cadiz, in New Spain (Mexico) through the insurgent printed forms the idea was constructed that they were directed by liberals, and thus by Freemasons. María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, *La formación de una cultura política republicana. El debate público sobre la masonería en México, 1821-1830* (México D.F., México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México y El Colegio de México, 2010), 31. About the ideas from these European revolutions and that inserted

These gusts of freedom that were sweeping from different revolutions in the late 18th century, provided new ideas and sociabilities that rebuilt the consciousness, utopias and interests of the creoles.⁷

In regards to the process of the arrival of Modernity to Latin America in the 19th century, Guerra, Fernando Armas Asin and Julio Pinto Vallejos have demonstrated that it was characterized by the continuity and permanence of structures, practices and ideas of the Ancient Regime. This did not fully permit the establishment and consolidation of Modernity; instead it was characterized by a process of hybridization and coexistence between the elements considered ancient and modern. However, during the second half of the 19th century, the commitment of different governments to this process of Modernity as a project was increasing, which in some cases led to the consolidation of the Nation-State, the insertion of international markets or a secular culture.⁸

Because of these particularities of Latin American modernity, we believe that we must conceive it as a process of socio-historical construction, which will serve as our category of analysis.⁹ This allows us to understand their Latin American particularities and consequently the ideological construction of a Central American Freemasonry that was organized until 1865 in the city of San José, the capital of Costa Rica, by the Catholic priest Francisco Calvo.¹⁰ Thus, in this study we will

in American societies, it could check: Jean Touchard, *Histoire des idées politiques, Du XVIII sicle à nos jours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 350-370.

⁷ Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias. Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas* (Madrid, España: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), 227-239.

⁸ Guerra, “De la política antigua a la política moderna: invenciones, permanencias, hibridaciones”, 1-13; Fernando Armas Asin, “Radicalismo liberal, modernización y tolerancia religiosa en el siglo XIX Latinoamericano” *19th. International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Oslo, Norway: University of Oslo, 6-13 August, 2000): 1-16. oslo2000.uio.no/program/papers/s17/s17-asin.pdf; Julio Pinto Vallejos, “De proyectos y desarraigos: la sociedad latinoamericana frente a la experiencia de la modernidad (1780-1914)” *19th. International Congress of Historical Sciences* (Oslo, Norway: University of Oslo, 6-13 August, 2000): 1-28. oslo2000.uio.no/program/papers/s17/s17-valejos.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁹ This research stems from the fact that we cannot understand Freemasonry as a monolithic organization, because this association as a social subject varies by place and time. In other words, Freemasonry is also a socio-historic construction. Furthermore, Freemasonry as a social phenomenon surpasses its theoretical definition (statutory), so that we must understand it through the social composition of its lodges and its relations with other social subjects *-independent of whether they defend, adverse or detract it-*. It is also essential to analyse the behaviour of its members, especially through their participation in various social networks. Moreover, the most important research so far on Central American Freemasonry is that of Miguel Guzmán-Stein, “Liberalismo, Educación, Iglesia y Masonería: el proceso de formación y secularización del Estado Nacional a través de las relaciones institucionales en Costa Rica en el siglo XIX” (Tesis de Doctorado en Historia, Universidad de Zaragoza, España, 2005).

¹⁰ Was Freemasonry in Central America before the year 1865? The Masonic legends and myths indicate that, the Mason Federico Herrera Góngora sustains it in his works, like the Grand Lodge of

analyze the relationship of Modernity with the organization and development of Freemasonry in Central America during the 19th century.¹¹ Why the organization of this space of sociability? What contextual factors conditioned the development of Masonic activities? And what were the social functions of Freemasonry in the expansion of the public sphere and in civil society? To answer these questions we will use as a matrix of analysis, periods of Masonic activities identified for 19th century Central America: 1865-1876, 1880-1885 and 1886-1889.¹²

The advent of Modernity in Central America (1821-1865)

During the first half of the 19th century, one of the first manifestations of Modernity in Latin America was the organization of new spaces of sociability. For example societies like the Knights rational or Lautaro lodges, the Legion of Black Eagle, the Guadalupes, the Unitarians, Patriotic social clubs, Utopian societies, Comuneros and Freemasonry were prosecuted in many cases, and therefore they

Costa Rica in 1914, but the historian Mason Rafael Obregon Loria is emphatic in stating, there are no sources for the existence of Freemasonry in Central America before the project of Francisco Calvo. Góngora Herrera, *Documentos de la Masonería Centroamericana (Antigua y Aceptada). Desde el año 1824-1933* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta Española, 1937), 11-16, y *Mis últimos documentos de la Masonería Centroamericana Antigua y Aceptada. Años 1809-1939* (San José, Costa Rica: GLCR, 1940), 183-202; Library of Congress (Washington DC, U.S.A), Grand Lodge of Costa Rica, *Efforts of the Costarican Freemasonry for the independence of Central America* (San José, Costa Rica, 1914); Obregón Loría, “Apuntes Acerca de la Masonería Antigua en Costa Rica (1824-1865)”, *Revista de los Archivos Nacionales* (San José, Costa Rica) 1-2 (1944): 29-48 ([03:08:14 a.m.] rich: Expanded edition years later *Actividades Masónicas en Centro América antes de 1865* (San José, Costa Rica: GLCR, 1965). [03:08:54 a.m.] rich: Furthermore, the 1944 version to be published again in Rafael Ángel Méndez Alfaro & Silvia Elena Molina Vargas eds., *Rafael Obregón Loría* (San José, Costa Rica: UNED, 2010), 107-126.

¹¹ In the present investigation, we conceive Central America as the socio-historical construct resulting from the Spanish colony, or that is, the Spanish Central America, which for the 19th century only included Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Therefore, this study examines only the Masonic development of Hispanic Central America, excluding the Scottish and English Freemasonry developed in Belize and the Caribbean coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua since the second half of the 18th century. To expand on the historical construction of Central America, the following can be consulted: Carlos Granados, “Hacia una definición de Centroamérica, el peso de los factores geopolíticos”, *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* (San José, Costa Rica) 11, n. 1 (1985): 59-78; Héctor Pérez-Brignoli, “Transformaciones del espacio centroamericano”, *Para una historia de América*, coord. Alicia Hernández Chávez, Ruggiero Romano & Marcello Carmagnani (México D.F., México: Colegio de México, 1999), Vol. 2, 55-93.

¹² About this periodization and the origins of Freemasonry in the different Central American countries, see our work: “Un estudio comparado del establecimiento de logias masónicas en Costa Rica y Guatemala (1865-1903)”, *Número especial de Diálogos 9º Congreso de Historia Centroamericano* eds. Ronny Viales Hurtado & Juan José Marín Hernández (Universidad de Costa Rica, San José, Costa Rica, 2008): 2357-2382. historia.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/articulos/2008/especial2008/articulos/07-regional/100.pdf; and Roberto Armando Valdés Valle, “Origen, miembros y primeras acciones de la masonería en El Salvador (1871-1872)”, *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 1, n. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2009): 155-171. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v1/n1/rehmlac.vol1.n1-543Ro.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

developed in anonymity.¹³ These new sociabilities, regardless of their literary, economic, political, patriotic or intellectual character, possessed common ideological points, but it did not mean that they lost their own particularities or did not offer varied ranges to facilitate the multiple memberships.

In regards to what was mentioned beforehand, the interesting thing was that Freemasonry in its internal dynamics of sociability configured educational, cultural,

¹³ Virginia Guedea, *En busca de un gobierno alterno: Los Guadalupes de México* (México D.F., México: UNAM-IIIH, 1992); Guedea, “Una nueva forma de organización política: la sociedad secreta de Jalapa, 1812”, *Un hombre entre Europa y América. Homenaje a Juan Antonio Ortega y Medina* (México D.F., México: UNAM-IIIH, 1992), 185-208; José R. Guzmán, “Fray Servando Teresa de Mier y la Sociedad Lautaro”, en *Anales. Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (México D. F., México: INAH, 1967-1968), Tomo I, 275-288; Ernesto de la Torre Villar, *Los guadalupes y la Independencia* (México D.F., México: Porrúa, 1985); Rogelio Aragón Juárez, “La masonería en las revoluciones decimonónicas de México”, *HISPANIA NOVA. Revista de Historia Contemporánea* (México D.F., México) 8 (2008). hispanianova.rediris.es/8/dossier/8d005.pdf; Felipe del Solar Guajardo, “José Miguel Carrera: redes masónicas durante las guerras de la independencia en América del Sur”, *La Masonería Española: Represión y Exilios*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza, España: CEHME, Gobierno de Aragón, Departamento de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2011), Tomo I, 475-496; Del Solar Guajardo, “Masones y Sociedades Secretas: redes militares durante las guerras de independencia en América del Sur”, *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire. Les Cahiers ALHIM* (Paris, Francia) 19 (2010). alhim.revues.org/index3475.html; Ferrer Benimeli, «Les Caballeros Racionales, les loges lautariennes et les formes déviées de la Franc-maçonnerie dans le monde hispanique», dans *Les révolutions ibériques et Ibéro-Américaines à l'aube du XIXe siècle, Actes du colloque de Bordeaux 2-4 juillet 1989* (Paris, France: Editions CNRS, 1991); Pilar González Bernaldo de Quirós, “Masonería y Revolución de Independencia en el Río de la Plata: 130 años de historiografía”, en *Masonería, Revolución y Reacción*, en *Masonería, Revolución y Reacción*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli, José Antonio (Alicante, España: CEHME 1991), Tomo II, 1035-1054; Jaime Eyzaguirre, *La Logia Lautarina* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1973), 1-17; Eloy Enrique Reverón García, “Mito y realidad en la historiografía masónica (1808-1830)”, *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos* (Caracas, Venezuela) 4 (1995): 261-335; Frederic Seal-Coon, “La Mítica masonería de Francisco de Miranda”, en *La masonería española entre Europa y América*, en *La masonería española entre Europa y América*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli, José Antonio (Zaragoza: CEHME, 1995), Tomo I, 107-126; Eugenia Molina, “Las modernas prácticas asociativas como ámbitos de definición de lazos objetivos políticos durante el proceso revolucionario (1810- 1820)”, *Universum* (Talca, Chile) 16 (2010): 407-437. universum.otalca.cl/contenido/index-01/molina.pdf; José Pascual Mora García, “Los comuneros, Francisco De Miranda y la francmasonería en Venezuela (1779-1810)”, *Heurística* (Mérida, Venezuela) 11 (enero-junio 2009): 74-92. saber.ula.ve/bitstream/123456789/30649/1/articulo7.pdf; Pierre-Luc Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina en el siglo XIX* (México D.F., México: Fondo Económico de Cultura, 1999), 341-358; María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, “La Gran Legión del Águila Negra. Documentos sobre su fundación, estatutos y objetivos”, *Relaciones* (Zamora, México) XXVIII, n. 111 (2007): 143-166. redalyc.uaemex.mx/redalyc/src/inicio/ArtPdfRed.jsp?iCve=13711105; Vázquez Semadeni, “La masonería en México, entre las sociedades secretas y patrióticas, 1813-1830”, *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 2, n. 2 (diciembre 2010-abril 2011): 18-33. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v2/n2/rehmlac.vol2.n2-mvazquez.pdf; Vázquez Semadeni, “American Origins of Mexican Freemasonry”, *International Conference on American & Latin American Freemasonry: A new past & A new future* (Freemasonry and Civil Society Program of the History Department of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), The Grand Lodge of California, California’s Institute for Masonic Studies, Los Ángeles, Estados Unidos, 3 de diciembre del 2011); Ignacio Zubizarreta, “Una sociedad secreta en el exilio: los unitarios y la articulación de políticas conspirativas antirrosistas en el Uruguay, 1835-1836”, *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Dr. Emilio Ravignani* (Buenos Aires, Argentina) 31 (2009): 43-78; Martínez Moreno, “Las Logias masónicas en la Nueva España”, *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 3, n. 2 (diciembre 2011-abril 2012): 223-297. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v3/n2/rehmlac.vol3.n2-cmartinezII.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

spiritual and political functions, as the lodge served as a space for meeting, training and to discuss the ideas promoted by Modernity.¹⁴ For example, for the first Independent Mexico, Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia and María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni explain that Freemasonry served as a pre-political force that attempted to insert itself into the new political system, organizing forces and creating networks of influence in a time of restricted educational opportunities because of socioeconomic differences.¹⁵ Therefore, unlike the European experience in Latin America, the organization of Freemasonry was a consequence and not an avant-garde of Modernity in its process of arrival. Similarly, this thesis is that we hold in the case of Central American Freemasonry, as indeed we see that it was organized until 1865 because the contextual conditions of the region did not permit it before.¹⁶ Thus, in our work we understand that Freemasonry was developed as a social space within the overall process of the expansion of the public sphere, framed in the modernization of Central American civil society during the 19th century.

The process of the arrival of Modernity in Central America was marked by advances and setbacks, it was never homogeneous or linear and its consequences did not come in the same manner to all sectors of society. Many times the items that theoretically characterized pre-modern societies, we find in Modernity developing or vice versa. In the 19th century, Modernity did not replace the tradition, which also did not mean the absence of processes of change, as new ways of thinking about politics, economics and culture, were coerced, hybridized, ceded or confronted with

¹⁴ To expand on the internal dynamics of Freemasonry, see the work of Luis P. Martín, “Las logias masónicas: una sociabilidad pluriformal”, *Hispania: Revista española de historia* (España) 63, n. 214 (2003): 523-550; and “La modernidad política de la masonería en la España contemporánea”, *Las logias masónicas en la modernización de España, Bulletin d'Histoire Contemporaine de l'Espagne* (Provence, France) 32-36 (décembre 2000-décembre 2003), 19-42.

¹⁵ Guillermo de los Reyes Heredia, *Masonería, política y sociedad en México* (Puebla, México: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2009), 16, 101-118; Vázquez Semadeni, *La formación de una cultura política republicana. El debate público sobre la masonería en México, 1821-1830*.

¹⁶ Certainly in the case of 19th century Latin America, Hans-Jurgen Prien had concluded that Modernity possessed as avant-garde republicanism, which in turn to liberalism and the latter to the Freemasonry. However, the thesis of Prien, every day is demystified in the new history of Freemasonry in Latin America, where recent studies show that different Freemasonries have been consequences of Modernity and independence, not the reverse. Prien, “Protestantismo, Liberalismo y Francmasonería en América Latina durante el siglo XIX: Problemas de investigación”, *Protestantes, liberales y francmasones. Sociedades de ideas y modernidad en América Latina, siglo XIX*, ed. Jean Pierre Bastian (México D.F., México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), 15-23; Yván Pozuelo Andrés, “La historiografía masónica latinoamericanista actual. Presente y futuro”, *200 años de Iberoamérica (1810-2010). Congreso Internacional. Actas del XIV Encuentro de Latinoamericanistas Españoles*, eds. Eduardo Rey Tristán & Patricia Calvo González (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 2010), 281-288. halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/52/92/98/PDF/AT4_Pozuelo.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

precedents. In 19th century Central America it was normal to find the coexistence of ancient and modern structures, practices and ideals. Thus, in continuation we will discuss the ways in which Modernity was manifested in the economic, political and cultural spheres in Central America during from 1821 to 1865 in order to examine its importance for the organization of Freemasonry.

Since independence in 1821, the conceptualization of the progress that has developed in economic terms was closer to English liberalism, promoter of the machine, production and industry. This at a time of consolidation of England as a global hegemonic force, where Central America formed part of its Atlantic objectives¹⁷ and from very early on it acquired a debt to this country.¹⁸ In fact, in economic matter the implementation of liberal principles was clearly noted, since, as opposed to other aspects of Central American life, all power groups were liberal. Throughout the 19th century, only from the budgets of liberal thought, we can explain the agrarian legislation, as well as the access and the production of the land.¹⁹

Therefore, the Central American economy is enabled through the investment of British capital, which created a network of mini ports in the Pacific, financed transport and production, and converted the region in demanders of its industry. The import trade was virtually monopolized by Germans, who often represented British

¹⁷ Jordana Dym, « Villes et frontières : définir un territoire souverain pour la Fédération de L'Amérique centrale, 1821-1843 », *Les empires atlantiques. Des lumières au libéralisme (1763-1865)*, Federica Morelli, Clément Thibaud & Geneviève Verdo comps. (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 159-182.

¹⁸ This is important for the subject, since England was established as the centre of international Freemasonry and the English immigrant will play an important part in the development of Central American Freemasonry. Paul John Rich and Jessica Harland-Jacobs have found that during the rise and consolidation of England as a global hegemonic power, Freemasonry played a significant role in the education of the elite, functioning as an ideological vehicle of Modernity under construction and being a protagonist in promotion of the imperial establishment, maintenance and control. Paul John Rich, *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism* (London, England: Regency Press Ltd., 1989); Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "Hands across the Sea: The Masonic Network, British Imperialism, and the North Atlantic World", *Geographical Review* (Louisiana, U.S.A.) 89, n. 2 (1999): 237-253, and "All in the Family: Freemasonry and the British Empire in the Mid-Nineteen Century", *Journal of British Studies* (Chicago, U.S.A.) 42, n. 4 (2003): 448-482. It can also be reviewed: R. William Weisberger, Wallace McLeod & S. Brent Morris eds., *Freemasonry on Both Sides of the Atlantic: Essays Concerning the Craft in the British Isles, Europe, the United States, and Mexico* (Boulder, CO, U.S.A.: East European Monographs, 2002).

¹⁹ Lowell Gudmundson Kristjanson, "Sociedad y Política (1840-1870)", *Historia general de Centroamérica. De la Ilustración al liberalismo. Tomo III*, ed. Pérez Brignoli (Madrid, España: FLACSO-Sociedades Estatales Quinto Centenario-Ediciones Siruela, 1993), 212; José Antonio Salas, "La privatización de los baldíos nacionales en Costa Rica durante el siglo XIX. Legislación y procedimientos utilizados para su adjudicación", *Revista de Historia* (Heredia, Costa Rica) 15 (1987): 63-118.

trading houses.²⁰ However, the fate of each of the republics of Central America was different.²¹ Costa Rica got inserted in the international market through agricultural exports of coffee. Guatemala and El Salvador possessed a limited revival of trade from the commerce of crops of deep colonial roots and a little boost with the start of coffee production. On the other hand, Honduras and Nicaragua were characterized by the absence of a direct integration into the world market, regional isolation and the persistence of archaic structures.²² The common characteristics were that small hegemonic groups were formed which, promoted a majority of marginalized social sectors, as well the encouragement of foreign immigration, mainly European and American, due to structural deficiencies such as the lack of capital and skilled labor.²³

The economic context of these years is important for understanding the organization and development of Central American Freemasonry for several reasons. On the one hand, many of the leaders of the Order left the coffee oligarchy, which also nurtured the political networks of each country, and although the number was not a significant group, their actions inside and outside the lodge led them to become protagonists in this process. On the other hand, the majority of the Masons of the

²⁰ Clotilde Obregón Quesada, “Inicio del comercio británico en Costa Rica”, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* (San José, Costa Rica) 24 (1982): 59-69. [163.178.170.74/wp-content/revistas/24/obregon.pdf](https://doi.org/10.15517/obregon.pdf). (Revised on January 15, 2012); Rodrigo Quesada, “América Central y Gran Bretaña: la composición del comercio exterior (1851-1915)”, *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* (San José, Costa Rica) 11, n. 2 (1985): 77-92; Robert A. Naylor, *Influencia británica en el comercio centroamericano durante las primeras décadas de la Independencia (1821-1851)* (Antigua, Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, 1988).

²¹ Héctor Lindo Fuentes, *La Economía de El Salvador en el Siglo XIX* (San Salvador, El Salvador: CONCULTURA: Dirección de Publicaciones e Impresos, 2002); 213-252; Steven Topik, “Coffee anyone? Recent research on Latin American Coffee Societies”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* (North Carolina, U.S.A.) 80, n. 2 (2000): 225-266. See also the classic comparative works: Ciro Cardoso & Pérez Brignoli, *Centroamérica y la economía occidental (1520-1930)* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 1977), 149-180; Gudmundson Kristjanson & Lindo Fuentes, *Central America, 1821-1871. Liberalism before liberal reform* (Alabama, U.S.A.: The University of Alabama Press, 1995); Robert Williams, *States and social evolution: coffee and the rise of national governments in Central America* (Chapel Hill NC, U.S.A.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

²² In Nicaragua there were large cattle ranches, in Honduras mining, but just for the decadent domestic market, these as major economic activities.

²³ Eugenio Herrera Balharry, *Los alemanes y el Estado cafetalero* (San José, Costa Rica: UNED, 1988); Regina Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala, 1828-1944* (Guatemala, Guatemala: Editorial IDEA, Universidad en Su Casa, Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 1991); Anita Gregorio Murchie, *Imported spices: a study Anglo-American settlers in Costa Rica 1821-1900* (San José, Costa Rica: Departamento de Publicaciones del Ministerio de Cultura, Juventud y Deportes, 1981); Rita Bariatti Lussetti, *Italianos en América Central. De Cristóbal Colón a la Segunda Posguerra* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Alma Máter, 2011); Giselle Marín Araya, “Inmigrantes españoles en la ciudad de San José, 1850-1930” (Tesis de Magíster Scientiae en Historia, Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica, 2000).

time period came from the urban middle sectors, developed in the lee of economic modernization, highlighting the foreigners, who were instrumental in the consolidation of Freemasonry in the region.

Meanwhile, the Nation-State building in Central America during the period 1821-1865 was characterized by the adoption of European institutions, the appropriation of liberal and illustrated ideals by the French paradigm,²⁴ and the promotion of electoral practices in the Costa Rican case.²⁵ In this process the various Central American civil power elites were always aware of the need of the State to be united to the Catholic Church. Thus, since very early times, the states took on a confessional character,²⁶ often aligned with Vatican policies and interests of this institution.²⁷ During these years, as in the rest of Latin America, Central America laid the foundation of mutually exclusive states, nations that were not egalitarian and the imposition of elitist interests at the expense of the social majorities. At the same time, special care was taken to create the myths and idealizations that should cover the abject realities, which often last until today.

The first attempt to build a modern political system occurred with the Central American Federal Republic (1824-1839), where the terms “republic”, “democracy”, “homeland” and “citizens” were banners. But due to local interests and cultural diversity, ancient was imposed on the modern, consequently causing the expansion

²⁴ Gudmundson Kristjanson, “Sociedad y Política (1840-1870)”, 203-256; Obregón Quesada, *El proceso electoral y el Poder Ejecutivo en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2000); María de los Ángeles Palacios Robles, “La formación del ciudadano costarricense de 1821-1886”, *Cuadernos para la Ciudadanía* 3 (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2005), 27-32.

²⁵ Hugo Vargas González, “Procesos electorales y luchas de poder en Costa Rica. Estudio sobre el origen del sistema de partidos (1821-1902)” (Tesis de Licenciatura en Historia, Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica, 1996).

²⁶ We add that the confessional character of the Costa Rican state is maintained until today (2012).

²⁷ Anthony Gill, *Rendering unto Caesar. The Catholic and the State in Latin America* (Chicago, U.S.A.: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 17-46; Miguel Picado Gatgens, “Los concordatos celebrados entre los países de Centro América y la Santa Sede durante el siglo XIX”, *Revista de Historia* (Heredia, Costa Rica) 28 (1993): 207-232. revistadehistoria.una.ac.cr/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=66&func=startdown&id=197. (Revised on January 15, 2012); Ricardo Bendaña Perdomo, *La Iglesia en Guatemala. Síntesis histórica del catolicismo* (Guatemala, Guatemala: Artemis Edinter, 1996); Luis Ernesto Ayala Benítez, *La Iglesia y la independencia política de Centro América: "El caso de El Estado de El Salvador" (1808-1833)* (Roma, Italia: Gregorian & Biblical Book Shop, 2007); Dagoberto Campos Salas: *Relaciones Iglesia-Estado en Costa Rica. Estudio Histórico-Jurídico* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Guayacán, 2000), 42-88; Aurelio Sandí Morales, “La Relación Estado e Iglesia católica en Costa Rica 1850-1920. En los procesos de Control del Espacio Geográfico y la Creación de un Modelo de costarricense” (Tesis de Maestría en Historia, Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica, 2009).

of a sphere of sovereignty at the cost of building a Central American Nation-State.²⁸ After the federal failure, the five Central American states became republics gradually,²⁹ but it meant the consolidation of modern political projects. Between 1840 and 1865, Central America between was characterized by the idealization and enforcement of the Nation-State and the search for the centralization of power and resources, it denied the right of development at regional and local levels. The result was the imposition of centralizing dictatorships by warlords who monopolized the benefits of new agro-export economies. This caused them to keep ancient forms of organization such as municipalities³⁰ and the “equal citizenship” was not for all people, and especially not for the indigenous people. The blows of the state, the peasant uprisings and ethnic conflicts would be the constant.³¹

In result, in the mid-1860s, Central American states are in the process of political modernization, with a strong weight of the confessional, which affected the organization and development of Freemasonry in the region.

Finally, in terms of culture, modernity in Central America experienced a dynamic process, not derivative and interrelated, with the Catholic religion, where identities and cultural practices of society were transformed. Modernity was culturally expressed in the appropriation of secular and bourgeois identities, practices, ideas and imaginaries from abroad,³² without this meaning that, in general terms, Catholicism ceased to determine the daily behavior and morals of the

²⁸ Yolanda Dachner T., “Centroamérica: una nación antigua en la modernidad republicana”, *Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos* (San José, Costa Rica) 24, n. 1-2 (1998): 7-20. anuario.ucr.ac.cr/24-1-2-98/dachner2.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

²⁹ Guatemala en 1847, Costa Rica en 1848, Nicaragua en 1854, El Salvador en 1859 y Honduras en 1865.

³⁰ An interesting analysis of this for the case of Costa Rica in Ileana Muñoz García, *Educación y régimen municipal en Costa Rica 1821-1882* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2002).

³¹ Noelle Demyk, “Los territorios del Estado-Nación en América Central: Una problemática regional”, Gudmundson, “Señores y campesinos en la formación de la Centroamérica Moderna: La tesis de Barrington Morre y la historia centroamericana” y Arturo Taracena, “Nación y república en Centroamérica (1821-1865)”, en: *Identidades nacionales y estado moderno en Centroamérica*, eds. Taracena & Jean Piel (San José: UCR-CEMCA-FLACSO, 1995), 13-62.

³² Gerardo Morales García, *Cultura oligárquica y nueva intelectualidad en Costa Rica: 1880-1914* (Heredia, Costa Rica: EUNA, 1995), 26-53; Cardoso & Pérez Brignoli, 87-111; Patricia Fumero Vargas, “La ciudad en la aldea. Actividades y diversiones urbanas en San José a mediados del siglo XIX” y Patricia Vega Jiménez, “De la banca al sofá. La diversificación de los patrones de consumo en Costa Rica (1857-1861)”, *Héroes al Gusto y Libros de Moda. Sociedad y cambio cultural en Costa Rica (1750-1900)*, eds. Iván Molina Jiménez & Steven Palmer (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Porvenir, Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 1992), 113-208; Fumero Vargas, “El advenimiento de la modernidad en Costa Rica: 1850-1914”, 1-40; Molina Jiménez, *La estela de la pluma. Cultura impresa e intelectuales en Centroamérica durante los siglos XIX y XX* (Heredia, Costa Rica: EUNA, 2004) y *Costarricense por dicha. Identidad nacional y cambio cultural en Costa Rica durante los siglos XIX y XX* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2008).

mestizos³³ or animistic and pantheistic worldviews stop doing the same with indigenous groups.³⁴ The main cultural effects of Modernity, we will see in the cities tended to Europeanization and acquired a more cosmopolitan and progressive character to organize the first Masonic lodges in Central America.

The organization of Central American Freemasonry (1865)

As we noted, Central American Freemasonry was organized until 1865 and in the city of San José, Costa Rica. We find the reasons for this late organization, in the slow arrival of Modernity in Central America since independence that did not permit, until this moment, the development of the appropriate contextual conditions for the start of a Masonic project in the region. However, six years (1871) passed before Freemasonry was organized in another Central American country. What special qualities did Costa Rica possess that allowed it to become the avant-garde of Central American Freemasonry? To answer this question it is necessary to analyze four different factors.

The first factor was the lack of intellectuals and the existence of only one university in the country. In 1859, after a coupe d'état many intellectuals were exiled,³⁵ which by the mid-1860's returned initiated as Masons.³⁶ Their influence was important, because from this moment until the late 19th century, six of the eight rectors of the University of Saint Thomas were part of this group.³⁷ This university since its organization (1843), through the various chairs promoted an enlightened culture of sociability and debate, which allowed the formation of new ideas since the

³³ Morales García, 26-53; José Daniel Gil Zúñiga, *El culto a la Virgen de los Ángeles (1824-1935). Una aproximación a la mentalidad religiosa en Costa Rica* (Alajuela, Costa Rica: MHJS, 2004), 9-40; Alfonso González Ortega, *Vida cotidiana en la Costa Rica del siglo XIX* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 1997), 34-42; Cardoso & Pérez Brignoli, 87-111; Esteban Rodríguez Dóbles, "Reconsiderando el Período Liberal: Mentalidad y Sociabilidad. Propuesta teórica para un estudio de las sociedades de creencias católicas y sus conflictividades ante la modernidad en Costa Rica, 1870-1935", *Revista Estudios* (San José, Costa Rica) 22 (2009): 33-48. estudiosgenerales.ucr.ac.cr/estudios/no22/papers/ise2.html. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

³⁴ Rafael Cuevas Molina, *Identidad y Cultura en Centroamérica: Nación, Integración y Globalización a Principios Del Siglo XXI* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2006), 1-64.

³⁵ Carmen Fallas Santana, "La voluntad de la Nación y la regeneración política: Los pronunciamientos militares de 1859, 1868 y 1870 en Costa Rica", *Diálogos Revista Electrónica de Historia* (San José) 9, n. 2 (agosto 2008-febrero 2009): 54-76. historia.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/articulos/2008/vol2/03carmenfallaspronunciamientos.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012); Morales García, 72-76.

³⁶ Lorenzo Montúfar Rivera, *Memorias autografiadas* (San José, Costa Rica: Lil S.A., 1988), 239.

³⁷ Obregón Loría, *Los rectores de la Universidad de Santo Tomás de Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Universitaria, 1955).

beginning of the rationalist school and French philosophy.³⁸ This in turn prepared the intellectual climate necessary for the establishment of a modern sociability such as Freemasonry. Furthermore, the university worked as an area of agglutination of lawyers and writers, and members of the intellectual and political networks. For example, the prosopography applied to the 239 Masons of the first period of Masonic activities, determined the following composition: 10% were lawyers and writers,³⁹ 16% were educators⁴⁰, and 26% were politicians.⁴¹

The second factor was the political impetus of various civil liberties,⁴² at the same time there were attempts to decentralize the political power of the Executive.⁴³ Between the civil liberties promoted were of that of association;⁴⁴ cults,⁴⁵ and of

³⁸ Obregón Loría, Abelardo Bonilla & Enrique Macaya, “Significación intelectual de la Universidad de Santo Tomás en la Costa Rica del siglo XIX”, *Revista de Filosofía* (San José, Costa Rica) 3, n. 9 (enero-junio 1961): 79-93.

inif.ucr.ac.cr/recursos/docs/Revista%20de%20Filosof%C3%ADa%20UCR/Vol.%20III/No.%209/Bonilla.%20Abelardo%20-%20Significaci%C3%B3n%20intelectual%20de%20la%20Universidad%20de%20Santo%20Tom%C3%A1s%20en%20la%20Costa%20Rica%20del%20siglo%20XIX.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

³⁹ See our working paper: “Composición socio-ocupacional de los masones del siglo XIX”, *Diálogos Revista Electrónica de Historia* (San José, Costa Rica) 8, n. 2 (agosto 2007-febrero 2008): 124-147. historia.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/articulos/2007/vol2/6vol8n2martinez.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁴⁰ Archivo de la Gran Logia de Costa Rica (AGLCR), *Ficheros de expedientes antiguos* (1865-1899); Luis Felipe González Flores, *Evolución de la instrucción pública en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: ECR, 1978), 293-318 y 424-430; *Ibid.*, *Historia de la influencia extranjera en el desenvolvimiento educacional y científico de Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: ECR, 1976); Paulino González Villalobos, *La Universidad de Santo Tomás* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 1989), 161-164; Guzmán-Stein, “Masones españoles en Costa Rica: el Krausismo y la Institución Libre de Enseñanza en la formación y desarrollo de la Democracia Liberal Costarricense”, en *Masonería Española y América*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli, José Antonio (Zaragoza: CEHME, 1993), Tomo I, 449-470.

⁴¹ In fact, to give us an idea of the importance of the Masonic lodge for the politician, by the prosopography we identified that during the first three years of Freemasonry (1865-1868), in the first lodge was associated the President, President of Congress, the President of the Supreme Court, one of two ministers, between 14% and 42% of the deputies, three of six of the judges, the Rector of the University of Saint Thomas, and all governing Council. See our working paper: “Masones y su participación política en Costa Rica (1865-1899)”, *Número especial de Diálogos 9º Congreso de Historia Centroamericano*, 1815-1848. historia.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/articulos/2008/especial2008/articulos/06-politica/76.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁴² Cleto González Víquez, *Obras históricas* (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 1973), 273.

⁴³ David Díaz Arias, “Construcción de un estado moderno: política, estado e identidad nacional en Costa Rica”, *Serie Cuaderno de Historia de las Instituciones de Costa Rica* 18 (San José, Costa Rica: EUCR, 2005), 34-44.

⁴⁴ Bernardo Villalobos Vega, *La mesocracia en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: ECR, 1986), 46.

⁴⁵ Daniel Isaac Montero Segura, “La evolución de la tolerancia religiosa en Costa Rica durante los siglos XIX y XX” (Tesis de Licenciatura en Historia, Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica, 1978), 86-88; Henry Duarte Cavaría, “El Artículo 75 de la Constitución Política a la Luz de los Convenios Internacionales y la jurisprudencia de la Sala Constitucional” (Tesis de Maestría en Derecho Constitucional, Universidad Estatal a Distancia, San José Costa Rica, s.a.), 63-69. uned.ac.cr/posgrados/recursos/documents/Libertadculto.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

speech and press.⁴⁶ The associational liberty led to the development of an associative culture with electoral practices internal to the dynamics of sociability.⁴⁷ At this point, the Masonic lodges were inserted smoothly in the climate of ideas and associative spaces of the time.⁴⁸ In this, Costa Rica was unique in Central America because the rest of the countries continued to observe from afar, even the evidence of an electoral culture. In regards to this, we have identified a spirit of partnership in the Masons, since of the 239 Masons of the first period, 45% were a members of professional or labor associations,⁴⁹ and 33.5% of charities societies,⁵⁰ all organized over the years.

In respect to the liberties of the cult, Freemasonry, due to its ecumenical character and its discourse of religious tolerance fit perfectly. In fact, from the sample of 250 Central American Masons, the prosopography determined that 75.5% were Catholics, 17.5% between Anglicans, Quakers and Evangelicals and 7% Jews, both of Sephardic and Ashkenazi origin. Among the Masons were the first representatives in the region of deism, atheism, free thought, rationalism and spiritualism.⁵¹ And in regards to the liberties of speech and press, the prosopographical analysis determined that 13% of masons of first period possessed some kind of relationship with the press. Therefore, the press as a generator of public opinion and the Masonic Lodge as an ecumenical sociability, characterized by its free association, both serve as spaces of free expression and possess a significant role in the expansion of the modern public sphere. That is, the organization of

⁴⁶ Francisco Montero Barrantes, *Compendio de Historia de Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: Librería Moderna de Antonio Font, 1896), 69; Adolfo Blen, *El Periodismo en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: ECR, 1983), 152; Vega Jiménez, “El mundo impreso se consolida. Análisis de los periódicos costarricenses (1851-1870)”, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* (San José, Costa Rica) 70 (1995): 83-96.

⁴⁷ Vargas González, “Procesos electorales y luchas de poder en Costa Rica. Estudio sobre el origen del sistema de partidos (1821-1902)”, 122-130.

⁴⁸ Morales García, 36-43.

⁴⁹ AGLCR, *Ficheros de expedientes antiguos* (1865-1899); Villalobos Vega, *Bancos emisores y bancos hipotecarios en Costa Rica 1850-1910* (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1981), 29, 122, 137, 140, 173, 192, y *La mesocracia en Costa Rica 1821-1926*, 219-250.

⁵⁰ AGLCR, *Ficheros de expedientes antiguos* (1865-1899); Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica (ANCR), Beneficencia 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 34, 51, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 79, 103, 105, 107, 117, 120, 138, 139, 141, 148, 152, 153, 154, 156, 159, 162, 168, 175.

⁵¹ See our working paper: “Mystical sociability: Freemasons and Theosophists in the organization of the Co-Freemasonry and the Liberal Catholic Church in Costa Rica during the 1920s”, *International Conference on American & Latin American Freemasonry: A new past & A new future* (Freemasonry and Civil Society Program of the History Department of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), The Grand Lodge of California, California’s Institute for Masonic Studies, Los Angeles, U.S.A, December 3er 2011).

Freemasonry was the product of a time that was marked by the promotion of diverse civil liberties in Costa Rican society.

The third factor was the number of foreigners, which accounted for 61% of the Masons of the time. German, Spanish, French and English immigrants transformed the social dynamics in the city of San José. The population census of 1864 identified 207 Europeans in this city,⁵² who developed their different cultural practices, habits, and forms of association such as Freemasonry and religious creeds. For foreigners, marriage, participation in trade networks and the free associations of a Masonic lodge meant the main options for social integration. For example, in the organization of Central American Freemasonry foreign participation was of paramount importance. Of the twelve people who participated, three were Costa Ricans and nine were foreigners (two Spanish, two French, two Germans, two Englishmen and one Chilean); eight European, five of whom were merchants and two educators.⁵³

Finally, the fifth factor was an ideological transformation to the internal of the Costa Rican Catholic Church,⁵⁴ which formed a type of priest and therefore membership that in our opinion also favored the organization of Freemasonry.

⁵² Oficial, *Censo general de la República de Costa Rica. 27 de noviembre de 1864* (San José, Costa Rica: Tipografía Nacional, 1868), 65. ccp.ucr.ac.cr/bvp/censos/1864/. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁵³ The first Masonic lodge was called Charity, organized by the *Grand Orient of New Granada* of the city of Cartagena, Colombia. This lodge developed their jobs based on the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. This lodge was guided in its works with manuals brought from Peru by the Spanish architect José Quirce Filguera, later in the year 1871 Central American Freemasonry begun to use *The Manual of Freemasonry. The Old Roofer of Scottish, French and Adoption Rites*, wrote it by the Franco-Cuban Andres Cassard. Quirce Filguera was initiated as a Mason in Peru in 1861, where he met Francisco Calvo. AGLCR, *Registro Oficial Masónico del Gran Oriente Neogranadino* (Cartagena, Colombia) 28 (1º de agosto de 1865): 257; Archivo del Supremo Consejo Centroamericano del Grado 33 de Guatemala (ASCC33), *Registro Masónico del GOSCCA* (Ciudad de Guatemala, 1889-1899), Número 1, Folio 1; Obregón Loría & George Bowden, *La Masonería en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: Trejos Hermanos, 1938), Tomo I, 7. granlogiadecostarica.org/doc/Historia_De_La_Masoneria_Costarricense-Primer_Periodo.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012); Obregón Loría, *José Quirce Filguera, fundador de la masonería en la República de Guatemala* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta Tormo, 1951), 6-7; Guzmán-Stein, “Andrés Cassard y su vida en Nueva York. Tres nuevas facetas de un masón polifacético”, *La Masonería Española: Represión y Exilios. XII Symposium Internacional de Historia de la Masonería Española*, Tomo I, 509-544.

⁵⁴ About this Armas Asin says that was part of a Latin American conjuncture, where the Catholic Church tried to insert and live with societies built from the ideals of Modernity. In the case of Costa Rica at the time, we note that the first organized political party was Catholic, it was Catholic press, and clubs, and the Catholic Church erected the Virgin of the Angels as a national symbol par excellence, among other issues. Armas Asin, 1-16; Gil Zúñiga, 71-108; Rodríguez Dobles, “Reconsiderando el Período Liberal: Mentalidad y Sociabilidad. Propuesta teórica para un estudio de las sociedades de creencias católicas y sus conflictividades ante la modernidad en Costa Rica, 1870-1935”, 33-48; Esteban Sánchez Solano, “Los círculos y clubes católicos del Partido Unión Católica (1890-1894)”, *Revista Estudios* (San José, Costa Rica) 22 (2009): 49-62. estudiosgenerales.ucr.ac.cr/estudios/no22/papers/ise3.html. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

Indeed, for these years we are not going to find in the country an ecclesial institution ultraconservative, diametrically opposed to Freemasonry as an institution, but rather an organization with modernizing sectors, as agreed in various aspects with the ideals and practices developed in the Masonic Lodge. This explains the participation of the clergy in political, intellectual and Masonic networks.⁵⁵ But neither should we ignore the development of an illiberal clerical sector, which in turn was also manifested as anti-Masonic, but neither this nor the papal condemnation of almost a century and a half, prevented the organization of Central American Freemasonry by a Catholic priest.⁵⁶

In conclusion, the organization of Central American Freemasonry cannot be analyzed as it is in Western Europe or the United States, because it arose and unfolded in the midst of a very different background. As mentioned, the different research on 18th century European Freemasonry explains how this space of sociability was a leader in a changing mentality among intellectuals and politicians, as speculative Freemasonry was born and developed with modern ideals. In Central America, the process was different, because Freemasonry was more a consequence of Modernity still in the process of arrival.

⁵⁵ Similarly, in these years, we found a group of priests defenders of secular liberties (thought, speech and press), often more concerned about secular civil interests than ecclesiastical, and if not, with strong relationships with politicians and intellectuals who made the same defense. The existence of a weak institutional church, with limited resources, evasive of the diocesan authorities and with a civilian secular clergy, allowed the first decades of independence elapsed relatively normal relations between the Catholic Church and the State, and facilitate also its consolidation and the highly civilian non traumatic normative organization. Thus, the creation of the diocese came late to the political, ideological and social game set up long ago, and in which the religious had been virtually replaced by an enlightened liberalism which is based on the spirituality of the State, but with a Christian living and praxis not contradict the state project. Guzmán-Stein, "La "Cuestión Confirma" y la represión ideológica: El debate entre el clero reaccionario, el clero liberal y masón y la autoridad vaticana en Costa Rica (1870-1880)" (Inédito); Carmela Velázquez Bonilla, "La educación formal del clero secular en la Diócesis de Nicaragua y Costa Rica", *Número especial de Diálogos 9º Congreso de Historia Centroamericano*, 668-689. historia.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/articulos/2008/especial2008/articulos/03-Colonial/31.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁵⁶ In fact, the majority of anticlerical masonries have been of Latin traditions, as it was in Mexico, Bogota (Colombia), Uruguay and Cuba. For example, on the Caribbean island, began to use the French revolutionary triptych of "liberty, equality and fraternity" as opposed to the three Christian theological virtues of "love, faith and charity" (by the way, the names of the first three Central American lodges), and later, the Masons of republican Cuba changed to "brotherly love, relief and truth," triptych of Anglo Freemasonries. It added that the use of the motto "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" in Freemasonry happened to the French Third Republic (1870-1940). Charles Porset, "La masonería y la Revolución Francesa: Del mito a la realidad", *Masonería, Política y Sociedad*, coord. Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: CEHME, 1989), Tomo I, 231-244; Arturo Ardao, *Racionalismo y Liberalismo en el Uruguay* (Montevideo, Uruguay: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Montevideo, 1962); Dominique Soucy & Delphine Sappez, "Autonomismo y masonería en Cuba", *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 1, n. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2010): 90-99. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v1/n1/rehmlac.vol1.n1-dsoucyysappez.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

The Central American Masonic project (1865-1899)

After reviewing the factors that facilitated the organization of Central American Freemasonry in 1865, we will now focus on its development until 1899. During this year *The Grand Lodge of Costa Rica* was organized, which nationalized Costa Rican Freemasonry and it allowed it to become independent from the Central American project, which was approaching its end. Thus, in the final part of this work, from the periodization of Masonic activities proposed (1865-1876, 1880-1885 and 1886-1899) we analyze the Central American Masonic project that was strongly determined by the political context of each country.

In the case of Costa Rica, where Modernity was more advanced and there was a constant promotion of liberal democratic reforms, Freemasonry possessed a greater development, but in times of dictatorial governments, due to the suppression of civil liberties, Masonic activities were suspended. In the cases of Guatemala and El Salvador, during the last third of the 19th century, radical liberalism alternated with military authoritarianism, being the first time when Freemasonry could develop. And with respect to Nicaragua and Honduras, these countries were characterized by the imposition of dictatorships activated by an aborted liberalism through foreign intervention; therefore Freemasonry really began to develop with the consolidation of enclave economies until the late 19th century.⁵⁷ We can observe these situations in the organizing of lodges systematized in Table 1.

⁵⁷ A comparative study of Central American political context during the last third of the 19th century is James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 111-235.

Table 1
Develop of Central American Freemasonry (1865-1899)

Periods of activities	Lodges in activity					
	Costa Rica	Guatemala	El Salvador	Honduras	Nicaragua	Total
1865-1876	10	2	1	-	-	13
1880-1885	1	1	3	-	2	7
1886-1899	5	8	-	2	-	15
Total	16	11	4	2	2	35

Sources: Archivo de la Gran Logia de Costa Rica, Actas de tenidas de logias: Caridad (Hojas sueltas); Maravilla 12 (1874-1875); Unión Fraternal 19 (1883-1887); Regeneración 6 (1888-1900); Unión Fraternal 9 (1891-1900); La Luz 12 (1897-1900); Libertad 15 (1898-1900); Phoenix 5 (1899-1900); “Acta de tenida de organización de la Respetable Logia Unión Fraternal 19, 9 de marzo de 1883”; “Acta de tenida de organización de la Respetable Logia Regeneración 6, 11 de noviembre de 1888”; “Acta Logia “Caridad” N° 26. Cuadro de miembros, 10 de noviembre de 1870”; *Boletín Oficial del Gran Oriente y Supremo Consejo Centro Americano 1871-1900*; Registro de firmas de logias: Esperanza 2 (1871-1874); Unión Fraternal 19 (1883-1887); Regeneración 6 (1888-1900); Unión Fraternal 9 (1891-1900); La Luz 12 (1897-1900); Libertad 15 (1898-1900); Phoenix 5 (1899-1900); *Registro Oficial Masónico del Gran Oriente Neogranadino* (Cartajena, 1865-1871); Archivo del Supremo Consejo Centroamericano del Grado 33 de Guatemala, *Registro Masónico del Supremo Consejo Centro-Americano* (Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, 1889-1899); Supremo Consejo Centro Americano, *Boletín Oficial Número Nueve (Extraordinario): Consagrado al 75 Aniversario de su Fundación* (9 de Enero de 1871-1946) (Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, 1964); Biblioteca de la Gran Logia de la Isla de Cuba, Archivos sobre Masonería, *Constitución del Supremo Consejo de Colón y de sus Cuerpos Subordinados. Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado* (La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1928); Supremo Consejo del Grado 33, Nicaragua, Gran Logia de Nicaragua, Gran Maestro de la Gran Logia, Masonería de Nicaragua. masoneriadenicaragua.com/indice.html; Federico Góngora Herrera, *Documentos de la Masonería Centroamericana (Antigua y Aceptada). Desde el año 1824-1933* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta Española, 1937) y *Mis últimos documentos de la Masonería Centroamericana Antigua y Aceptada. Años 1809-1939* (San José, Costa Rica: GLCR, 1940); Rafael Obregón Loría & George Bowden, *La Masonería en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: Trejos Hermanos, 1938-1940), Tomo I. granlogiadecostarica.org/doc/Historia_De_La_Masoneria_Costarricense-Primer_Periodo.pdf; Tomo II. granlogiadecostarica.org/doc/Historia_De_La_Masoneria_Costarricense-Segundo_Periodo.pdf; Tomo III, 106-120. granlogiadecostarica.org/doc/Historia_De_La_Masoneria_Costarricense-Tercer_Periodo.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

Table 1 shows the proposed three periods and chronological-spatial distribution of thirty-five Masonic lodges. However, these lodges did not last the entire period; their average duration was 2.9 years. Most of these lodges were organized in the capitals of each country or in major ports, characterized as being the doors to the Western world and for possessing a large number of foreigners.⁵⁸ In

⁵⁸ For studies on the relationship Freemasonry and ports at the time, see our works: “Sociabilidades modernas: sociedades fraternales secretas en el Caribe costarricense a finales del siglo XIX”, *Memorias. Revista Digital de Historia y Arqueología desde el Caribe* (Barranquilla, Colombia) 11 (noviembre 2009): 128-143. rcientificas.uninorte.edu.co/index.php/memorias/articulo/view/516/277; “Sociedades de ideas en Puerto Limón durante la década de 1890”, *Revista Intercambio. Revista sobre Centroamérica y el Caribe* (San José, Costa Rica) 7 (2009): 157-186. ciicla.ucr.ac.cr/revista_intercambio/006_007/007.pdf; “Actividades masónicas en la Ciudad de Puntarenas (1870-1876)”, *Revista Inter Sedes* (San Ramón, Costa Rica) VIII, n. 15 (2010): 93-108. intercedes.ucr.ac.cr/recursos/pdf/revistas/volumen8_numero15_2007.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012); “Sociabilidad moderna, impugnación católica y redes masónicas en la Ciudad de Puntarenas (1870-1951)”, en *De Puerto a Región: El Pacífico Central y Sur de Costa Rica 1821- 2007*, eds. Oriester Abarca Hernández, Jorge Bartels Villanueva & Marín Hernández (San José: Sede de la Pacífico “Arnoldo Ferreto Segura” y CIHAC, Universidad de Costa Rica/SIEDIN, 2010), 105-142.

fact, the only cities with at least one functioning lodge for the three periods were San Jose and Guatemala, which made sense, since these places as essential capitals were the centers of the political, economic and cultural development of each country.

During the first period the Central American Masonic project was developed and led by the Catholic priest Francisco Calvo, which began with organizing the first lodge and ended with the abjuration of the priest and the closing of all lodges. In these years Masonic lodges were organized in Costa Rica, Guatemala and El Salvador (Table 1), all according to the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. Initially, the Central American Masonic project was supported by Grand Lodges of Colombia and Cuba, until in 1871 when a Central American Grand Lodge was organized in San Jose, Costa Rica.⁵⁹ The Central American Masonic project always looked for the regulation of the *United Grand Lodge of England*. And with the organization of a Central American grand lodge, the Masonic project stopped depending on the foreigner, and claimed the power to direct and manage all Masonic activities in the region.⁶⁰

Although Central America Freemasonry was organized by Anglo-Saxon tradition (with a Christian character), the ghosts of conflicts of Freemasonry of the Latin tradition (with an anti-clerical character) came to the region. Between 1865 and 1867 the first conflict between Central American Freemasonry and the Catholic Church occurred. This conflict involved the Bishop of Costa Rica Anselmo Llorente y Lafuente;⁶¹ Masonic priests Calvo and Carlos María Ulloa; the priest and rival from previous internal matters of ecclesiastical power, Domingo Rivas Salvatierra; the Metropolitan Archbishop of Guatemala, Manuel F. Barrutia; the president of the Republic of Costa Rica, the “Grand Protector of the Masonic Order”,⁶² José María

⁵⁹ Guzmán-Stein, “Andrés Cassard y las masonerías cubana y colombiana en la fundación de la masonería centroamericana: relación de un protagonismo personal en tres jurisdicciones”, *I Simposio Internacional de Historia de la Masonería Latinoamericana y Caribeña* (Cátedra Transdisciplinaria de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Cubana Vicente Antonio de Castro (CTEHMAC), Casa de Altos Estudios Don Fernando Ortiz, Universidad de La Habana, Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, Gran Logia de Cuba de A.L y A.M y el Centro de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Española (CEHME) de la Universidad de Zaragoza, España, La Habana, Cuba, del 5 al 8 de diciembre de 2007).

⁶⁰ Guzmán-Stein, “La fundación del Supremo Consejo Centroamericano y la revolución de 1870 en la construcción de un Estado Liberal democrático en Costa Rica”, *I Simposio Internacional de Historia de la Masonería Latinoamericana y Caribeña*.

⁶¹ Relative to political Masons in front of the Costa Rican government.

⁶² This title as "pompous" granted to Castro Madriz was a regular practice in the Freemasonry of the time to the president or the king, provided if he will accept it, regardless of their participation in the organization. This practice shows that Freemasonry was not discreet or secret. Also, this being attributable to common practice association's time to seek the protection of the highest representative

Castro Madriz (cousin of Calvo); and the rector of the University of Saint Thomas, the Guatemalan lawyer and Mason Lorenzo Montúfar Rivera. However, despite the campaigning of Masonic politicians and no “Masonic threat” to the ecclesial institution, Bishop Llorente y Lafuente because of the recommendation of the Archbishop Barrutia, performed the first pastoral reproach to Central American Freemasonry in 1867.⁶³ The sentence was characterized by: (i) to begin by the prelate pressures, (ii) to be in line with Vatican instructions, (iii) be part of a global situation of Catholic condemnation of Freemasonry, and (iv) does not elicit an institutional response on the part of Freemasonry.⁶⁴ The next and last pastoral against Central American Freemasonry was published by the Bishop of El Salvador Tomás Pineda and Zaldaña in 1871, without any novelty in the speech.⁶⁵

After this first conflict between Central American Freemasonry and the Catholic Church, its own conflicts with the state began to develop. The following crisis of Freemasonry were caused by clashes among Masons for political reasons, since for example, Masonic politicians changed sides, and set up *coup d'états*, to later unite them and participate in other insurgencies, and impose their particular interests, for any ideal, faction or participation in an associative way, including Freemasonry.

In 1868 the first conflict between Freemasonry and the political situations emerged since there was a *coup d'état* in Costa Rica that confronted some Masonic politicians because some were from the government and other leaders of the coup group. With the *coup d'état* civil liberties were restricted, among which were the association and expression. Therefore, the Masonic lodges were closed by the

of the country, for example, mutual workers in Costa Rica, also did the same. (HBN, *Gaceta Oficial* (San José, Costa Rica, 24 de enero de 1874): 1).

⁶³ The first one of August 20th 1867 and the second one from October 12th of that year. On the other hand, it is noted that these pastoral were signed by Ulloa, due to their status as secretary of the prelate. Ulloa was initiated Mason on June 24th, 1865 in the Lodge Charity. We do not know to when Ulloa was a member of the Freemasonry because the documentation is incomplete in cited lodge, but we know that Ulloa continued until his death, participating in the circles of sociability of various members of Freemasonry. Archivo Histórico Arquidiocesano de la Curia Metropolitana de San José (AHACMSJ), Fondos Antiguos (Caja, Tomo, Folios): 48, 1, 141-160.

⁶⁴ Guzmán-Stein, “Masonería, Iglesia y Estado: Las relaciones entre el Poder Civil y el Poder Eclesiástico y las formas Asociativas en Costa Rica (1865-1875)”, *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 1, n. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2009): 100-134. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v1/n1/rehmlac.vol1.n1-mguzman.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁶⁵ Francisco J. Ponte Domínguez, *Historia de la Masonería Salvadoreña* (Sonsonate, El Salvador: Imprenta Excelsior, 1962), 24-27.

militaries.⁶⁶ Central American Freemasonry was reorganized again in Costa Rica with the recovery of civil liberties, after the *coup d'état* of 1870. In the reorganization of the Masonic project Masons participated who gave and who received the *coup d'état* of 1868, which some at the same time, participated together in this new uprising.

The 1870 *coup d'état* resulted in principle, a political and ideological movement sustaining a strong root of secular liberalism. This time, political leaders and intelligentsia, sought to move towards reform capable of establishing the rules of the relationship between the State and the Catholic Church. This, from the secular identification of the State before the civil society and other bodies of power, as the ecclesiastical sector. Therefore, this insurrection was represented by its protagonists as the possible beginning of a democratic and enlightened regeneration.⁶⁷ Masonic politicians represented Freemasonry as a socio-moral symbol of the liberal civil society project that was being proposed. Similarly, after the *coups d'état* in Guatemala and El Salvador in 1871, they began a series of liberal reforms that built the necessary conditions for organizing the first Masonic lodges in these countries.⁶⁸

Central American Freemasonry of the early 1870 was characterized by being present for the first time in three countries and because the social composition of their lodges continued possessing a majority of foreigners dedicated to trade associated with coffee agro-export projects booming in these countries during this

⁶⁶ Obregón Loría, *Hechos militares y políticos* (Alajuela, Costa Rica: Imprenta Nacional, 1981), 152-158.

⁶⁷ Fallas Santana, "La voluntad de la Nación y la regeneración política: Los pronunciamientos militares de 1859, 1868 Y 1870 en Costa Rica", 54-76.

⁶⁸ Rodolfo Cardenal, *El poder eclesiástico en El Salvador 1871-1931* (San Salvador, El Salvador: UCA-CONCULTURA, 1980), 33-108; José Edgardo Cal Montoya, "La Iglesia de Guatemala ante la Reforma Liberal (1871-1878)", *Estudios* (San Carlos, Guatemala, 2000): 148-191. ress.afehc-historia-centroamericana.org/articulos/portada_afehc_articulos3.pdf; Taracena Arriola, "Liberalismo y Poder en Centroamérica (1870-1929)", *Historia General de Centroamérica. Las Repúblicas Agroexportadoras, Tomo IV*, ed. Acuña Ortega (Madrid, España: FLACSO, 1993), 179-185; Arturo Piedra Solano, "Notas sobre la relación entre liberalismo, francmasonería y penetración protestante en Centroamérica", *Protestantes, liberales y francmasones. Sociedades de ideas y modernidad en América Latina, siglo XIX*, 119-131; Valdés Valle, "Masones, Liberales y Ultramontanos salvadoreños: Debate político y constitucional en algunas publicaciones impresas, durante la etapa final del proceso de secularización del Estado salvadoreño (1885-1886)" (Tesis de Doctoral en Filosofía Iberoamericana, Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas", El Salvador, 2010), 54-71. uca.edu.sv/deptos/filosofia/web/admin/files/1260825405.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012); Obregón Loría, *José Quirce Filguera, fundador de la masonería en la República de Guatemala* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta Tormo, 1951).

time period.⁶⁹ However, Central American Freemasonry also experienced one of the moments in which more politicians had been associated. Why did this happen?

Our hypothesis is that after the *coups d'état* and the claims of liberal reforms of the period 1870-1871, the lodge increased its value as a social space where the politician could express new ideas, in a time when it was still a sensitive social issue. This meant that Freemasonry became a symbol that anyone who claimed to be liberal and enlightened, and upon being associated with it, testified adherence to those ideals. Thus, while, at the time that some politicians were awarded with a symbolic value to Freemasonry in its project of civil society, wrapped in a political dimension, this did not mean that the Masonic project began to unravel politically in society. Besides this function of Freemasonry as a space for expression and identification was not automatic, as many liberals were Masons, many Masons were not liberals. Also it is also evident that the Masons were not the majority or the social actors involved in the liberal political process, as there were many people promoting these changes during this era. Neither did the Masonic politicians do it as a single monolith, because it was clear that the Masons often fought each other for political rivalries.

However, it became apparent that there was active participation of the same people in political and Masonic processes, which was due to the presence and coincidence, at least in the speeches and articles, of many of the modern ideals in vogue during these years,⁷⁰ both in the project of the State and in the Masonic lodge.⁷¹ In addition, among the politicians who actively participated in the promotion and implementation of modernizing reforms,⁷² there was a group that was associated with Central American Freemasonry during this time.

Between 1870 and 1873, Freemasonry had a stable and growing development, despite the fact that the Catholic Church continued its anti-Masonic

⁶⁹ Cardoso, "América Central: la era liberal, c. 1870-1930", en: *Historia de América Latina. 9. México, América Central y el Caribe, c. 1870-1930* (Barcelona, España: Crítica, 1992), 183-209; Mario Samper Kutschbach, "Café, trabajo y sociedad en Centroamérica (1870-1930). Una historia común y divergente", *Historia General de Centroamérica. Las Repúblicas Agroexportadoras, Tomo IV*, 11-110.

⁷⁰ Morales García, 36-43.

⁷¹ An interesting exercise to observe this situation can be done by comparing the political speeches of the time with the statutes and Masonic texts. An essay on this, to the Central American case is in: Valdés Valle, "Elementos para la discusión sobre masonería, política y secularización en la Centroamérica del siglo XIX", *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 2, n. 2 (diciembre 2010-abril 2011): 66-84. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v2/n2/rehmlac.vol2.n2-543ro.pdf. (Revised on January 15, 2012). And about the political vocabulary of the time, is available the work of Taracena, "Nación y república en Centroamérica (1821-1865)", 13-62.

⁷² Morales García, 36-79.

attacks, directed more to their political ideals and the figure of Calvo. After these years, the Central American Masonic project experienced a new phase of decline during the years 1873 and 1876, which ended with the closing of all lodges. The reasons for this decline were threefold: (i) political instability in the region (the three “democratic revolutions” became dictatorships), (ii) Calvo's personal problems, and (iii) the division of Central American Freemasonry. With this view many foreign Masons emigrated and Masonic politicians, for the following years, more than longing for the reorganization of Freemasonry migrated to literary and scientific societies, educational Krausists institutions, adult schools and social clubs, finding in them, the social symbol and the space of political action that they could have associated with Freemasons.

During the period 1877-1880 there was a crisis in Central American Freemasonry due to constant fighting between Masons for political and personal reasons. The social conflicts since 1865 among Masons shows that the personal interests of these people were more important than the idea of a fraternity or a brotherhood amongst them. These conflicts resulted from the particular strategies of the Masons as individuals to achieve their specific interests, which always remained on top of the fact that it belongs to the Masonic lodges and the ideals of Freemasonry, to the point that many times, Masons were political opponents, but then joined in the lodges and other *coups d'état*.

For these years the conflict exceeded national boundaries. For instance, in Costa Rica, Masons who held political power exiled other Masons who had converted in their political opponents. In some cases those who came to Guatemala began to participate in the central government, which motivated the authorities (many of them Masons) to disclaim the Costa Rican government.⁷³ And those who immigrated to El Salvador organized the *Antiguardista League*, referring to the dictator-president of Costa Rica, who was also initiated as a Mason, General Tomás Guardia Gutiérrez. These examples show that what prevailed were the strategies of interests and not the Masonic fraternity.

The structural change in Guatemalan society continued and by 1880 a new lodge was established in the capital due to the demand made by foreigners, who had probably been initiated Masons in their countries of origin. This establishment

⁷³ Obregón Loría, *Hechos militares y políticos*, 178-183.

marked the second period of the Central American Masonic project. However, this lodge lasted only a few months. Also in Nicaragua and El Salvador two and three Masonic lodges were organized respectively, between 1881 and 1882, but they suffered the same fate as the lodge in Guatemala.⁷⁴ Similarly, in Costa Rica, the dictator's death in 1882 marked the restart of a modernization project in Costa Rican society,⁷⁵ and therefore, the return of civil liberties and the possibility of reorganizing Freemasonry, as it happened in 1883.

The reorganization of Freemasonry in Costa Rica was of paramount importance, as it was the base of the Central American project. But due to lack of strong leadership after the resignation of Francisco Calvo, the division in Freemasonry continued, hence the project in this new period began condemned to failure. And although in 1880 Costa Rica was in constant liberal reforms and there was no opponent of Freemasonry (Anti-Masonic Catholic press was silenced since 1883),⁷⁶ this lodge barely survived until the end of 1886 and it was closed in 1887. This happened at a time of booming coffee in Guatemala, which in turn increased American and European immigration, which was concerned with developing their cultural habits and practices, among which was Freemasonry.⁷⁷ In addition the

⁷⁴ See our work: "Un estudio comparado del establecimiento de logias masónicas en Costa Rica y Guatemala (1865-1903)", 2357-2382; Valdés Valle, "Origen, miembros y primeras acciones de la masonería en El Salvador (1871-1872)", 155-171.

⁷⁵ Claudio Vargas Arias, *El Liberalismo, la Iglesia y el Estado en Costa Rica* (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Guayacán, 1990), 135-149.

⁷⁶ However, this type of press had a significant development in El Salvador in the mid 1880's and back to Costa Rica to the early 1890. Most of the articles of the Catholic press reproduced Masonic ideas of the papal documents on Freemasonry, while detractors constructed representations: Freemasonry-Deism, Freemasonry-Satanism, Freemasonry-politics (with a conspiratorial, liberal and anticlerical character) and Freemasonry-Protestantism. See our works: "Masonic Societies of Ideas and their Social Representations in Costa Rica (1865-1899)", *CRFF Working Paper Series* (Sheffield, England) 4 (2008): 1-23. freemasonry.dept.shef.ac.uk/show_upload.php?id=356&blob_field=upload_file1; "Documentos y discursos católicos antimasonicos en Costa Rica (1865-1899)", *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 1, n. 1 (mayo-noviembre 2009): 135-154. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v1/n1/rehmlac.vol1.n1-543rich.pdf; "Conspiradores políticos y sectas misteriosas: Imaginarios sociales sobre la masonería en Costa Rica (1865-1899)", *Revista Estudios* (San José, Costa Rica) 22 (2009): 13-32. estudiosgenerales.ucr.ac.cr/estudios/no22/papers/isecl.html; Sánchez Solano, "La identificación del desarticulador del mundo católico: el liberalismo, la masonería y el protestantismo en la prensa católica en Costa Rica (1880-1900)", *REHMLAC* (San José, Costa Rica) 2, n. 2 (diciembre 2010-abril 2011): 34-52. rehmlac.com/recursos/vols/v2/n2/rehmlac.vol2.n2-esanchez.pdf; Valdés Valle, "La Masonería y el Gobierno de Rafael Zaldívar (1876-1885)", *Boletín AFEHC* 37 (2008). afehc-historia-centroamericana.org/index.php?action=fi_aff&id=1976; "Antimasonismo en las páginas del periódico salvadoreño *El Católico* durante el año 1885", *La Masonería Española: Represión y Exilios*, 1189-1204; René Antonio Chanta Martínez, "Francmasonería, Iglesia y publicaciones impresas en el Salvador: La discusión, 1881", *AFEHC* Ficha n° 2003 (11 agosto 2008). afehc-historia-centroamericana.org/index.php?action=fi_aff&id=2003. (Revised on January 15, 2012).

⁷⁷ Wagner, *Historia del Café en Guatemala* (Guatemala, Guatemala: Villegas Editores, 2003), 103-116; Samper Kutschbach, 17-25.

Liberal government guaranteed civil liberties, among which were the association and expression, especially for foreigners. So the inconsistency in Costa Rican Freemasonry since 1876, and the constant political clashes between Masons, added to the boom that Guatemalan Freemasonry experienced obligated the transferal of the seat of the Central American grand lodge (“motor of the project”), from San José, Costa Rica to Guatemala City in 1887, marking Costa Rica’s loss of prominence in the region.⁷⁸

With the change of leadership in the Central American Masonic project, from Guatemala to Costa Rica, began the third Period of activities, incidentally, the last of this project. The project resumed in 1886 with Guatemalan Freemasonry as a vanguard. At the end of 1888 Freemasonry would be reorganized in Costa Rica. The third period was characterized because it was led by foreigners; therefore the political conflicts between Masons and the critical discourses of the Catholic Church about Freemasonry did not affect a majority of foreigners with no interest in the politics and religious practices of Protestant or Jews traditions, which generally do not condemn Freemasonry. Also, these were years of institutionalization of civil liberties,⁷⁹ which favored a positive development of Freemasonry.⁸⁰

Moreover, the fact that the politician, in general, was not interested anymore in the association to a Masonic lodge during third period, we explain four factors closely associated with political modernization in the region. The first factor was that since the early 1870’s with the enactment of various liberal reforms, there was an expansion of civil society and consequently of the public sphere. In the late 19th century new sociability and associative form were organized, among which stood the political party, so that despite the particularities of Freemasonry, it began to compete for political association. On the other hand, the second and third factors were linked to the processes of development of the citizen experienced in the region, which at different rates (Costa Rica was the avant-garde in this regard), new social sectors

⁷⁸ Obregón Loría, *Porqué se trasladó a Guatemala el Supremo Consejo Centroamericano* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta Tormo, 1952).

⁷⁹ Taracena Arriola, “Liberalismo y Poder en Centroamérica (1870-1929)”, 179-185; Patricia Eugenia Badilla Gómez, “Estado, ideología y derecho: la reforma jurídica costarricense (1882-1888)” (Tesis de Maestría en Historia, Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica, 1988).

⁸⁰ In fact, part of the success of the III Period, we identified that the majority of lodges organized during those years and still survive and that the Costa Rican and Guatemalan Freemasonries grew to the point that the first was nationalized and its independence in 1899, while the second followed suit in 1903, ending the Central American Masonic project. Also worth noting that during the first quarter of the 20th century there were attempts to unite the Salvadoran, Honduran and Nicaraguan Freemasonries, but this issue is still pending in the historiography.

were included in political decision-making. The second factor was that the strong demonization that Freemasonry experienced since the early 1880's by the Catholic press caused a preoccupation of the politician, since he was concerned about competing for the votes of an electorate essentially Catholic, giving up the chance to start as a Mason. The third factor was related to the exclusive and elitist character institutionalized in Central American Freemasonry from 1884,⁸¹ because it was not a useful tool to attract votes in an increasingly inclusive society. Finally, the fourth factor was the societal profile of foreigners that Freemasonry started to possess in Central America since 1886.

Finally, the third period of Masonic activities, the last of the Central American project, was done in 1899 due the organization of the *Grand Lodge of Costa Rica*. Four years later the same thing happened with the Guatemalan Freemasonry. This event we explain in two situations: (i) the rise of Freemasonries guaranteed by the expansion of Modernity, and (ii) having happened at a Latin American conjuncture of Nation building, characterized by the establishment of institutions with the names “national”, “Costa Rican or Guatemalan” or “ of Costa Rica or of Guatemala”.⁸²

Conclusions

The organization of Central American Freemasonry was a consequence of the arrival of Modernity in the 19th century. Freemasonry was one of the new associations organized and operated as one of many liberal practices of the universe of bourgeois culture outspoken in the region. Also, Freemasonry was one element in the process of the secularization of society and the promotion of new ideas.

The development of Masonic activities was characterized by (i) the constant ups and downs, relating to political crises, particularly during unconstitutional governments, (ii) the interests (personal strategies) of the Masons who often took

⁸¹ AGLCR, GOSCCA, *Constitución del GOSCCA* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta de la Paz, 1871); Andrés Cassard, *Manual de Masonería. El Tejador de los Ritos Antiguo, Escocés, Francés y de Adopción* (New York, U.S.A., 1871); AGLCR, GOSCCA, *Estatutos civiles de la Masonería de Centro América* (San José, Costa Rica: Imprenta de la Paz, 1884); ASCCG33, GOSCCA, *Constituciones Generales y Estatutos del GOSCCA* (Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala: Tipografía “La Estrella”, 1889).

⁸² To expand on this conjuncture of Nation building, is available: Palmer, “A Liberal Discipline: Inventing Nations in Guatemala and Costa Rica, 1870-1900” (Ph. D. Thesis in History, Columbia University, U.S.A., 1990).

precedence and hindered the Masonic project (iii) and strong Anti-Masonic speeches of the local Catholic Church. However, in this process the political and personal interests of the Masons were more important than the religious adversity. And while we see a process with the declining share of politicians in Freemasonry, it was not the presence or absence of them in the lodges that determined its development. The fluctuations in Freemasonry came to an end with the institutionalization of civil liberties that allowed this sociability to develop to the point of finding itself in the appropriate conditions to organize national grand lodges, and initiate a new phase of consolidation of Freemasonries of each Central American country during the 20th century.