



Stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans

A case study of the Isla Calero conflict

SVF-3901

Anne Natvig

*Master's thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
University of Tromsø
Fall 2012*

Stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans

Stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans

A case study of the Isla Calero conflict

© Anne Natvig

2012

**Stereotypes among and about
Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans**

A case study of the Isla Calero conflict

Master's thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation

Centre for Peace Studies

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

University of Tromsø

Contents

List of tables and illustrations	7
Abbreviations and list of newspapers	8
Abstract	9
Map of Central America	10
Maps of the conflict area from Costa Rican newspapers	11
Maps of the conflict area from Nicaraguan newspapers	12
Preface.....	13
Part I	15
1 Introduction	17
Earlier research.....	18
Research questions	21
Representing both sides.....	22
The structure of this thesis.....	23
2 Analytical framework	25
Said's Orientalism.....	25
Anderson and the imagined community.....	27
Lincoln on discourse and the construction of society	29
Hall's view on stereotypes	32
Appadurai and the fear of small numbers.....	33
3 Historical background	37
Nicaraguan history	38
Costa Rican history.....	42
Legal treaties regarding the San Juan River.....	46
Part II.....	49
Introduction to methods and findings.....	51
4 Questionnaires	53
Review of the findings	57
5 Observations and conversations in the conflict zone	59
Ethical considerations.....	60
Going to the disputed area.....	61
Approaching a winding conflict	63
In a Costa Rican river town.....	64
The animals do not have borders.....	66
6 Journalists and newspapers about the conflict.....	69
The conflict from the journalists' points of view	69
Finding and organising newspaper items	70
What happened?	73
Why did it happen?.....	75
How will it be solved?	79
Who caused it?	84
Who is the victim?	87
Will it happen again?	91
7 Counting stereotypes	93
Part III	97
Introduction to the analysis	99

8	Combining theories and findings.....	101
	The power to define an Other (Said).....	101
	Defining the imagined community (Anderson).....	106
	The past, the present and the future (Lincoln).....	111
	Stereotypes as unchangeable facts (Hall).....	114
	Globalisation and minorities (Appadurai).....	116
9	Review of research questions and findings.....	121
	Epilogue.....	127
	References.....	129
	Appendix 1.....	139
	Appendix 2.....	140

List of tables and illustrations

Tables

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRES NICARAGUA.....	55
TABLE 2: QUESTIONNAIRES COSTA RICA.....	56
TABLE 3: COSTA RICAN NEWSPAPERS WORD COUNT.....	94
TABLE 4: NICARAGUAN NEWSPAPERS WORD COUNT.....	94

Illustrations

ILLUSTRATION 1: MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA (GEOLOGY 2012).....	10
ILLUSTRATION 2: MAP OF ISLA CALERO AND THE CANAL (LA REPUBLICA. 04.11.2010).....	11
ILLUSTRATION 3: MAP OF THE GOOGLE BOUNDARY (LA NACIÓN, 04.11.2010C).....	11
ILLUSTRATION 4: MAP OF THE BOUNDARY MARKS (LA PRENSA, 06.11.2010A).....	12
ILLUSTRATION 5: MAP OF THE COLORADO RIVER (LA PRENSA, 14.11.2010B).....	12
ILLUSTRATION 6: A COSTA RICAN MATADOR (LA PRENSA, 12.11.2010C).....	75
ILLUSTRATION 7: RIVER MAN (LA REPUBLICA, 16.11.2010A).....	76
ILLUSTRATION 8: “GOOGLING THE BORDER” (LA NACIÓN, 07.11.2010).....	77
ILLUSTRATION 9: “THE ONLY STATE COUNCIL” (LA PRENSA, 17.11.2010E).....	79
ILLUSTRATION 10: “LET’S PLACE THE BOUNDARY MARKS” (LA PRENSA, 10.11.2010E).....	80
ILLUSTRATION 11: THE COSTA RICAN OAS REPRESENTATIVE (LA PRENSA, 10.11.2010D).....	81
ILLUSTRATION 12: “THE DIPLOMACY OF THE BUTCHER” (LA PRENSA, 15.11.2010B).....	82
ILLUSTRATION 13: BRAIN (LA REPUBLICA, 19.11.2010C).....	83
ILLUSTRATION 14: “I DO LIKE THESE LITTLE GAMES” (LA REPUBLICA, 19.11.2010B).....	84
ILLUSTRATION 15: EDÉN PASTORA (LA PRENSA, 24.11.2010B).....	85
ILLUSTRATION 16: “SOVEREIGNTY AND ‘SOVEREIGNS’” (LA PRENSA, 23.11.2010).....	86
ILLUSTRATION 17: “THE COSTA RICAN TROOPS READY TO INVADÉ NICARAGUA!” (LA REPUBLICA, 15.11.2010B).....	88
ILLUSTRATION 18: “ASSERÍN, ASSERÁN, THE TIMBER OF...ISLA CALERO” (LA REPUBLICA, 20.11.2010).....	90

Abbreviations and list of newspapers

ALBA:	Bolivarian Alliance for the peoples of our America (Alianza Bolivariana para los pueblos de nuestra América)
FSLN:	Sandinista Front for National Liberation (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) ¹
ICJ:	International Court of Justice (CIJ: Corte Internacional de Justicia)
OAS:	Organisation of American States (OEA: Organización de Estados Americanos)
UCR:	University of Costa Rica (Universidad de Costa Rica)
UNAN:	National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua)

Newspapers

Nicaragua:

La Prensa

El Nuevo Diario

Costa Rica:

La Nación

La Republica

El Diario Extra

¹ In the thesis the Spanish abbreviation will be used since there are no English abbreviation commonly applied.

Abstract

Through different qualitative approaches this thesis analyses the (re)creation of stereotypes among and about Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans in the context of the Isla Calero conflict which began in 2010. The findings are based on questionnaires, interviews and observations conducted in Costa Rica and Nicaragua in late 2011. An analysis of news items produced in both countries during the first month of the conflict also sheds light on the use of stereotypes in these societies.

Although both countries claimed to want peace and reconciliation, the discourses employed during the time of research have contributed to a deeper division between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The countries competed over the representation as peaceful, while stereotyping the other as conflict seeking. Through emphasising difference and not similarities, myths about the other were (re)created within both societies. Further, the discourses in the two countries largely ignore the points of view of the other. This constructs a hegemony of representation and stereotyping within each country that (re)creates the boundaries between Us and an Other. Also, through mythologizing historical events, national stereotypes are naturalised within the societies, creating perceptions of difference as inevitable facts.

Map of Central America



Illustration 1: Map of Central America (Geology 2012)

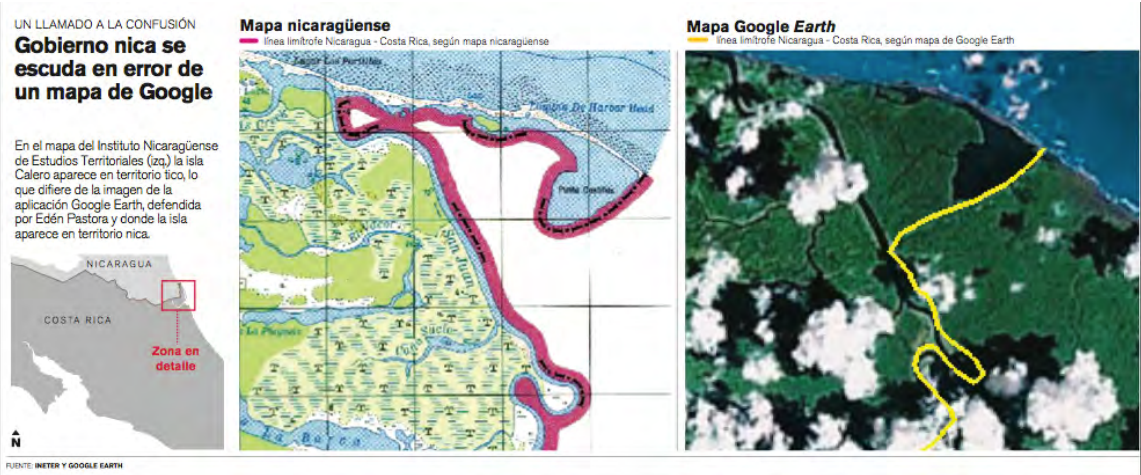
Red square marks conflict area.

Maps of the conflict area from Costa Rican newspapers



2

Illustration 2: Map of Isla Calero and the canal (La Republica. 04.11.2010)



3

Illustration 3: Map of the Google boundary (La Nación, 04.11.2010c)

² The stippled line marks the canal Costa Rica claims Nicaragua to be constructing in its territory. See page 46-48.

³ The maps compare a Nicaraguan official map to the border drawn by Google Earth. The Costa Rican newspaper holds that the Nicaraguan map proves Isla Calero to be Costa Rican. See page 17 and 78.

Maps of the conflict area from Nicaraguan newspapers

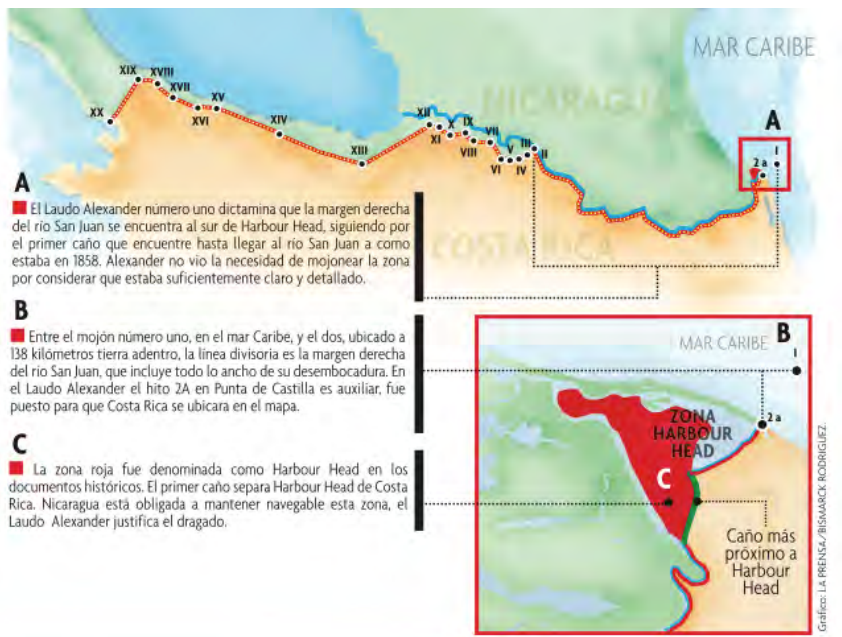


Illustration 4: Map of the boundary marks (*La Prensa*, 06.11.2010a)



Illustration 5: Map of the Colorado River (*La Prensa*, 14.11.2010b)

⁴ The map shows the demarcations of the border according to the Alexander Award. The A shows that there were few boundary stones close to the sea, because the demarcation was thought to be clear. The B establishes where Punta Castilla lies and the C shows the location of the first caño. Nicaragua is obligated to maintain this area navigable, the newspaper states. See page 46-48.

⁵ The map shows the Colorado River which Costa Rica fears affected by the dredging, and which Ortega claims Nicaragua should have navigational rights to. Ortega also holds that Nicaragua, unlike Costa Rica, will not place armed soldiers in the area. See page 46-48 and 82.

Preface

It is the creation of groups in a conflict I want to explore in this thesis. Understanding why and how groups come into being is an essential part of understanding any conflict. Some conflicts have well defined groups, but other conflicts can erupt between neighbours and friends. In both cases it becomes salient for the opposing groups to define exactly what it is that makes some of them connected and what makes the others different. This is when stereotypes come into play, whether hostile or not. Conflicts are influenced by many factors, some more important than others, but the creation and re-creation of groups will always be a part of it.

In 2010, when the Isla Calero conflict between Costa Rica and Nicaragua started, it coincided with several lectures on nationalism in my master programme. This made me see the conflict from new perspectives and left me with many unanswered questions which sparked the idea for this thesis. My interest in stereotypes and nationalism arose when studying in the Basque Country five years ago. The complex political situation there, and the stories my friends told me about pretending to be nationalist in order to be accepted by certain groups, fuelled my newly won interest for political science. I am a journalist, therefore I know both the theoretical and practical importance the media have in shaping thoughts and opinions. Therefore, researching what newspapers have written about a conflict, is a point of departure within an area that I know. Having made many trips to both South and Central America, I also wanted to use my knowledge of the region and of the Spanish language.

Many people have been important during the writing of this thesis. First, I want to thank all the people I met during my fieldwork who shared their time, thoughts and knowledge with me. Second, I want to thank my supervisor Bjørn Ola Tafjord for helping me find a way out of every labyrinth, and for his interest and belief in my research. There have been many ups and downs during the writing of this thesis, I want to thank Øyvind Festø for his patience and encouragements throughout this year. In addition, I would like to thank the staff and my fellow MPCT-students at the University of Tromsø, particularly Turid Austin Wæhler for her academic, social and gastronomic contributions. I am also grateful for the work Siri Natvig has done to give the English language in this thesis a boost. To my other friends and to my family, knowing that you are always there makes all the difference.

Part I
Introduction, theorists and history

1 Introduction

Where the San Juan River lazily flows towards the Caribbean ocean, and where giant mosquitos are even lazier in their attempt for dinner, a conflict started in 2010. In the midst of weed filled swamps where only drug traffickers find it worth spending time, a small river island became the protagonist in a game much bigger than itself. Its importance unclear, but the attention given enormous. The conflict involved Google, the neighbouring countries Nicaragua and Costa Rica, later all of Latin America and finally the United Nations.

There is a saying that goes: In Costa Rica there are three seasons: the dry, the rainy and the one with Nicaraguan conflicts.⁶ The phrase attributed to the ex-president of the republic, Ricardo Jiménez (La Republica, 16.11.2010b), sums up the historically difficult relations between these two Central American countries. One element adding to this story is the importance of the San Juan River, which has been a source of conflict for almost two centuries.

The construction of a canal in the San Juan River was going to bring prosperity to Nicaragua, but Panama was chosen instead. Since independence Nicaragua has experienced internal rivalry, external interventions, dictatorships and war between the US sponsored Contras and the Sandinistas. Costa Rica was politically turbulent after independence, but has maintained a stable democracy the past 60 years. These historical differences have allowed for the construction of contrasting national identities. Costa Rica has promoted itself as a peaceful country since the army was abolished in 1948, while fearing the perceived communist threat of Nicaragua in the following decades. Nicaragua, on the other hand, emphasises its long struggle for independence and considers Costa Rica to be compromising independence through cooperation with the United States.

This background is important for understanding reactions to the present conflict. In the fall of 2010 Nicaraguan soldiers were stationed on the tip of Isla Calero. The small piece of land was shown to be Nicaraguan on Google Maps.⁷ However, according to both Nicaraguan and Costa Rican official maps all of Isla Calero belongs to Costa Rica. Considering this to be an invasion, Costa Rica took the issue to the Organisation of American States (OAS) and to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Nicaragua maintained that the Google border was correct and referred to

⁶ “En Costa Rica hay tres estaciones: la seca, la lluviosa y la de los pleitos con Nicaragua.”

⁷ See illustration 3.

legal treaties.

While the dispute was taking diplomatic turns in different organizations, tension was growing within the two countries. The conflict challenged the identities of the countries, and through legal, historical and moral arguments the re-establishment of national boundaries was sought. The river turned into an important symbol around which stereotypes of militarism, peace, expansionism, civilisation, ecology and pride were (re)produced. In researching the stereotypes awakened and produced by the Isla Calero conflict it is important to balance the many different points of view. Some important representations are Nicaraguan and Costa Rican national stereotypes and the stereotyping between the two countries.

Earlier research

The previous research done on relations between Nicaragua and Costa Rica do have an emphasis on the latter. The three studies mentioned below all consider Costa Rican points of view. This creates a bias that unfortunately is hard to avoid as most research done by Nicaraguans or about Nicaragua focuses on other issues.

The Costa Rican communications researcher Carlos Sandoval-García has conducted the main previous research on relations between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. His work is focused on how the role of the Nicaraguan Other relates to the construction of a Costa Rican national identity. His book *Threatening Others* also seeks to address more generally why identification is so closely connected to national belonging. He holds that the sense of national belonging works through the media, as reactions to certain events can be spread and represented as public opinion. Through the media, negative reactions towards Nicaraguan immigrants, which is the focus of Sandoval-García, reach the Costa Rican public.

Sandoval-García has viewed how Nicaraguans are represented in Costa Rican news, as well as in international news cited by Costa Rican media. In addition, pupils in primary and secondary school have written about Costa Rica as a nation and their opinions about Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. Sandoval-García does not, however, consider how Costa Ricans are viewed in Nicaragua. The researcher's main argument is that the national identity of Costa Rica is undergoing a crisis, which Nicaraguan immigrants to a great extent are blamed for. The key sources of belonging in Costa Rica centre around an idyllic representation of the past, where

equality among inhabitants, a “white” population, a stable democracy and peace are the most important representations. The Nicaraguan Other is associated with political turbulence, poverty, dark skin and nondemocratic governments (Sandoval-García 2004: xiii-xiv).

History is a crucial source from which nationhood is constructed, because the “past” is a key reference for present imaginations. Sandoval-García claims that many of the ideas about Costa Rica historically having a “rural democracy” stem only from a few influential 19th century history books. This has culminated into a belief in the Costa Rican will for democracy and the metaphor of Costa Rica as the “Switzerland of Central America” (Sandoval-García 2004: 65). In addition the African-Americans and indigenous peoples of Costa Rica have been held away from public discourse, creating a belief in Costa Rica being more closely connected to Europe, and having a “white” population. African-Americans, especially from Jamaica, who came to work on the Atlantic railway or in the banana industry, were initially not allowed to leave the province of Limón and were not recognized as national citizens until 1949. Indigenous peoples did not obtain national identity cards in Costa Rica until 1993 (Sandoval-García 2004: 84-85).

According to Sandoval-García, the idea of Costa Rica being different is hard to maintain. Participation in elections is declining and there is an increasing sense of distrust in the Costa Rican democracy. This is described as a process causing “social anxiety” leading to a perception of national pride being threatened. This “crisis of moral values” has been projected onto Nicaraguans, who are being held responsible for a multitude of crimes, diseases and general insecurity. Nicaraguans in Costa Rica absorb these stigmatisations, and increasingly come to view themselves in the light of such racialized representations (Sandoval-García 2004: xvii). In his study conducted in primary and secondary schools, Sandoval-García found that the Costa Rican pupils who interacted frequently with Nicaraguans were less hostile than those who did not. Many of the informants based their assumptions about Nicaraguans on information from the media. Sandoval-García holds that the groups that do not fit into the middle-class ideal, project negative sentiments towards lower social groups, such as Nicaraguan immigrants (Sandoval-García 2004: 113-116).

A study that comments on the perception of democracy, and the notion of civilisation that is associated with this type of government, is also relevant to my project. The North-American political scientists Mitchell A. Seligson and John A. Booth studied relations between culture and regime type after the Nicaraguan revolution and the following war. They found that the

democratic culture was stronger in Nicaragua than in Costa Rica. Nicaragua, which had been ruled by authoritarian regimes for centuries, scored much higher than Costa Rica, a country with Latin America's longest continuous experience with democracy, on support for democratic liberties such as the rights of opposition groups. The researchers explain the Nicaraguan democratic values through the long struggle against the Somoza dictatorship, and later the war between the Contras and the Sandinistas, in which civil liberties became important for both parties of the conflict (Seligson and Booth 1993: 789-790).

A more recent study, conducted by the German historian and political scientist Sebastian Huhn, analyses four important events in Costa Rican history, which Huhn claims are cited as proof of the Costa Rican pacifism today. These historical happenings are important for understanding Costa Rica's reaction to the Isla Calero conflict, and shed light on the Costa Rican relation to communism. By going through more than one thousand Costa Rican newspaper articles, Huhn concludes that the present day memory of Costa Rica's peaceful past is based on what he calls a "collective amnesia" about certain cornerstones of Costa Rican history. This romanticising of the past creates consequences for the present because the peaceful image of Costa Rican identity is perceived as threatened by increasing violence and crime (Huhn 2009: 26-27).

The first event researched by Huhn is the Civil War of 1948, which was sparked by electoral fraud and a deep ideological division in the context of the imminent Cold War. A rebel army, headed by José Figueres, took over the country, ousting the communist-supporting president from power. All newspapers sided with Figueres, and the event was celebrated in the press as a liberation from communism. The victims and destruction of the Civil War were left out of the newspapers, and so was the instability following the conflict. The focus of the newspapers was rather that the rebels had to start a civil war to establish peace.

The second happening is the 1948 abolition of the Costa Rican military, which today is viewed as a logical consequence of and a "natural" act of Costa Rican national identity. At the time, however, it was subject of a heated debate. The newspapers viewed it as a reform, not as the beginning of demobilization.

The third event is the 1983 Proclamation of Neutrality, proposed by the Costa Rican president Luis Alberto Monge. The proclamation, which came as a response to the fear of the Sandinistas and the US' request to use Costa Rica as a southern front in the war, sought to avoid Costa

Rica's involvement in armed conflict. That the proclamation denied the deployment of foreign troops and encouraged demobilisation of armed groups was hotly debated as many Costa Ricans saw this as threat to national security.

The last case is the Arias Peace Plan, which created a time line for building peace and democracy in Central America, and which granted Costa Rican president Oscar Arias the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987. The old fear of communism was once again brought back to life, and many criticised the plan for compromising peace by including Nicaragua (Huhn 2009: 12-23). Huhn concludes that the strong belief in a Costa Rican "natural" identity as peaceful must be deconstructed before a rational debate over the fear of crime and violence can be conducted (Huhn 2009: 28).

Research questions

The conflict over the Calero Island has received little attention in international media, except as a joke due to the part played by Google in the beginning of the conflict. But inside and between the two countries the dispute sparked the use of stereotypes and brought divisions to the surface. My main research question attempts to identify stereotypes used among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans:

What does the Isla Calero conflict reveal about stereotypes about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

In addition, five subordinated research questions are designed to shed light over different aspects of my main research question. As my principal sources of information were newspapers and interviews, the next two research questions are about the stereotypes expressed by the media and among people:

1. Which stereotypes were (re)produced in the media coverage of the Isla Calero conflict?

2. Which stereotypes were (re)produced when Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans spoke about the Isla Calero conflict?

While these questions point to existing stereotypes today, the answers would seem uprooted

and taken out of context without their historical background. Therefore I want to look into:

3. How are perceptions of Us and an Other created historically within and between these countries?

Whereas the previous questions establish the existence and background of stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, I also want to know why stereotypes are used:

4. Why were stereotypes describing Us and an Other used in the context of the Isla Calero conflict?

The last aspect I want to reflect on is how the two societies were affected by the use of stereotypes:

5. How were the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican societies reconstructed in relation to each other during this conflict?

Representing both sides

Carlos Sandoval-García used information from newspapers in both Costa Rica and Nicaragua in his research, still his work has mainly focused on the perceptions Costa Ricans have of Nicaraguans, not vice versa. Consequently a study like mine, which attempts to balance the points of view of people in both countries, has not been done before. The study of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican news items from one month of the conflict reveal information displayed in one country, as well as the reaction, or lack of it, in the other.

Contrasting this to surveys, observations and interviews done a year after the conflict, captures a long time span of the discourses related to the dispute. This can bring an important dimension into understanding the persistence of stereotypes. Having conducted similar studies in and on both countries, I have tried to represent both sides equally. Therefore this thesis contributes to a new way of viewing the relationship between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Because in order to understand why and how groups are created one must know the points of view of every party involved.

The structure of this thesis

In the next chapter I will present the theoretical perspectives that my analysis will depart from. Then, in chapter 3, short resumes are given of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan histories, as well as the history and legal treaties of the San Juan River. The introduction to part II includes a brief outline of my methods and also a few critical reflections on my own involvement. Chapter 4 is about the questionnaires and their results. In chapter 5 I will comment on the areas where I did observations and the selection of interviewees in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The second part of the chapter combines these two methods in a review of the information revealed. In Chapter 6 the interviews with journalists are introduced, as well as the different newspapers and the time period from which the news items have been gathered. The chapter also summarises the information given by the journalists and the newspaper items. Then, in chapter 7, some of the important stereotypes found in chapter 6 are counted and organised to show their frequency of use. In chapter 8 I will analyse the findings from chapters 4-7 in the light of the theoretical perspectives. Finally, in chapter 9, the research questions are reviewed and given answers.

2 Analytical framework

This thesis will borrow from different thinkers with theories centred round the formation of groups, but whose thoughts are considering different aspects of boundaries and the relationship between Us and an Other. The theories are written in different decades, which means that some of the later authors have been influenced by the earlier. This creates an analytical framework which sheds light upon different dimensions, while at the same time building on a similar foundation. The theoreticians are by many considered to be some of the most important thinkers within their field. I believe the chosen works can make a relevant framework for the analysis of stereotypes in this thesis.

Said's Orientalism

The scholar of literature, Edward Said, is my starting point for understanding the stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Said's book *Orientalism* from 1978 argues that stereotyping the unknown over time can develop into a truth that people no longer question. Shortly summarised: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (Said 1979: 2). This means that there exists a system mapping out both the psychological and the physical differences between East and West, and Said claims this is based on false premises.

The Orient is an undefined region with great geographical aspirations, comprising parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Its vastness is also a part of the problem. As Said points out, there are Americanists, classicists and other regional experts, but their focus is still on relatively small portions of the world, not half of it. According to Said, Orientalism is an academic and institutionalised system for generalising a wide variety of social, historical, linguistic and political realities (Said 1979: 50).

Orientalism must be understood in relation to history and particularly to imperialism. The British colonisers in Egypt saw themselves lifting the country out of ignorance and into enlightenment through an extensive Western domination of land, internal affairs and resources. This was all based on the argument that: "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated" (Said 1979: 36). Said claims that such a theory is not first and foremost based on a particular racism or viciousness on behalf of the British

imperialists, but serves to show how streamlined and effective the doctrine of the Orient had become. It was convenient too, because the management of Orientals became easier. They were perceived to be nearly the same everywhere.

But it was more than mere expansionism and the overtaking of land and resources, it was also the domination of knowledge. In such an uneven power relation, the intellectual power of the West in some sense created the Orient and the Oriental (Said 1979: 36-41). And from this springs Orientalism. The field of study gained popularity, but it was a restrained type of research, mainly a textual universe, where Orientalism framed the mind-set of the writers. Said holds that Orientalism ultimately was a political vision of reality that promoted the difference between the familiar Europe, the West, “us” and the unknown, the Orient, the East, “them” (Said 1979: 43). This maxim also influenced the Orientalists in the field. They were seldom: “[...] interested in anything except proving the validity of these musty ‘truths’ by applying them, without great success, to uncomprehending, hence degenerate, natives” (Said 1979: 52).

Said grew up in two British colonies, Palestine and Egypt. He describes his education to be “Western”, but there was something that kept bothering him, an awareness of being culturally defined as “an Oriental” (Said 1979: 25-26). This unshakable otherness was what prompted him to trace the effects Orientalism may have had on him. One of the strengths of Orientalism, he writes, is the three-way relationship it imposes on the Orient, the Orientalist and the receiver of Orientalism. Said holds that the Orient is to some extent being corrected or even punished for being outside “our world”, outside the European boundaries. This causes the Orientalist to understand the Orient, not as it is, but how it ought to be. The Orient is thus Orientalised into something else, for the benefit of the Western consumer of Orientalism (Said 1979: 67). This exercise of contrasting the European identity to non-European peoples and cultures has contributed to the creation of an idea of a European cultural superiority, Said claims (Said 1979: 7).

He also writes: “It seems a common human failing to prefer the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human” (Said 1979: 93). The consequence is that a text can gain so much authority that it becomes more valid than what it describes. One example can be drawn from travel books, dutifully read by engaged travellers, who after arriving may claim that the destination was not what they expected, meaning it was not what the book said it would be. The Orient had the same problem, it was silent and available for

European inspection and interpretation. It did not have, and was not given, the power to defy the images of otherness imposed on it (Said 1979: 94).

In 2003, a quarter century after *Orientalism's* first publication, Said wrote a new preface, reflecting on the book's content and influence. In the context of the 9/11 attacks, and the consequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Said maintains that the content of the book still is valid in viewing contemporary history. There is a new mobilisation of fear, hatred and arrogance, closely connected to Islam and the Arabic on one side, and the Westerners on the other, he claims. Having hoped for a change in the general understanding of the Middle East the past 25 years, Said is pessimistic. Although relations towards Islam and Muslims seem to have improved in Europe, it has remained at a standstill in the USA. The rhetoric prior to the invasion of Iraq shows that the clichés, stereotypes and justifications of power used by the British and French imperialists, still remain, he holds.

Further, the globalisation of the media contributes to the divide between east and west, exemplified by television reports in the time leading up to the Iraq war. A polarised picture lacking nuances was presented about the Other in the US and in Arabic and Muslim countries. However, Said also considers the possibilities of globalisation. The worldwide protests held before the Iraq war, were made possible by the Internet. In a world that demands instant actions and reactions, the slow patience needed to achieve cooperation between cultures becomes increasingly difficult, Said states (Said 2004: I-XIII).

Anderson and the imagined community

The political scientist and historian, Benedict Anderson, wrote *Imagined Communities* in 1983. The book sheds light on the mechanisms at play in the formation of groups. Since *the imagined community* addresses different ways of understanding the nation and its boundaries it is helpful when viewing stereotypes among Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, even if it is mainly addressed towards nationalism. Anderson writes that the nation: “[...] is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 2006: 6). By saying that the nation is imagined, Anderson means that there is no way to know every person in a nation, or even meet them or hear of them. Still, for the fellow members of a nation there exist an image of common belonging, an image of a comradeship.

That the nation is imagined to be limited means that no nation aspires to encompass the entire world. Even the largest nations, which encompass a billion people or more, still have boundaries outside of which there are other nations. Religion, by contrast, has no boundaries and it has been possible for Christians to envision and dream of uniting all mankind under Christianity. The nation being imagined as sovereign refers to sovereignty as a creation that came into existence after the feudal system collapsed, causing the need for a stricter definition of previously porous and changing borders.

The nation is also a community, Anderson writes, because even if people are exploited or wealth unevenly distributed, a profound image of a communion within the national boundaries prevails (Anderson 2006: 6-7). One important aspect of the imagined community is the idea of continuity between the past and the present, the present and the future. Anderson calls this “homogenous, empty time” which is the perception of the nation as a community moving down the lines of history as one group. In any nation one does not know what the others are up to, but one has complete confidence in their steady, simultaneous activity (Anderson 2006: 26). A concrete example of this is the use of newspapers. As one person reads the paper in his home an early morning, sipping coffee before going to work, the person knows that this is simultaneously replicated by thousands, or millions of other people, whom the person does not know, but whose existence is certain. This notion is reinforced as the newspaper reader sees the same paper being read by others on the subway, on the bus or in the park (Anderson 2006: 34). Thus, fiction becomes reality and this: “creates that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations” (Anderson 2006: 36).

Retracing the steps of nationalism and the imagined community, language and print-capitalism play important roles. There used to be varied spoken languages and idiolects before the age of printing, but these had to be limited and assembled into far fewer print-languages. The printed languages made it possible for the speakers of a variety of Frenches, Englishes or Spanishes to understand one another. By the fixation of written language, and the permanent form of books, languages did not change as much, and this contributed to an image of antiquity, central to the idea of the nation (Anderson 2006: 42-45).

The importance of language in creating nationalism could have been elaborated upon in much more detail, but for the purpose of this thesis, the sense of an historical past and common belonging is of more relevance. Anderson notes that what a person is naturally tied to, is in a

sense without interests. The unchosen belonging calls for unselfishness and solidarity. This is often associated with the family, but it can also count for the nation. This is also why it can ask for sacrifices:

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International cannot rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will (Anderson 2006: 144).

Since language has no date of birth, it appears as historically rooted beyond almost anything else in modern societies. The singing of the national anthem, for example, holds an impression of simultaneity, it is a realization of the imagined community (Anderson 2006: 145).

Anderson also comments on how new states can see a nationalism which is systematically imposed by the state through mass media, schools, administration and other institutions. This claim is specifically directed at the state of affairs in colonies, but can also be viewed in a broader context. The author holds that three institutions in particular are important in the making of a state, namely the census, the map and the museum. These institutions establish the nature of the people within the colony, its geography and the legitimacy of its ancestry. And for the colonial rulers all of these institutions had the function of classification. The census could establish racial groups, the map could model the world just the way the colonisers wanted it to be (not how it really was), and the museum allowed the state to appear as a guardian of tradition (Anderson 2006: 63-81).

Lincoln on discourse and the construction of society

Bruce Lincoln is a historian of religions and writes about taxonomies. They are systems for classifying the phenomenal world and for organizing indiscriminate data. Lincoln claims that it is not only different social factors, such as language, diet, customs or economy, that create those imaginary lines that separate one group from an other. The creation and maintenance of social borders is also affected by the employment of taxonomic systems that organize similarities or dissimilarities between groups.

This process, as Lincoln emphasises, is in constant change as there are unlimited possibilities for finding similarities or differences, which can produce feelings of affinity or estrangement between groups. Most often social borders are a winding mix of potential sentiments, where negative sentiments sometimes are suppressed in order to preserve social integration or where positive sentiments may be overlooked in the interest of maintaining borders (Lincoln 1989: 9-

10). Lincoln holds that society is a construction that can be torn apart and rebuilt: “Ultimately, that which either holds society together or takes it apart is sentiment, and the chief instrument with which such sentiment may be aroused, manipulated and rendered dormant is discourse” (Lincoln 1989: 11).

Myths are important elements in the construction of social borders. Lincoln defines a myth as a recollection of sentiments through emphasising select moments from the past that contribute to the (re)construction and (re)establishment of social identities. Just as a family tree can connect variously sized social groups, so can the recollection of episodes from the past. An example Lincoln uses is how the Sieneese recount the battle at Montaperti (1260) where Sienna won over their arch rival Florence. Although the latter would grow to dominate the region, the battle is still referred to with pride by Sieneese. The emphasis on the Montaperti myth evokes annoyance, anger or at the best tolerance by Florentines, while outsiders are left with puzzlement or boredom. By recounting an episode from the past, latent divisions between groups become evident. The Sieneese become more Sieneese through uniting with others who also take pride in Montaperti. In the process other positive sentiments or social formations, such as Tuscan unity or Italian victories in soccer, are temporarily deconstructed (Lincoln 1989: 22-23).

Lincoln claims that myths are vital in the creation and recreation of society. He compares the use of myths to fables, legends and history, and the difference is as follows: A fable does not claim to be true. Legends, however, do, but they lack the credibility to be believed by the audience. While history does have credibility, it lacks something the myth possesses, namely authority. Lincoln describes authority as the power to effectively mobilize social groups, a power somewhat similar to revolutionary slogans or family trees. Thus, frequent repetition of a myth can function to maintain the structures in society, or it can be used to pull them apart. When depriving a myth of its authority, reducing it to history or legend, it loses capacity to mobilise sentiments. This also works the other way around, a history, legend or even a fable can be elevated to the status of myth, if equipped with credibility and authority. Another way of altering sentiments relating to myths is to make new lines of interpretation or modify their narration (Lincoln 1989: 24-27).

Rituals work in much the same way as myths, as symbolic discourses and as instruments to evoke sentiments of affinity and estrangement. Both myths and rituals have authority, therefore the difference between them is, broadly speaking, that rituals are what you do, myths are what

you say (Lincoln 1989: 53). Rituals cannot bridge cleavages or resolve tensions between groups. Their function is rather to “cloak” fundamental conflicts for some time, allowing people to give it less attention. By making people forget about conflict for a while, rituals can bring about positive sentiments and possibly promote stability (Lincoln 1989: 89). But rituals may also create bigger cleavages. During the Spanish Civil War, where the Left and the Right were deeply separated, people took to the streets. As the church was identified to be supporting the Right it became subject of many ritual attacks. One in particular was a macabre spectacle, namely the exhumation and public display of naturally mummified corpses of priests, nuns and saints (Lincoln 1989: 103-106). Lincoln argues that if:

In some measure society is constructed (and continually reconstructed) through the exercise of symbolic discourse, then the destruction of widely recognized and even revered symbols may be seen as an attempt to undo their effects, that is, to deconstruct the social forms that others have constructed and maintain through them. The iconoclastic act is thus less a matter of the icons themselves than it is an attack launched by one segment of society against those of another [...] (Lincoln 1989: 117-118).

When such symbols and rituals are deconstructed, they become powerless, something that reflect back on the people promoting these images. The rituals or images are shown to be no more sacred, or special than anything else (Lincoln 1989: 120).

Sociotaxonomic systems can be attacked from different angles, and Lincoln writes that the most prominent one is “symbolic inversion”. It refers to a reversal of a symbolic or ideological order, which can create an alteration socially or politically (Lincoln 1989: 142). This happened when the artist Marcel Duchamp, under a pseudonym, submitted *Fountain*, an upside-down urinal, to a New York art exhibition. The art committee, of which he was a member, did not know how to deal with the urinal, which is described by Lincoln as: “[...] an object related to both the corporeal and the spiritual, certainly ridiculous, but possibly also sublime [...] a toilet in the salon” (Lincoln 1989: 145).

Believing the work to be done by an unknown artist, the art committee hung it in the back corner, screened from view, and removed it shortly after. This prompted many artists to withdraw from the art society. The conflict it can be summarised in four points: 1. A violation of an accepted norm happened when *Fountain* was submitted. 2. This gave attention to a latent cleavage within the group. 3. Attempts were made to solve the conflict by putting *Fountain* in a booth in the back of the exhibition. 4. This was unsuccessful, and the two groups were divided along the previously defined cleavages within the group. One group withdrew from the society and the other was left weakened, not only because of loss of members, but also because of their

inability to defend themselves in a moment of conflict (Lincoln 1989: 142-145).

Hall's view on stereotypes

The cultural theorist and sociologist, Stuart Hall has in his 1997 essay “The Spectacle of the ‘Other’” given his definition of stereotypes. In order to understand stereotypes, it can be useful to make a distinction between *typing* and *stereotyping*, Hall writes. The former refers to the need to classify the world around us, an exercise that is essential to produce meaning. For example, if one sees a flat object with four legs, it can be placed in the mental category of “table”. A person can be placed in a wider category relating to for example age, work, class, gender, nationality or ethnic background. Which objects, people or events that fit into these mental classifications vary from culture to culture, but generally a *type* is a simple and understandable characterisation that is easy to remember (Hall 2002: 257).

Stereotypes make use of some of these simple, vivid and memorable characteristics, but exaggerate and simplify them: “stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’” (Hall 2002: 258). The logic behind naturalisation, Hall explains in relation to slavery, follows the idea of differences between black and white being beyond history, something natural. If differences were “cultural” they would have been easier to change (Hall 2001: 335).

Because stereotypes exclude and expel everything that is different and does not fit into the mental box, they are more rigid than social types. Stereotyping thus sets up a symbolic boundary between Us and Them, bonding the insiders into one ‘imagined community’ and symbolically exiling the outsiders. Further, stereotypes are related to the power to mark and classify the Other, which is the topic of Said’s book *Orientalism*. Hall holds that stereotyping is a key element in such exercises of symbolic violence (Hall 2002: 259).

Another important element of stereotyping is its double-sided nature, a representation working on a conscious and unconscious level. Hall exemplifies this through the “infantilisation” of black men during slavery. The white master exercised his power over the black male slave by representing and treating him as a child, referring to him as “Boy” and thus depriving him of responsibility and authority. But on a subconscious level the black man was also fantasised and envied by whites as a symbol of sexual prowess. Black men often

responded to the infantilisation by adopting an aggressive masculinity, but this only confirmed the white fantasy of the excessive sexual nature of blacks. Thus black men became trapped in the binary structure of the stereotype, shuttling between two extreme opposites, sometimes being both childlike and oversexed at the same time. This ambivalence reveals that stereotypes refer as much to imagination as to what is perceived as “real” (Hall 2002: 262-263).

Appadurai and the fear of small numbers

Arjun Appadurai is an anthropological theorist that takes into account more recent forces in the processes of group-formation. His prime focus is on globalisation and its effect on social formations, and boundaries. Appadurai claims that globalisation, the global flow of goods, money, people, media and ideas, penetrates previously established categories and boundaries making them porous. This challenges the idealised image of the nation-state, and contributes to a sense of incompleteness and uncertainty among the majority. This can further lead to violence against minorities, as they are held responsible for the changes brought by globalisation (Appadurai 2006: 6-8).

In his 1996 book, *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai defines five dimensions of global cultural flows, the sources of what Appadurai calls “imagined worlds”, an expansion of Benedict Anderson’s thoughts. The *ethnoscape* refers to the landscape of persons that constantly move between states, meaning tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers etc., who increasingly are affecting politics within and between nations. The *technoscape* refers to the fluidity and high-speed movement of technology through previously impenetrable borders. Both these factors must be understood in relation to the rapid and difficult movements of global capital, the *financescapes*.

The *mediascapes* add to the difficult relationship of globalisation. Worldwide broadcasting of image-centred narratives blurs the lines between fiction and reality and triggers the imagination of possible lives. The farther away the audiences are from the media-information they consume, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds. These worlds can and do become incorporated into metaphors and narratives of the Other. The fifth dimension is *ideoscapes*, which consider how political ideology must be viewed contextually as it is no longer held in a Euro-American master narrative. Therefore the notion and understanding of

democracy may vary in different parts of the world (Appadurai 1996: 33-37).

In *Fear of Small Numbers*, Appadurai uses these factors to view the relationship between minorities and majorities in a globalised world. He also investigates the growth of genocides in the 1990s, in the context of state formations and liberalism after the Cold War. Appadurai claims that the nation-state is built on the notion of an ethnic genius, and this is threatened by globalisation (Appadurai 2006: 3). As globalisation can allow people to move between categories, for example through mixed marriages and shared languages, borders are wiped out and this can cause the majority to feel threatened. It is impossible to know how many of “them” are among “us” (Appadurai 2006: 5-11). The plausibility of minorities and majorities changing places, real or imagined, is what triggers what Appadurai calls “predatory identities”. This refers to a belief that the extinction of one group is crucial for the survival of another group (Appadurai 2006: 51).

Appadurai holds that the majority needs a minority, if nothing else to clean toilets and fight wars. But minorities are also unwelcome because they are different. This binary opposition is the key to the puzzle of ethnocide and the problem of globalisation itself for many nation states: minorities are both necessary (they can be owned, controlled), and undesired (they can be avoided, denied or eliminated). As globalisation is a force without a face it cannot easily be recognised or eliminated, but minorities can (Appadurai 2006: 44). They become symbols of the uncertainty and incompleteness of the majority, a reminder of the small gap that remains for the majority to obtain the pure national ethos, the symbol of the nation-state. Therefore, to deal with the uncertainty created by globalisation, fundamentalism can be a way to re-establish boundaries (Appadurai 2006: 8). As the North-American writer and journalist Philip Gourevitch said after the civil war in Rwanda: “genocide, after all, is an exercise in community-building” (Appadurai 2006: 7).

As many aspects of life, and most importantly the economy, have become globalised, inequality between nations, regions and classes increases (Appadurai 2006: 23). In this context, global moral enemies become indistinguishable from internal enemies, which also add a powerful component to the relation between majorities and minorities (Appadurai 2006: 118). Appadurai uses an example from India to illustrate this. Higher castes are minorities in India, but through Hinduism they have united with the majority of lower castes against another minority, the Muslims. As Muslims in India are associated with Pakistan they are

discriminated against, because giving in to Muslim demands locally means giving in to Pakistan (Appadurai 2006: 74-76).

Minorities and majorities are recent historical inventions, interlinked with the idea of nations, populations and representation, which only have existed for a few centuries (Appadurai 2006: 50-58). As liberalism is concerned with the individual, it is the masses that are feared. They have to be controlled because they can mobilise against a system. Then, from where comes the fear of small numbers? Appadurai writes that in relation to liberal social thought, small numbers are troubling in one way because they are associated with elites and tyrannies, in another because they bring forth an idea of conspiracy, the cell, the spy, or the revolutionary.

But minorities can also excite sympathy, especially when it comes to a democratic legislative framework. In such a context, minorities are temporary, created by dissenting opinions, not by difference. After the creation of the United Nations in 1945, previously procedural minorities were given rights, thus fixing them as permanent social and cultural minorities. Following this there have been struggles over citizenship, justice and political participation, resulting in a deep ambivalence towards minorities in democracies of all varieties (Appadurai 2006: 61-64).

3 Historical background

Said, Anderson, Lincoln, Hall and Appadurai all establish that history is important to build the nation. The writing of history is a national affair, a political and discursive institution often dominated by nationals. Therefore history must be approached with scepticism. Writing the history of Nicaragua and Costa Rica especially so, as many stereotypes are created and maintained through historical myths.

The neighbouring countries Costa Rica and Nicaragua, placed on the isthmus that connects North and South America, have many historical features in common. After Simón Bolívar's successful liberation of Venezuela from the Spanish Crown in 1821, the surrounding states followed like dominoes. Only a couple of months later both Costa Rica and Nicaragua gained their independence (Chasteen 2008: 142-144). It came without a single battle, but for the two neighbours on the Central American isthmus, history would take them in very different directions.

Before examining more recent events in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, a few important historical aspects relating to the colonial period and the time after independence, must be looked into. Costa Rica was harder to colonise than its neighbours as the indigenous populations were spread out. Whereas countries further north had large and dense populations, the Costa Rican indigenous groups lived in villages surrounded by tropical wilderness, swamps, mountains and wild animals (Molina and Palmer 2007: 12). Various attempts were made by the Spaniards to colonise the indigenous, but they largely failed due to the climate, difficult terrain, lack of supplies, indigenous resistance, and because of internal conflicts among the Spaniards (Molina and Palmer 2007: 23). This made it difficult for the colonisers to control the Costa Rican indigenous populations through repressive labour systems, which was a common way of conquest in many other Latin American countries. As a result of this, there was little exploitation of Costa Rica's natural resources. Agriculture therefore became the main source of economic activity (Seligson 2007: 453-454). At the beginning of the seventeenth century Costa Rica was an isolated, poor and marginal colony with only a few settlements (Molina and Palmer 2007: 27).

During the colonial period, the north-western peninsula, which today is the Costa Rican province Guanacaste, was controlled by the province of Nicaragua. The peninsula was then

called Nicoya. It had a large indigenous population that was enslaved by the Spanish conquistadores. This contributed to an economic growth for the colonial upper class in Nicaragua in the mid 1500s (Molina and Palmer 2007: 20). The important colonial settlements in León and Granada were established in 1524 (Quirós 2003: 324) and had important trading relations in stockbreeding with Nicoya (Fonseca 2002: 155). The city of León had the colonial administration from where the Costa Rican economy was controlled (Molina and Palmer 2007: 29). León was also a cultural and educational centre, the first university being built there in 1812. Attacks on Nicaragua could be launched through the San Juan River, which derives from Lake Nicaragua⁸. Therefore Granada, situated at its shores, became a strategic point for both colonial and independent governments. Granada's geographic location made trade, both legal and illegal, the main economic activity (Vilas 1992: 315).

The different backgrounds of these two colonial centres were the starting point of a deeply divided political situation in Nicaragua. Liberals in León and conservatives in Granada were in constant opposition. Further, the state's role as a platform for the elite to accumulate wealth caused long periods of political instability in Nicaragua after its independence. Different local groups of Spanish descent competed for the control of the state apparatuses, which created a weak political regime (Vilas 1992: 311). Because of the power disputes within Nicaragua, the inhabitants of Nicoya decided through a poll to annex the province to Costa Rica after independence. The unstable political climate in Nicaragua also made many displaced people immigrate to Costa Rica (Sandoval-García 2004: 87).

Nicaraguan history

Since the end of the 19th century, its vicinity to the United States has to a large extent defined Central America. The US put great efforts into displacing Spain and Great Britain from the region, and quickly became the most powerful state in the area (Høivik and Aas 1981: 337). In the late 1800s the US started looking for a way to link the two oceans together and laid eyes on the San Juan River, which for a long time had been a freight way. But a volcanic eruption in 1902 made the US change their mind and opt for a canal in Panama instead (Rabella 2004: 79).

Although Central America was of limited economic importance, the isthmus achieved high geopolitical and strategic value when the Panama Canal was constructed. Protecting the canal,

⁸ Lago de Nicaragua

and the possibility of an alternative route through the San Juan River was a vital military objective for the US (Høivik and Aas 1981: 337). Relations between the US and Nicaragua deteriorated after 1904 when the Nicaraguan dictator José Santos Zelaya offered European and Japanese investors to make a canal in the San Juan River (Rabella 2004: 79).

The US intervened in 1909 and ousted Zelaya from power, instating the conservative and US friendly president Adolfo Díaz. He sold both the railway and the Nicaraguan customs to US banks. In 1912 another uprising led by Benjamin Zeledón resulted in a second US invasion (Store Norske Leksikon 2009). Fearing that liberals might grant a canal concession to some other nation, Washington entered a de facto alliance with the conservatives. The US Marines remained in Nicaragua ensuring conservative rule until 1925 (Millett 2007: 466).

When the US left in the mid 1920s they put a coalition of liberals and conservatives in charge. Shortly after Emiliano Chamorro gained power by a coup and expelled all the liberals from parliament. The US intervened for the third time. The liberals went into exile on the Caribbean coast and later negotiated a peace treaty with the conservatives (Store Norske Leksikon 2009). The US Marines remained in Nicaragua after the intervention and created a police force known as the National Guard. But the liberal general Augusto César Sandino did not want any political compromises and launched a guerrilla war against the US Marines and the National Guard, a fight that lasted until the Marines left in 1933. Sandino then negotiated peace terms, but was murdered by the National Guard a year later (Millett 2007: 466).

The commander of the National Guard, General Anastasio Somoza García, used his position to gain the presidency in 1936, starting one of the hardest dictatorships in Latin America. In the 40 years to come, the family would run Nicaragua almost as a private estate (Blum 2004: 290). To keep themselves in power, the Somozas depended on the control of the National Guard, manipulation of the Liberal Party and the image of a close alliance with the United States. The founder of the dynasty was murdered in 1956, but his sons Luís and Anastasio Somoza Debayle managed to hold on to power for more than 20 years after their father's death (Millett 2007: 466). The Somozas were faithful to the US and, in the context of the Cold War, Nicaragua provided launching pads for US invasions in both Cuba and Guatemala (Burns and Charlip 2007: 252-253).

When Anastasio Somoza took over in 1961, as the third ruler of the dynasty, an opposition

group was formed in Cuba. It was inspired by Nicaragua's anti-imperialist hero, Sandino, and took the name Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Among the nine commandants in the leadership were Daniel Ortega, Carlos Fonseca and Tomás Borge. For almost two decades the Sandinistas were alone in opposing the Somoza rule, but two events were to change this. After the 1972 earthquake, which almost destroyed Managua, the Somoza clan pocketed aid worth \$250 million. Then in 1978, the famous regime critic and editor of the oppositional newspaper *La Prensa*, Joaquín Chamorro, was murdered. This united Nicaraguans right and left, and a widespread rebellion began. The US realising the dictator could not win, withdrew its support. This caused the National Guard, and thus the government, to collapse (Chasteen 2011: 306). The Sandinistas assumed leadership, and initially convinced other factions to cooperate in a broad based government. However, it soon became clear that the real power lay with the nine founders of the FSLN, and internal political conflicts started to build up (Millett 2007: 467).

The country that the Sandinistas took over was facing many difficulties. Over half the population was illiterate, three quarters of the children were malnourished and life expectancy was just slightly more than 53 years. Attempting to rebuild the country, the Sandinistas doubled the number of schools, education became free, and illiteracy was reduced from 52 to 12%. Clinics and hospitals were built in the countryside, health centres quadrupled, diseases like measles, diphtheria and polio were eliminated, and infant mortality fell 50%. Land previously belonging to the Somozas was redistributed free of charge and cooperatives were organized. Through the land reform, the Sandinistas hoped to make Nicaragua self-sufficient as well as starting a Nicaraguan export of crops (Burns and Charlip 2007: 254-256).

As time went, political division increased. Some middle- and upper class Nicaraguans were unsatisfied with their lack of influence and withdrew cooperation with the FSLN government, some even became hostile. But what were ripples in the water turned into storm when Ronald Reagan replaced Jimmy Carter in 1981. The Contras had, until then, been hit and run agents stationed in Honduras, with limited means for waging war. With Reagan came the big guns, the air power, the landing strips and the radar stations. Reagan's "Freedom Fighters", the Contras were to eliminate the red scare that the Sandinistas represented, and they aimed at destroying the newly established social programmes. Health centres, schools, agricultural cooperatives and community centres were targeted, unarmed civilians tortured, raped and killed. Adding to the load, Nicaragua was excluded from American trade, loans were withheld, the harbours were

mined, and the country was starved for imports as well as exports (Blum 2004: 291-293).

The main imperative for US involvement was the alleged weapon transport from Nicaragua to El Salvador. President Daniel Ortega had such shipments officially stopped before 1981, something the US recognised. Still, the Reagan administration maintained that Nicaragua could continue such shipments through other channels (Smith 1987: 90-91). A white paper published by the Department of State in 1985 claimed to have proof of Nicaragua's expansionistic plans. The sentence: "This revolution goes beyond our borders", was held as conclusive evidence of Nicaragua's interventionist plans. In reality it was taken completely out of context, being part of a much larger speech by Tomás Borge (Smith 1987: 89).

The FSLN won the elections in 1984 by a 60% vote. But the US and its Nicaraguan allies were not satisfied and continued the fight against the Sandinistas. By 1988 progress had turned into recession, a decade of war had taken money away from education and health. People were tired and wanted peace, the FSLN lost the 1990 elections to the conservative Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, widow of the murdered editor Pedro Joaquín (Blum 2004: 303-304).

The Chamorro administration brought another six years of political turmoil, economic crisis and public insecurity. The many years of conflict had caused food production to decline by 42% and the country's GDP had declined with over 3% annually for 25 years (Seligson and Booth 1993: 790). However, some progress was made. Inflation, which had passed 30 000% during FSLN rule, was controlled. Further the military was greatly reduced and the police were brought under governmental control. The 1996 and 2001 elections were both won by conservative presidents, although the FSLN, headed by Daniel Ortega, was actively seeking the presidency (Millett 2007: 468). Before the 2006 elections, the FSLN changed their political rhetoric, turning away from the revolutionary image and seeking ties with businesses. The moderate version of the FSLN won the elections.

In 2010, one year before elections, Ortega managed to get a majority in congress to vote in favour of a constitutional change, allowing him to run consecutive terms (Reuters 2011). Around the same time, Ortega started a dredging of the San Juan River, and sediments were put on a river island that both Nicaragua and Costa Rica claim to be theirs. This has led to substantial national support for Ortega, and the FSLN won the 2011 elections. The constitutional change did, however, cause many European countries to withdraw their support.

Now, Nicaragua is dependent on oil and donations from Venezuela to cover the loss of international aid (The Economist 2010, BBC 2012).

The foreign policy of Nicaragua, besides varying relations with the US and the search for debt relief, is centred round territorial issues, especially with Honduras and Costa Rica. Colombia's right over the San Andres Islands in the Caribbean has also been disputed (Millett 2007: 475). Lately, because of Nicaragua's close relation to Venezuela and Hugo Chavez, Iran has become an important ally. The Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has visited Nicaragua several times during Ortega's presidency (BBC 2012).

Many Nicaraguans have fled to other Central American countries, or to the US as a cause of the many internal conflicts. Recently most of the Nicaraguans leaving the country have economic motives. According to the Costa Rican census from 2008, more than a quarter million Nicaraguan immigrants live in Costa Rica, working in fields such as construction, banana plantations and housekeeping (INEC 2008).

Costa Rican history

After independence, Costa Rica sought a link to the world market, and found it in coffee. The demand for coffee turned agriculture into capitalist enterprise, but the abundance of agricultural possibilities limited the growth of a bureaucratic elite. Although the political climate was turbulent the first twenty years after independence (Seligson 2007: 456), the relatively flat social structure made Costa Rica avoid the protracted civil wars seen by many other Latin American countries (Molina and Palmer 2007: 49-54).

Already in the early 19th century travellers, writers and diplomats from the United States started coming to Costa Rica. The real or imagined perception of shared political, economic and social cultures, contributed to good relations between the countries, and few incentives for the US to intervene to protect American lives or property. That the US controlled Costa Rica's productive facilities and hindered other countries from entering the economy also contributed to this. Nevertheless, the positive relations did grant San José more freedom than the US allowed other countries in Central America (Longley 1993: 150-152).

The Norwegian peace researchers, Tord Høivik and Solveig Aas claim that prior to World War

II Costa Rica experienced the same instability as many of its neighbours. Following the decline in coffee prices after World War I, a military coup was carried out in 1917. It was initially supported by both local and foreign elites, but not by the US, and an economic embargo was imposed. This aggravated the economic crisis in the country and provoked political turbulence. This situation allowed the US to instate a president they could accept. Four years later, a border dispute between Costa Rica and Panama, intensified by competing banana companies, was settled by a US intervention on terms of Costa Rican sovereignty. The strong US dominance in the area limited Costa Rican sovereignty and also diminished the need for an army (Høivik and Aas 1981: 340).

The working class played an important role in the events leading up to the 1948 civil war. The economic crisis of the 1930s, and the abandonment of plantations in the Caribbean because of plant diseases, strongly affected the coffee and banana industries. The Costa Rican communist party grew quickly and was supported by many unemployed workers. The ruling elite's opinion was split in how to handle the growing movement, and different political factions emerged. Before the US and the Soviet Union turned against each other in the late forties, the labour and communist movements were respected and even allied with the president, Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia. However, as the Cold War started and international hostility grew, tensions arose between the political groups also in Costa Rica.

Calderón's successor, Teodoro Picado was anti-communist, but needed the support of the workers. The opposition therefore targeted him as soft on communism (Høivik and Aas 1981: 335-336). The election of 1948 was turbulent, and initially won by Otilio Ulate, belonging to the hard-line sector of the opposition. But Congress, which was dominated by Calderón supporters, annulled the election. Calderón, who was running for a second term, was declared winner. Without waiting for Ulate and Calderón to solve the dispute peacefully, the Ulate supporter José Figueres and his National Liberation Army started the civil war (Molina and Palmer 2007: 110-111).

Figueres met little resistance from the government army, which at that point was stripped of functions: "Internally it had been replaced by relatively strong civil institutions, and externally by United States intervention in case of conflict" (Høivik and Aas 1981: 340). José Figueres defeated the weak government forces in six weeks. The total losses of the civil war were between one and two thousand people (Høivik and Aas 1981: 337). Later the same year the

army was abolished and replaced with a strong police force, an act that made it hard for dissenting forces to attempt a coup against the newly established government. In addition, the Communist Party was outlawed and the control of the government was given back to Ulate (Seligson 2007: 457).

But the end of the civil war did not mean stability. Calderón launched a counterattack from Nicaragua in late 1948, which was stopped by the Organization of American States (OAS). The year after, a minister in the interim Junta attempted an unsuccessful overthrow of the government. In 1953 Figueres gained the presidency, and two years later OAS stopped another intervention from Nicaragua (Molina and Palmer 2007: 125-126). Even if Costa Rica abolished their army in 1948, they continued to be involved in regional affairs. In 1955, an attempt to kill the Nicaraguan dictator Somoza was launched from Costa Rica. Figueres supported this, causing the CIA to attempt to overthrow and assassinate him (Blum 2003: 83-84).

In 1980 the Costa Rican economy collapsed as a cause of failed economic policies in the previous decades, a rise in oil expenses and a sharp drop in coffee prices. Further, the violent conflicts in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala shattered regional trade and caused problems relating to the increasing number of refugees. Two years later, however, the economy was recovering. The US was waging a proxy war in Nicaragua, and wanted to use Costa Rica as a showcase of democracy and capitalism. USAID transferred more than a billion dollar into the Costa Rican economy during an eight-year period (Molina and Palmer 2007: 146-148).

As the war between the US sponsored Contras and the Sandinistas intensified, the US also wanted Costa Rica as a southern front. The pressure from the north was intensified through the loyalty of the local media, calling for militarisation to confront the red threat of the Sandinistas. In an answer to the increasing pressure, president Luis Alberto Monge, declared the neutrality of Costa Rica. Still, the government accepted all but one of Washington's demands: they would not "invite" US troops to establish bases in Costa Rica (Molina and Palmer 2007: 150-151). Actions were taken by the US to supply the Contras stationed in Costa Rica with means to defeat the Sandinistas (Seligson 2007: 469).

One of the leaders of the Costa Rica based Contras was Edén Pastora, a former FSLN member who denounced the Sandinista revolution. Known as *El Comandante Zero*, Commandant Zero, he joined the Contras from Costa Rica and launched attacks on civilians, schools and

infrastructure in Nicaragua (Blum 2003: 302). As a result of the war, an increasing number of Nicaraguan refugees fled to Costa Rica and Honduras, both countries paradoxically helping the US in their war against the Sandinistas (Molina and Palmer 2007: 475).

Costa Rican foreign policy took a new turn when Óscar Arias became president in 1986. Seeking to undermine Washington's demands of Costa Rican militarisation and to re-establish regional trade, Arias brokered a peace plan signed by all the five leaders of the Central American countries. Managing this, despite the US concentrated efforts to destroy the Sandinistas, Arias received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 (Molina and Palmer 2007: 152). By 1990, both the Cold War and the Sandinista government had ended. The US therefore halted the money flow to Costa Rica. This combined with a neoliberal economic strategy, caused a deterioration of the Costa Rican welfare state, poverty, strikes and student dropout of universities (Molina and Palmer 2007: 154-156).

New sources of income, such as tourism, have become increasingly important in Costa Rica the past three decades. About 25% of Costa Rica is preserved in national parks, something that the country has promoted in order to attract eco-tourists from North America and Europe. But the country's policy towards nature preservation is ambivalent. Banana cultivation and industry have caused heavy deforestation since the 1970s (Molina and Palmer 2007: 159-161). Recently Costa Rica also agreed to an open-pit gold mine that required the clearing of over hundred acres of forest (Time World 2009). In 2010 the Climate Justice Tribunal judged Costa Rica responsible for the destruction of nature, and the project was stopped (Tico Times 2010).

The 21st century in Costa Rica has been marked by urbanisation, lack of security, increasing differences between classes, competitiveness and consumption. Adding to this, corruption has become widespread in the neoliberal economy. The immigration from surrounding countries has contributed to Costa Rica becoming a multi-cultural country. This new situation, differing from the popular image of Costa Rica as white, peaceful, egalitarian and rural, has resulted in an identity crisis showing itself in pessimism, growing discontent about social inequality and voter participation dropping steeply (Molina and Palmer 2007: 174-177). In a 2012 report, the United Nations' International Narcotics Control Board named Costa Rica, along with Nicaragua and Honduras, one of the most violent regions in the world. This is largely because of the escalating drug-related violence by transnational and local gangs and other criminal groups (INCB 2012: 52).

Legal treaties regarding the San Juan River

A stretch of the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua follows the San Juan River on its way towards the Caribbean Sea. The history of these countries cannot be completely understood without knowing the historical importance of the San Juan River. Both countries have, since their independence, perceived the construction of a canal using the San Juan River as a way to modernity. The advances in technology and transport after the industrial revolution raised expectations among the Nicaraguan elite. By linking the two oceans through a canal, they believed the country would be introduced to European culture and the world economy, as well as bringing internal political struggles to an end. In the context of imperial disputes, the area had by the 1830s considerable geopolitical relevance. Nicaragua looked towards the US for the construction of a canal, while Costa Rica tried to attract British investors. The possibilities associated with the San Juan River fuelled disputes on local as well as global levels, conflicts that became vital in the nation-building projects of both countries (Sandoval-García 2004: 87-88).

The continuous disagreements about the San Juan River culminated in the Caña-Jerez Treaty of 1858. It was created as a solution to growing tensions in the border zone, and establishes the two countries' rights over the river. It states that the border follows the southern bank of the river, meaning that the river is fully Nicaraguan territory and the rights of navigation belong to Nicaragua. The treaty does however allow Costa Rica to navigate the river for purposes of commerce (La Recopilación de Documentos, a).

But the twelve articles of the treaty were not clear enough. Since the San Juan River was a possible candidate for a trans-isthmus canal there were multiple disputes in the years that followed. Thirty years later, US president Grover Cleveland decided to mediate in the conflict. This led to the 1888 Cleveland Award, which establishes that Costa Rica can only navigate the river with commercial vessels, not with military ships (La Recopilación de Documentos, c).

Still, the border remained unclear near the coast, and the US engineer E.P Alexander made a third interpretation of the Cañas-Jerez Treaty in 1897. Both Cañas-Jerez and Cleveland established "Punta de Castilla"⁹ to mark where the border runs into the sea, but the Alexander Award claims that there is no reference to this name in any of the original maps of the San Juan

⁹ See illustration 2 and 4.

bay. Alexander therefore holds that the sea has covered “Punta de Castilla” of 1858, and that the border follows the shore of the harbour situated where the river meets the Caribbean Ocean. The border continues through the first *caño*, river arm it meets, and from there follows the riverbank upstream (La Recopilación de Documentos, b).

During the 113 years between the Alexander Award and the latest conflict, different courts and instances have settled numerous incidents relating to the San Juan River. As late as in 2009 the International Court of Justice ruled that Nicaragua could not tax Costa Rican tourists using the river, but also prohibited the transportation of Costa Rican police on the San Juan waters (ICJ 2009: 269-272). Then, only a year after, Nicaragua started dredging the San Juan River and put troops on the Calero Island.

A core issue in the Isla Calero conflict is the claim of the Alexander Award of the border following the first *caño*. If the first river arm goes through Isla Calero, the disputed tip of this island will belong to Nicaragua. If the river arm is the main flow of the San Juan River, which has been the interpretation since 1897, the disputed area is Costa Rican. Claiming the entire island to be part of their country, Costa Rica states in its application to the ICJ that Nicaraguan troops are violating Costa Rica’s territorial integrity by occupying an area of three square kilometres. An intergovernmental treaty for the preservation of wetlands, called Ramsar, protects Isla Calero. A delegation from Ramsar went to the area and made a report of the damage. On the basis of this, Costa Rica claims that Nicaragua is destroying fragile wetland and primary rainforest as a result of the dredging and the creation of an artificial canal.¹⁰ Costa Rica also states that the dredging will have a major impact on the water flow in the Colorado River¹¹, which is Costa Rican (ICJ 2011: 2-5).

Nicaragua, on the other side, states that the all the activities they are accused of took place on Nicaraguan territory and that they have not, and will not cause any irreparable harm to Costa Rica. A limited number of trees were felled, but these areas will be replanted. Nicaragua also holds that the country is not creating an artificial canal, but rather reopening the natural course of the San Juan River. Referring to Alexander, Nicaragua claims the canal it has cleaned on the Calero Island is the first river arm, *el caño*, thus marking the boundary.¹² The country states that

¹⁰ See illustration 2.

¹¹ See illustration 5.

¹² See illustration 4.

the dredging is necessary because of progressive sedimentation, an action which is an international obligation and which they have the sovereign right to do. Nicaragua also maintains that any debris from the dredging has been set on their side of the newly cleaned river arm. Nicaragua disputes the validity of the Ramsar report, and the claim that Costa Rica has been occupied. Nicaragua does state that troops were assigned to the area to protect staff cleaning the channel, but all remained in Nicaraguan territory (ICJ 2011: 9-10).

Part II
Methods and findings

Introduction to methods and findings

In the next four chapters I will present my methods and findings in more detail. Each chapter includes a method and the findings connected to it.

My fieldwork started in August 2011 and lasted three and a half months. The methods I had planned were reviews of newspaper items and interviews with journalists and people in the conflict zone. Upon arriving in Costa Rica I realised that I needed a point of departure, something to give me an overview of the most important stereotypes in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. I therefore designed questionnaires that I distributed among students in a large public university in Costa Rica. After going through the answers, I used the information as a tool to prepare myself for the interviews in Barra del Colorado, the Costa Rican village closest to the disputed area. Before leaving, I visited Costa Rican newsrooms where I interviewed journalists and gathered newspaper items from the first month of the conflict.

In the beginning of October 2011 I crossed the border to Nicaragua. I started by distributing the questionnaires in a public university. Afterwards I contrasted the information from the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican questionnaires and used this knowledge in my further research. Once in Nicaragua, it became possible to travel down the San Juan River by canoe. This allowed me to observe of the river and the disputed area. This journey also opened for interviewing Nicaraguans close to the disputed island. Before travelling down the San Juan River, one Nicaraguan newsroom was visited and one journalist interviewed.

After finishing my fieldwork I transcribed the interviews. Also the 454 newspaper items gathered from Costa Rican and Nicaraguan newspapers were read through and summarised. This, arguably, is a large amount of data, therefore only the most relevant articles have been included in my review. However, I also found that a count of important stereotypes revealed by the news items is relevant since it indicates the frequency of these stereotypes in the media.

Through combining the information from the questionnaires, interviews, observations and news items, I believe my research questions can be answered with a broad founding. However, as Alan Bryman warns, the coupling of methods may not always result in data that are comparable, even if examining similar issues (Bryman 2003: 64-67). Also, the order in which I conducted my research may have influenced the findings. Reading through the news items after finishing my fieldwork can have caused me to be less informed about certain details of the

conflict while doing other types of research.

As a journalist and student, being objective is the overarching guideline, but as Edward Said mentions, one does not live in a vacuum:

No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society (Said 1979:10).

Therefore the student will to some extent influence any work or research, whether it is by own participation or by choice of variables and groups. During my fieldwork I will necessarily have been affected by the stereotypes I read about or observed myself. As Hall points out, there is usually some degree of truth in all stereotypes, they are mental categories between “reality” and imagination. It is therefore important to maintain a critical distance towards myself and my relation to the stereotypes investigated. One example is that people in Costa Rica told me that Ortega controls all Nicaraguan newspapers. Coming to the Nicaraguan newspaper La Prensa and hearing their criticism of the president was thus a surprise. Being critical towards my own involvement can hopefully help me avoid reading stereotypes into situations where they are not present.

4 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were created in the beginning of my fieldwork, aiming to get an overview of general stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. I used the book *Threatening Others* by Carlos Sandoval-García as a point of departure to select 30 adjectives. My own influence cannot be overlooked as the selection of adjectives is based on what I interpreted to be the most important stereotypes mentioned by Sandoval-García. Hopefully this influence will be diminished through the mixed methods approach of this thesis.

To attempt an equal distribution of positively or negatively loaded adjectives, I classified them as negative, neutral and positive, with 10 adjectives in each category. The categorisation was based on my own understanding of these adjectives, but also on the impressions I got from Sandoval-García's book. The adjectives classified as neutral are not necessarily so, but they are placed in this category because they can be interpreted as both positive and negative. To hide this categorisation from the participants, I alphabetised the adjectives and then changed the places of every other adjective from the top and the bottom (2 and 30, 4 and 28).

I made two different questionnaires. Besides getting an overview of stereotypes, I also wanted to see if personal and public opinion differed. In Group 1, five adjectives for each country were selected based on the participant's own opinion of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans. Group 2 did the same, but selected adjectives based on national stereotypes. No adjectives could be added, but the respondents could choose not to participate. The same questionnaires were used in Costa Rica and in Nicaragua.

I distributed the questionnaires among students in large public universities in the two countries. The majority of young people in Costa Rica and Nicaragua do not have the economic means to pursue higher education. Therefore students in these countries often come from the higher social strata, and they may some day hold influential positions. Taking into account my time frame and resources, I considered a convenience sample of students a pragmatic choice (Bryman 2008: 183).

In Costa Rica the questionnaires were distributed in *Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR)*, San José. In Nicaragua in *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN)*, León. I chose students only from the faculty of Social Sciences. This was done to make the Nicaraguan and

Costa Rican answers easily comparable and because it is an academic field familiar to me. Also, these students may have a rather nuanced perception of the social world. There is often a majority of girls enrolled in such studies. To know if there was a strong majority of one gender participating, the questionnaires asked the respondents to mark their sex. This is not taken into consideration in the results since there was a more or less equal representation of the sexes.

After arrangements with lecturers at the UCR, the questionnaires were distributed in three different classes with the aim of getting an even number of answers in the two groups. In Nicaragua a storm cancelled the UNAN lectures, I therefore distributed the questionnaires at the Social Sciences library. This way, students from a number of sciences were represented. As the library was quite small, I offered questionnaire 1 to half the room, and questionnaire 2 to the other half.

The questionnaires distributed in Nicaragua and Costa Rica were written in Spanish.¹³ For use in this thesis, the adjectives have been translated into English. There is thus a possibility that some of the adjectives have different connotations in the two languages and to the different readers. In Spanish the words *trabajadores* and *consumidores* are both adjectives and nouns. These were best translated to English as nouns, and are therefore written as *workers* and *consumers* in the English translation of the questionnaires.

Some of the respondents did not understand the purpose of the questionnaire. Even if both questionnaires were explained orally and in writing, many participants chose too few or too many adjectives. This could be caused by the layout of the questionnaires, insufficient explanation or poor hearing conditions, particularly in the UNAN library. All questionnaires filled out incorrectly were discarded. The results are presented on the next two pages. The underlined adjectives in each category are the ones with the greatest difference between x and y (Costa Rica/Nicaragua, Nicaragua/Costa Rica).

¹³ See appendix 1 and 2 for the Spanish versions of the questionnaires.

Questionnaires Nicaragua

	Group 1	Group 2
Place of survey:	Library	Library
Participants:	20	24
Incorrect:	3	7
No opinion:	0	0
Total in survey:	17	17
Girls:	11	6
Boys	6	11

	Group 1		Group 2		CR Total	N Total
	CR	N	CR	N		
Positive adj.						
Civilised	3	4	2	1	5	5
Clean	4	1	1	0	5	1
Ecological	7	4	2	10	9	14
Educated	5	6	2	4	7	10
<u>Generous</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>23</u>
Just	0	4	0	4	0	8
Law obedient	2	1	0	1	2	2
Pacifist	0	3	1	2	1	5
Proud	4	10	7	1	11	11
Rich	1	0	2	1	3	1
Neutral adj.						
Americanised	7	1	2	2	9	3
Boring	7	0	2	1	9	1
Consumers	3	1	1	4	4	5
Critical	6	1	6	2	12	3
Determined	0	2	1	1	1	3
Sensitive	0	4	0	6	0	10
Silent	0	2	0	2	0	4
Short	0	1	0	1	0	2
Tall	0	0	1	0	1	0
<u>Workers</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>31</u>
Negative adj.						
Aggressive	0	1	6	1	6	2
Arrogant	8	0	11	0	19	0
Cowardly	1	0	3	0	4	0
Dirty	0	1	2	2	2	3
Egocentric	<u>12</u>	<u>1</u>	6	0	18	1
Poor	0	4	0	7	0	11
<u>Racist</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>0</u>
Uneducated	0	0	1	1	1	1
Untrustworthy	2	0	3	1	5	1
Violent	0	7	7	2	7	9
Sum adjectives	85	85	85	85	170	170

Table 1: Questionnaires Nicaragua

Questionnaires Costa Rica

	Group 1	Group 2
Place of survey:	Psychology	Communications and Social Work
Participants:	20	19
Incorrect:	3	1
No opinion:	1	0
Total in survey:	16	18
Girls:	11	11
Boys	5	7

	Group 1		Group 2		CR Total	N Total
	CR	N	CR	N		
Positive adj.						
Civilised	1	1	7	0	8	1
Clean	0	1	1	0	1	1
Ecological	3	0	11	0	14	0
Educated	4	2	7	1	11	3
Generous	3	5	4	2	7	7
Just	0	0	3	0	3	0
Law obedient	1	0	0	0	1	0
Pacifist	7	1	16	0	23	1
Proud	8	5	6	0	14	5
Rich	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral adj.						
Americanised	8	1	8	0	16	1
Boring	0	0	1	0	1	0
Consumers	9	2	4	0	13	2
Critical	2	0	0	0	2	0
Determined	1	5	1	2	2	7
Sensitive	4	1	1	0	5	1
Silent	0	2	0	1	0	3
Short	2	1	2	1	4	2
Tall	0	1	0	1	0	2
Workers	3	11	7	10	10	21
Negative adj.						
Aggressive	2	7	0	9	2	16
Arrogant	7	3	5	2	12	5
Cowardly	1	0	1	0	2	0
Dirty	1	2	0	7	1	9
Egocentric	6	3	3	0	9	3
Poor	0	9	0	18	0	27
Racist	5	5	1	1	6	6
Uneducated	0	2	0	12	0	14
Untrustworthy	0	4	1	11	1	15
Violent	2	6	0	12	2	18
Sum adjectives	80	80	90	90	170	170

Table 2: Questionnaires Costa Rica

Review of the findings

In Nicaragua all participants in group 1 and the majority in group 2 associate themselves with being workers. This clearly shows a positive connotation to this adjective. Further, the Nicaraguans in both groups consider themselves to be generous and sensitive. Both the Costa Rican groups are describing themselves as americanised and consumers. The adjectives pacifist and ecological have been selected by a much higher percentage of Costa Rican respondents in group 2 than in group 1.

A high percentage of respondents in both the Nicaraguan groups consider Costa Ricans to be racists, nobody thinks Nicaraguans are. In comparison, the Costa Rican groups have answered that both Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans are racists. Moreover, the Nicaraguan groups are describing Costa Ricans as arrogant and egocentric. Both the Costa Rican groups mark Nicaraguans to be poor, aggressive, untrustworthy and violent, these adjectives being more frequently selected by group 2.

The answers of group 1 in both Costa Rica and Nicaragua were relatively spread out among the 30 adjectives. Both Costa Rican and Nicaraguan respondents in group 1 mark many positive adjectives, a moderate number of neutral and fewer negative adjectives for themselves, and this pattern is reversed for the other country. Group 2 in both countries marked fewer adjectives, and prominent stereotypes became easier to distinguish. In group 2, the participants almost exclusively used positive adjectives to describe their own country and negative adjectives to describe the other. The variety of chosen adjectives in group 1 and the grouped answers in group 2 may point to a more nuanced perception of Us and an Other in personal opinion, and a stronger consolidation in national stereotypes.

To single out which stereotypes to look out for, the adjective with the highest difference in representation in each category is selected. This means 12 adjectives in total, six from each pair of groups, plus one extra as two adjectives had a similar difference in representation. It becomes visible that the two groups have chosen the same adjectives in almost all categories. Adjectives about Costa Rica selected by Costa Ricans are: *americanised* and *pacifist*. Adjectives about Costa Rica selected by Nicaraguans are: *egocentric* and *racist*. Adjectives about Nicaragua selected by Nicaraguans are: *generous* and *workers*. Adjectives about Nicaragua selected by Costa Ricans are: *workers* and *poor*.

5 Observations and conversations in the conflict zone

When visiting the villages closest to the conflict zone in both Costa Rica and Nicaragua I wanted to hear the lived experiences people had of the conflict, and if it had affected their relation to their neighbouring country. When finding informants in Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, and in San Juan de Nicaragua, I wanted to have an equal representation of the sexes, as women and men may have different impressions. I also wanted to interview people over the age of 20 to secure a more informed answer, and not having to get a parental permission. Getting an overview of everyone living in the villages and obtaining a random sample was practically impossible. I therefore selected informants by the snowball method, meaning that I contacted people relevant to the research topic and used these to get in touch with others (Bryman 2008: 184). Since virtually everyone in the two villages was relevant to the topic, I went to areas where people were gathering, such as the riverbank, the grocery store and the air plane landing strip, where people would hang out at night in Barra del Colorado.

In Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, I conducted eight interviews in total, four with each sex, ages ranging from 34 to 60. There are many Nicaraguan immigrants living on the Costa Rican border. I therefore intended to interview people from both countries, which ended up being five Costa Ricans and three Nicaraguans. To get as broad a sample as possible, I tried to find people with different occupations, outspoken persons and people that to a lesser degree were opinion holders, such as the hairdresser hidden in a tiny shop. In San Juan de Nicaragua I interviewed three women and two men, all Nicaraguan, ages ranging from 25 to 53. Getting in touch with people was more difficult in San Juan de Nicaragua than in Barra del Colorado, and some people were reluctant to answer questions about the conflict. Therefore I ended up with fewer, but longer interviews.

When working as a journalist, conducting interviews is essentially your job. In order to make focused and understandable news stories it is important to make the questions in advance. With this point of departure, I decided that semi-structured interviews would be the most fitting for this project. Semi-structured interviews open for flexibility in the interview situation while at the same time following certain guidelines (Miller and Brewer 2003: 167).

I planned the questions and topics I wanted to address months in advance and edited them along the way. Since the answers from my informants are used qualitatively, I focused on open

questions that allow the respondent to elaborate on topics. Leading questions were avoided since this may guide the informant's answer in a certain direction (Bryman 2008: 238-244). However, if struggling to get an answer, I would repeat a reply from a previous interview, anonymously, and ask about the interviewee's opinion. Since I was doing all the interviews face to face I could follow up interesting answers as well as rephrase questions if the informant did not understand.

The interviewees of Barra del Colorado and San Juan de Nicaragua were asked about their experience of the beginning of the conflict, if it had any implications for them or their family then, and the situation now. The respondents were also questioned about their opinion about the conflict, which newspapers they had read during the start of the conflict, how the dispute was represented in the news and what they thought were the intentions of the two countries. Further the interview focused upon whether the conflict had changed relations between people in the border zone, future developments and if the interviewees had been in the neighbouring country.

Ethical considerations

All the interviewees were informed orally and signed a written statement about the purpose of the project. It stated the informant's right to choose if the interview should be recorded, that the person could withdraw from the interview and gave them the right to check citations later on.¹⁴ The statement also read that the information would not be used in contexts other than the thesis without the consent of the interviewee. Further it held that the information is anonymous, only country of residence and work will be identified and that all information will be kept in a private computer only accessed by a personal password.

I wanted to record all interviews as this allows for a more thorough examination of what people say. Although notes taken during an interview can be detailed, it is hard to remember the exact wording of the interviewee, which in my project can be of great importance. In radio-journalism I always inform interviewees when I start recording and when I stop. I also did this during my fieldwork interviews. However, the difference between journalism and social research is that the recordings will not be broadcast, and such a precaution is not as urgent. I therefore experienced interviewees telling very interesting stories after the recorder was turned

¹⁴ While this is an important right of the interviewee, very few of my informants had the possibility to check citations since the access to Internet is sparse along the San Juan River.

off. I then took notes and wrote the stories down after finishing the interview. In Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, I recorded five out of eight interviews, because three of the interviewees did not want me to use the recorder. In San Juan de Nicaragua none of the interviews were recorded, because I did not want to ruin the recorder while canoeing. The interviews done without a recorder were all written out in full length right after the end of the interview.

Although the debate about ethical principles is ongoing, and the variety of projects makes it difficult to set a norm, Diener and Crandall identify four issues that should be considered in order not to transgress the ethical boundaries of social research. The first is: do no harm to participants. The second considers the importance of sufficiently explaining the project before the informants give their consent. The third issue treats the possibility of an invasion of privacy and the last issue considers deception, meaning that the research is presented as something other than it is (Bryman 2008: 118-124). The informed consent form, signed by all participants, made sure all interviewees knew the purpose of the interview, guaranteed anonymity and secured the confidentiality of the information. Thus, through this scheme, I believe these four ethical aspects are covered.

Going to the disputed area

While doing interviews in Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica, I also spent time getting to know the area. It was valuable to take part in the village life, seeing the planes circling the disputed area and experiencing people's discussions of whether the plane had seen something new or was only looking for drug traffickers. However, the village was different than expected because it is divided in two parts by the Colorado River. The northern village is situated on the actual disputed island and the southern village on the mainland. This knowledge is important for the interpretation of the interviews because the level of experienced involvement in the conflict was different on the two sides. As the southern village has the airstrip, lodges for sports fishing and a few restaurants, the police and journalists were staying there during the heated days of the conflict. This may be why the four interviewees in the southern village expressed more fear and involvement in the conflict. The main occupation in the northern village is fishing, and the majority living there are Nicaraguan immigrants. Although the fishermen were experiencing problems related to fishing zones after the conflict, the women on the northern side showed little interest in or understanding of the dispute.

Principally the plan was only to visit Barra del Colorado, Costa Rica. But knowing that the San Juan River has been a source of conflict for decades, I decided to get to know it. I rented a guide and a canoe and paddled the 150 kilometres of river from El Castillo down to the Caribbean Ocean and San Juan de Nicaragua. The four-day journey, with a young Nicaraguan man that knew the river as his back pocket, truly broadened my scope for understanding the dispute. Staying with a local Nicaraguan family and in two military camps along the way, gave me first hand impressions of how people live and their relation to the river and to the conflict. Paddling downstream I got to examine the road Costa Rica is building on their side of the river, and I experienced the frustration of the guide over how this may damage the wildlife and beauty of the San Juan River. Further, the canoe trip put the conflict in perspective by seeing the dredging operations, seeing the size of the disputed area, the canal, the military presence along the river and the people stationed in the actual conflict zone.

From previous experience I know that traveling alone as a woman in Latin America can be challenging. I therefore decided to bring along a friend for the visits to the conflict zone. While it is important to be culture-sensitive and open for different mind-sets, the macho culture in many Latin American countries can be experienced as quite intimidating. By bringing along a male companion, I believe I was taken more seriously as a researcher and avoided uncomfortable situations. Although it is still uncertain which country the disputed part of Isla Calero belongs to, there was no personal risk involved in going to the area. Even during the most heated days of the conflict no shots were fired. Therefore I was not worried about security visiting the border towns. Still, drug trading is a common way of making a living in these villages, therefore I was cautious about what I talked about and who I spoke to.

My own involvement as a foreigner, a *gringa*, speaking Spanish with an obvious accent, can possibly have affected the status or credibility of my research. It may also have been perceived as a positive feature since I do not have any particular ties to either country and therefore may be seen as more impartial. Choosing to gather information in Spanish has made the research a bit harder. Albeit speaking Spanish more or less fluently, it is still my third language and the risk of misinterpretation or misunderstandings is higher than in Norwegian or English. Using newspapers as a source of information is therefore a great advantage, it is easier to get the content right in a written text than in radio or television coverage.

Although time consuming, transcribing the interviews was a great way to take a dive back into

the information gathered during fieldwork. Having worked in radio for some time I have had my share of ruined sound recordings from background noise or rooms with echo. Therefore I am careful in the selection of places for interviewing. All of the recordings were of good quality and transcribing the interviews was most of the time without problems. The only problems I encountered were that some of the interviewees were referring to legal words or expressions relating to the conflict that I did not understand at the time, and some of the interviewees were mumbling. A few of the people I spoke to used local Costa Rican or Nicaraguan expressions that were hard to understand.

The words I did not understand were spelled out the way they sounded and underlined. Afterwards I searched the dictionary for words with the same spelling, and a few times a word I had not understood turned up, but most of the time the words were left with a question mark. The transcriptions were done in Spanish, but for use in this thesis all quotes have been translated into English by the author. It has been my focus to keep the translations as accurate as possible. In cases of doubt about the most accurate translation of idioms, expressions or phrases, El Salvadorian MPCT alumni Alberto Valiente Thoresen was consulted. For all direct translations the original Spanish text is included as footnotes. This allows Spanish speaking readers to access the original wording.

Approaching a winding conflict

In the middle of the day, under layers of heavily perfumed Nicaraguan sunscreen and a Caribbean sun that found its way into my pale, Norwegian skin anyway, we were finally there. The yellow canoe, which had been filled to its rim with rice, beans, water and a tent, was almost empty. It had been our life for the past four days, taken us down the winding San Juan River, into small river arms with monkey filled trees and past crocodiles twice its size. And now it was right in front of us, the mission, my mission, what had brought me across the Atlantic, what had been on my mind for the past six months. A swamp. No more and no less, a swamp. The speculations and worries of the media seemed like a distant dream, is this really it? And there, just 40 metres away, the canal constructed by Nicaragua opened up in all its glory, if it is possible to say that about a one meter wide and one meter deep ditch, with vegetation almost covering its entrance. It was unimpressive, but nevertheless meaningful, because now I really had to know why this little piece of water and weeds could provoke such strong sentiments in two neighbouring countries.

My guide points forward and says: Here they are, this is the Sandinista youth camp. They are here to show our presence, he answers when I ask why. A selection of sticks and palm leaves is put together to construct homes for the group of young people hanging out along the riverside. There is laughter, clothes being washed in the river, a fire heating *el almuerzo*, the lunch, which most likely consists of rice and beans, just like breakfast and dinner will do. It is unfrightening. Can this group of youths really be soldiers stationed on a disputed island?

In a Costa Rican river town

In Barra del Colorado, the Costa Rican border town closest to the disputed piece of land, life is moving on like it used to. Almost. I am in the police office. It is a small blue house with bunk beds to house a much larger number of police than usual. Because even though the conflict has been delivered to the International Court of Justice, there is a certain level of distrust. The inhabitants of Barra del Colorado know there are people in the disputed area, and the officer I am talking to is soon going to Isla Calero to keep watch. “Tell me this, señorita, who wants to go and stay in those swamps? Without water, without light, in conditions working against human survival?”¹⁵ he asks me. The boat keeper at the dock is not in any doubt at all: The army is still there working on the canal, they are just dressed up as civilians, he says.

The Sandinista Youth Camp, or the soldiers in disguise, shed light upon something, an indefinable thing lurking in the background. An unspoken uncertainty of what might come next. An insecurity that puts invisible weights on an existence that otherwise follows the slow rhythm of the Caribbean Ocean. Border conflicts are not new to the people living close to the San Juan River, for many they are lived experiences. The war between the Contras and the Sandinistas, and Costa Rica’s involvement, has not been forgotten.

A Costa Rican teacher in Barra del Colorado, whom I meet outside the local *pulpería*, a small grocery store, tells me that the conflict has not caused any shifts in the perception of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. Upon finishing the interview I ask her if she knows any Nicaraguans that I can speak to. She says: You can talk to this guy, and points inside the store. I go inside and ask the guy behind the counter: Ok, so you are from Nicaragua? Both the woman

¹⁵ “Dígame esto, señorita, quien va a querer venir a meterse en estos pantanos? Sin agua, sin luz, con todas las condiciones en contra de la sobrevivencia humana?”

I had interviewed and the cashier break out in laughter: What, do you really think I am Nicaraguan? Do you think I look like I am from there? No, I have got no Nicaraguan blood, I am all Costa Rican, he says.

Later in the day I interview two middle-aged women in northern Barra del Colorado, one a cook selling *almuerzo* from her riverside home, the other a hair dresser on the outskirts of town. Both say they had little to do with the conflict, and with limited information they had not really figured out what it was about. The fishermen at the dock are worried about getting their boats taken by the Nicaraguan military who they claim are moving into Costa Rican fishing zones. One Nicaraguan fisherman, who immigrated to Barra del Colorado as a child, says the money Nicaragua has spent on the conflict should have been used on the Nicaraguan people instead.

The boat keeper, on the other hand, has stronger opinions. He tells me that the US is interested in making a military base in Barra del Colorado because it is a strategic position. He claims Nicaragua knows this, and that dredging therefore has nothing to do with making transport on the San Juan River easier. The conflict is about Nicaragua wanting to show their presence, he continues:

They have never, Nicaragua have never ever been interested in tourism. It is a beautiful country, I know it, it is a beautiful country, but they do not care about it [tourism]. The life is unorganized. They have a very different mentality. In fact, the majority of people that leave Nicaragua for other countries, that I have gotten to know, they change their mentality a lot, I am saying, they are Nicas¹⁶. They do not care about garbage, they contaminate everything. Therefore they do not care about tourism, not at all. They are mostly interested in arms.¹⁷

Living with either the ocean or the river on their doorsteps, the people of Barra del Colorado were aware of any changes, or new appearances at sea. Quite a few of my interviewees had seen large ships, or at least their shadows, out in the water during the conflict. A woman working in the social development unit on the southern shore of Barra del Colorado tells me that the US has had a float of ships guarding the coasts ever since the conflict started, but nobody knows what they are there for, she said. The police officer denies any involvement from the US, and claims that the boats are there to stop drug trafficking. He also says Costa Rica will not aggravate the conflict: “[...] we are a country that will choose peace as the first or last thing

¹⁶ Slang for Nicaraguans, often with a negative connotation when used by Costa Ricans.

¹⁷ “Ellos nunca en la vida, Nicaragua nunca en la vida había interesado turismo. Es un país bonito, yo conozco, es un país bonito, pero a ellos no le interesa. La vida es desordenada. Ellos tiene una mentalidad muy diferente. De hecho, la mayor parte de gente que salen de Nicaragua a otros países yo he conocido, les cambian tanta la mentalidad, estoy diciendo, son Nicas. Porque a ellos no importa basura allí, le contaminan todo. Entonces a ellos nunca le interesa esa cosa de turismo ni nada. Ellos interesa más que todo armamentismo.”

we do. And if anything is left, it will be for peace.”¹⁸ Nicaragua, on the other hand, prefers to have hungry children in the streets, and let the country deteriorate only to keep their army going, the Costa Rican police officer holds.

The animals do not have borders

Back in the San Juan River, we have paddled past the aquatic carnival in San Carlos, created in 2010 to promote Nicaraguan sovereignty, and pink posters saying: “The San Juan River, get to know it, it is ours.”¹⁹ A few times a day we stop at Nicaraguan military checkpoints, sometimes only to show our passports and sign papers, and a couple of times to spend the night in a crocodile-free environment. On one of these nights we are sitting outside, killing armies of mosquitoes, eating rice and beans, and watching the other side of the river. Costa Rica. A big road is being constructed all along the Costa Rican riverbank. One of the soldiers stationed at the base says: I wonder if they are going to make big hotels now when the access gets so easy. I ask him: And then what will happen, another conflict? Ehh, he says, looking towards his fellow soldiers, he knows he is not really allowed to say anything: Maybe, he laughs.

The Costa Rican riverside was already deforested, and it is not getting better by the road-construction. My guide, who has an overarching interest in reptiles, amphibians and birds, is worried. Gazing towards the Costa Rican riverbank, where a flock of parrots is settling in a tree, he says: The animals do not have borders. Although Costa Rica has the right to do whatever they want on their side of the river, the animals can no longer live there, he says.

The fourth day we leave the last military base and the disputed swamp behind, heading downstream towards San Juan de Nicaragua. We have passed floating markets, seen the two dredging boats taking out sediments from the riverbed and stopped in eddies behind steam engines. They are pieces of metal, serving as rusted symbols of the grandeur the river once held. It was the time when east-coasters, with gold in their eyes, took the long journey from New York to San Francisco, the time when the steamboats of the San Juan River were the younger brothers and sisters of Route 66. It was over 150 years ago, but the past is intrinsically connected to the present. I ask my guide why Nicaragua wants this piece of land: I think it is important since we have lost land to both our neighbours, we lost Guanacaste to Costa Rica and

¹⁸ “[...] somos un país que primero esta la paz, después esta la paz y por ultimo estará la paz. Y si queda algo será para la paz.”

¹⁹ “Río San Juan, conócelo, es nuestro.”

we have also lost land to Honduras and Colombia, he answers. And it is perhaps part of the same picture, it is a sense of loss, of things being different from what they were supposed to be, different from what they could have been.

We arrive late and use the main highway through town, the Indio River, to get to our hostel in San Juan de Nicaragua. It is another river town where fishing is the most common way of making money, whether the catch is cocaine or snappers. The owner of our hostel explains more thoroughly the next day: Don't you wonder where all the nice houses here come from when there is no work? The waters outside here are like the Pan-American highway for drug trafficking, this has been a region forgotten by the state, the dollars used to be flowing down here, we did not even use Cordobas²⁰. The trouble we are having now is all because of drug trafficking. There is one family with double citizenship living on the Calero Island, or I mean, the Nicaraguan name is Harbour Head Island, and they are deeply involved in drug trade. Obviously, a family engaged in drugs does not want the military too close. So when Nicaragua started cleaning *el caño*, the canal last year, the family ran to the Costa Rican government and said the country had been invaded. Then the conflict started, the hostel owner says.

Later the same day I walk the cemented streets of the village. People are resting in their rocking chairs behind brightly painted walls. I enter a small grocery store with many empty shelves. The young girl behind the counter explains that because of the conflict they can no longer buy food from Costa Rica. The riverboat transporting Nicaraguan food to the village comes a couple of times a week, she says. I ask her why the conflict started: I don't know what the conflict is about. I have heard the Ticos²¹ want our river, she says.

²⁰ The Nicaraguan currency.

²¹ Slang for Costa Ricans, used by both countries.

6 Journalists and newspapers about the conflict

Before I went to the conflict zone, on both sides of the border, I interviewed journalists and gathered news items from three Costa Rican newspapers and one Nicaraguan. In case of criticism of the media in my interviews in the Caribbean, I wanted to know the points of view of journalists covering the dispute before leaving.

In the Costa Rican newspaper *La Nación*, more than 10 journalists had covered the conflict, but few were available for interviews. After a few days, a journalist who had been to the disputed area at the beginning of the conflict could meet me. In Costa Rican *La Republica* fewer journalists covered the conflict. I got an interview with the journalist that had written most of the articles, which was also the case in Nicaraguan *La Prensa*. When visiting *El Diario Extra* in Costa Rica, none of the journalists that covered the Isla Calero conflict were present. As it was my last day in Costa Rica I could not arrange for later interviews. In Nicaraguan *El Nuevo Diario* my request to visit the newsroom was not answered.

The journalists were asked about what types of articles they had written and what places they had gone to make stories during the beginning of the conflict in 2010. Further they were questioned if they had read Costa Rican/Nicaraguan newspapers, what they thought about the other country's media coverage and their thoughts about the countries' future relations. They were also asked to summarise their own newspaper's point of view on the conflict, and how people from the other country (Costa Ricans/Nicaraguans) were represented in their newspaper during the dispute. In addition, a few questions were asked about ethical regulations for journalists as well as target group and political affiliation of the newspaper. All the interviews with the journalists were recorded.

The conflict from the journalists' points of view

The Costa Rican journalist in *La Nación*, Carlos Arguedas, holds that *La Nación*'s coverage has been very clear regarding the dispute: "I mean, the conflict is artificial, it is something they [Nicaragua] made to solve some internal problems."²² Although he has not read any Nicaraguan newspapers, he believes that *La Nación* has given the Nicaraguan version of the conflict sufficient space by interviewing Nicaraguans and members of the government. The Nicaraguan

²² "O sea, que hay un conflicto que es algo artificial que ellos lo crean para solucionar algo interno."

journalist, Wilder Pérez says that La Prensa has shown that it was unnecessary for the conflict to go this far. He says Nicaragua has taken the initiative to delimitate the border since 1987, following the Jerez-Cañas treaty, but Costa Rica does not want to. He continues:

Costa Rica is using their fame as an environmentalist country, although only two other countries in the world are using more agricultural chemicals than them. The fame of being an environmentalist country, contra the bad reputation of Daniel Ortega, whom we have as president, it is not desirable. Costa Rica is using this to take terrain from Nicaragua.²³

In the Costa Rican newspaper La Republica, Natasha Cambronero claims that Nicaragua invaded Costa Rica and that the invasion still goes on. She has read Nicaraguan newspapers and maintains that: “The Nicaraguan press is controlled by Daniel Ortega, therefore it is understandable that everyone refers to his discourse [...]”²⁴ In Barra del Colorado, however, people are not impressed by the discourse in the Costa Rican media. The boat keeper thinks that the press has made an image of Nicaraguans being just metres away from Barra del Colorado, pointing their guns towards the people. There are a lot of lies told about this conflict, and the people in San José believe them, he says.

Finding and organising newspaper items

Since three Costa Rican media groups own all the newspapers in the country, I chose to gather news items from the biggest newspaper in each group. La Nación claims to be the biggest newspaper in Costa Rica and is directed towards middle to upper classes (Arguedas 2011). La Republica is a financial newspaper with less domestic coverage than La Nación. It is directed towards the upper class and businesses (Cambronero 2011). El Diario Extra has a more tabloid and sensationalist approach, and states that it is the most sold newspaper in Costa Rica. It intends to reach all social layers (Díaz Loria 2012).

In Nicaragua there are two major newspapers. La Prensa which is directed at all levels of society and which is openly in opposition to the current government (Pérez 2011). The other newspaper, El Nuevo Diario claims to be a tabloid newspaper, with general information and a national circulation (El Nuevo Diario 2012). Out of the five selected newspapers, only El Nuevo Diario did not let me enter their archive or do an interview with a journalist. The people

²³ “Costa Rica aprovecha su fama de país ambiental aunque es el tercer país que mas agroquímico usa en el mundo. Esa buena fama de país ambiental contra la mala fama de Daniel Ortega que tenemos como presidente, poco deseable. Entonces Costa Rica se aprovecha de eso para quitarle terreno a Nicaragua.”

²⁴ “La prensa en Nicaragua son de Daniel Ortega, entonces, es entendible que todos se refiere el discurso de Daniel [...]”.

in the reception told me I could buy the newspapers from 2010 at the archive, but it was closed every time I went by. Fortunately the online archive of the newspaper is updated, therefore the online version will be used for El Nuevo Diario.

I collected news items from the first month of the conflict, November 2010. It is a month where the media have covered many important happenings and heated debates about the conflict. During November 2010 the dispute went from uncertainty to claims of intervention, via regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), and was at the end of the month forwarded to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). By looking at texts from 2010 and doing interviews, observations and questionnaires in 2011, the research encompasses a long time period. This can possibly contribute to an idea of the persistency of stereotypes displayed in the context of the conflict.

All news articles, letters to the editor, columns, drawings, editorials, commentaries or any other gathering of words relating to the Isla Calero conflict in Costa Rican and Nicaraguan newspapers, have been included in my sample of texts. Originally I also wanted to gather news items from important dates throughout the winter and spring. After intending this in La Nación and La Republica it became clear that it was hard to find any consistency in the coverage after the first month of the conflict, and fewer people had submitted their opinions. Items from the entire month is included from all newspapers, except El Diario Extra who only has mailed me articles from the first half of November 2010, despite numerous inquiries.

All the archives I visited had sorted old newspapers by the month. I personally went through all sections of the newspapers in search of texts about the conflict. I marked related pages and got these in a PDF-version. I wanted to use the printed version of the newspapers, as opposed to online versions, since the paper version usually is more detailed. In addition, only two of the five newspapers I researched have online-archives that function. The online archive of El Nuevo Diario is organised so that each day of the month can be accessed separately. Online articles are often updated during the day, and in the archive each new version is guarded separately. Therefore only the latest version is included in my selection. Another problem with the online version of El Nuevo Diario is that only news articles have been archived, and one cannot access other texts such as editorials and letters to the editor. Although there are commentaries below some of the online texts, these have not been included. They are omitted because such commentaries are a form of opinion sharing that differs from texts printed in the

actual newspapers, and are thus beyond the scope of this thesis. There are in total 454 texts, out of which 245 are from Costa Rican newspapers and 209 are from Nicaraguan.²⁵

All the texts were read through and summarised. These summaries were used to organize the texts within six subgroups, reflecting criteria or types of information that I, as a reader, look for when I read newspapers. These six categories consider: 1. What happened? 2. Why did it happen? 3. How will it be solved? 4. Who caused it? 5. Who is the victim? 6. Will it happen again?

Since the categories are thematic, the texts within them do not always follow a chronological timeline, but it has been my intention to create six more or less parallel stories. The texts used in the different categories are chosen because they reflect a general theme. If not this is pointed out. The two largest newspapers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, *La Nación* and *La Prensa*, are used the most because they have larger news coverage than the others.

In the media, everything cannot be said in one article, editorial or analysis. Therefore including and excluding facts is a part of the process of transmitting information. The choice of what to include or exclude can be viewed as the writer's own interpretation, a privilege sometimes used deliberately in the media. The readers of a medium absorb this interpretation, each understanding it differently depending on their own horizons of meaning.

Because there is a wide gap between rich and poor in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, opinion sharing through the media is a socially limited arena. The voices transmitted through the media are primarily those of the elites, making the transmitter-receiver relationship of information lopsided. At the time of research, the people contributing to the newspapers were mostly from higher levels of society, such as lawyers, engineers, professors and politicians. This limits the number of opposing voices, while also giving the elites the possibility to influence broad levels of society. Therefore, the articles from November 2010 can only serve as an indicator of how the conflict was perceived in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The next sections aim to present how the Isla Calero conflict was represented in the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan press. The Costa Rican researcher Carlos Sandoval-García has compared

²⁵ Costa Rican newspapers: *El Nuevo Diario*: 39, *La Nación*: 132, *La Republica*: 74. Nicaraguan newspapers: *La Prensa*: 93, *El Nuevo Diario*: 116.

the media coverage of earlier border conflicts in the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican press. He claims that the newspapers were contesting the “official” versions of the other, and also that the countries were divided by nationalistic goals, but paradoxically united by similar discursive strategies (Sandoval-García 2004: 45). This is a pattern recognizable in this conflict as well.

What happened?

This section intends to establish the different points of view of what is happening in the conflict and what it is about. It also includes a few happenings that can be viewed as discursive attacks on the other country.

In the first phase of the conflict, both countries claim to be invaded by armed troops of the other. Early in November the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa* notes that Costa Rica has sent 70 heavily armed troops to the area to keep an eye on the dredging of the San Juan River.²⁶ The Minister of Defence and the chancellor consider the situation to be serious and a violation of sovereignty, but hope it will not lead to an armed conflict (*La Prensa*, 02.11.2010b). The same day the Costa Rican newspaper, *El Diario Extra* informs its readers that more than 50 Nicaraguan troops are in Costa Rican national territory. The Minister of Social Security and the chancellor of Costa Rica say they hope this will be solved peacefully (*El Diario Extra*, 02.11.2010a).

Although both countries hope for a peaceful solution, they are careful to note how armed the other really is. *El Diario Extra* claims that the Nicaraguan army is “armed to their teeth”²⁷ pointing their Russian AK-47 rifles towards the journalist circling the area in a helicopter. The newspaper can also inform that the Costa Rican police use M16 rifles from the United States (*El Diario Extra*, 03.11.2010). On the other side of the river, the Nicaraguan vice-president maintains that the Costa Rican police forces are as well equipped as any army (*El Nuevo Diario*, 01.11.2010).

As this is playing out in the capitals of both countries, the people close to the conflict know little or nothing. From both sides of the border there are reports of fear, as little information reaches the remote villages of Barra del Colorado and San Juan de Nicaragua. Villagers worry

²⁶ According to *La Nación* police presence in the zone increased from 4 to 20 (*La Nación*, 02.11.2010).

²⁷ “Armados hasta los dientes”

about being arrested if going too close to their neighbouring country (La Nación, 04.11.2010b, La Prensa, 04.11.2010b). With frictions in the border zone, memories of the older generation come to life. A group of men living in the San Juan area say: “We do not call for war, but the Costa Rican military mobilization on our border makes us remember: you do not discuss the sovereignty of a people; you defend it with guns in your hands” (El Nuevo Diario, 03.11.2010b).²⁸

Costa Rica’s foreign minister, René Castro, writes a letter to the editor headlined: “An intolerable aggression.”²⁹ He states that Nicaragua is violating the territorial rights and sovereignty of Costa Rica by placing its troops on the Calero Island, an act that puts a fragile environment at risk. This is an intervention, not a border conflict like Nicaragua says, the foreign minister holds (La Nación, 10.11.2010b). Nicaragua officially stops claiming to be invaded by Costa Rica, but maintains that the country cannot invade itself. The National Assembly secures that all Nicaraguan troops are on national ground, and point out that this is the second time all political parties have united to protect national sovereignty. According to the newspaper, this also happened in 1857 when Costa Rica planned to seize El Castillo and the San Juan River (La Prensa, 12.11.2010b).

Incidents that most likely would have passed in silence under normal conditions are given a whole new focus, and sometimes also a new meaning during the conflict. Six military trucks imported by Nicaragua are held back in a Costa Rican port, and later released. This sparks a battle of words about war and peace, militarism and humanitarianism. One newspaper states that the streets in Costa Rica looked like a war scene from Iraq as the convoy of trucks were transported for inspection. Neighbours were “terrified” by the sight of the trucks because of the ongoing conflict with the “pinoleros”³⁰ invading Isla Calero (El Diario Extra, 12.11.2010b).

Further, the Minister of Public Security tells La Nación that if Costa Rica was an authoritarian country, it might have kept the trucks detained. However, releasing the trucks serves to show that Costa Rica is not at war with Nicaragua, the minister says (La Nación, 12.11.2010b). On the other side of the border this is not perceived the same way. The front page of La Prensa the

²⁸ “No instamos a la guerra, pero la movilización militar de Costa Rica en nuestra frontera nos lleva a recordar: la soberanía de un pueblo no se discute; se defienden con las armas en la mano.”

²⁹ “Una agresión intolerable”.

³⁰ Pinolero is a colloquial term for Nicaraguans. The word is derived from the roasted and ground corn flour Pinol.

same day reads: “Serious provocation by Costa Rica.”³¹ The newspaper claims that the previously mentioned Costa Rican minister apparently is trying to include Nicaragua in his hostile strategy, and this in the midst of a controversy between the countries. Nicaragua has, according to the newspaper, used these trucks for humanitarian purposes since 1989 (La Prensa, 12.11.2010a).



Illustration 6: A Costa Rican matador (La Prensa, 12.11.2010c)

As the conflict continues without a solution, worries of a military escalation are frequently transmitted in the media. A Costa Rican newspaper claims that Nicaragua has created a camp housing over 600 soldiers with armed helicopters and boats (El Diario Extra, 12.11.2010a). Later in the month, La Nación says that the Nicaraguan army has created a new camp on the San Juan River, only 200 meters from Costa Rican ground. In the process, trees in the UNESCO protected reserve Indio Maíz have been cut down. There are also signs saying: “The San Juan River is Nicaraguan”³² seen by a Costa Rican journalist from a hill on the other side of the river, the newspaper claims (La Nación, 21.11.2010a). The next day, Nicaraguan El Nuevo Diario answers that the military camp in reality is a memorial site where Sandinistas and their families can go to remember their fallen heroes. The newspaper claims that people along the river are worried about the chain of lies and the xenophobia that Costa Rican media transmit (El Nuevo Diario, 22.11.2010c).

Why did it happen?

This section seeks out the news items that cover the reasons for the dispute, speculations about it or justifications for its necessity. This conflict, like most others, is complex. The reason for its

³¹ “Costa Rica con grave provocación”.

³² “El río San Juan es nica”.

existence cannot be answered in a single sentence, or even a single paragraph, and there is never only one answer.

A reoccurring issue is the dredging of the San Juan River, which Nicaragua started before placing military forces on Isla Calero. The dredging is disputed on the base of environmental claims by Costa Rica, and defended as a means for economic development by Nicaragua. Each viewpoint reflects a desired national image, Costa Rica as an ecological defender, Nicaragua as a country beginning to be developed. In addition to the sediments left on Isla Calero, a disputed aspect is that the dredging can divert water from Costa Rica into Nicaragua. Two Costa Rican specialists in International Law believe that such a scenario will be the worst natural damage Costa Rica can suffer. They claim that since Nicaragua has not informed its southern neighbour about its activities the country does not follow international law like other civilized countries do (La Nación, 01.11.2010). But an international law expert in Nicaragua sees it differently. He believes the reason Costa Rica does not like the dredging is the possibility of Nicaraguan economic development in the Caribbean, which can affect Costa Rican tourism (La Prensa, 08.11.2010a).



Illustration 7: River man (La Republica, 16.11.2010a)

“What we need to dredge here is foolishness and lack of common sense”

Continuing, the disputed images of being ecological or developed are taken to another level by the variety of theories about the possible economic or geopolitical gains of the conflict. A political analyst in Nicaragua believes that populous regions in Costa Rica might lack water in the future. This is why Costa Rica wants to access the water from Lake Nicaragua, he states (El Nuevo Diario, 05.11.2010). La Prensa informs that Koreans are interested in making a deep-water harbour on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua (La Prensa, 02.11.2010a). A Costa Rican analysis states that it makes sense for Nicaragua to increase their presence in the border zone, considering that US naval ships have been allowed to use Costa Rican ports since 2009. The

author says that Costa Rica cannot be sure where or when the Nicaraguan army will stop their invasion. Costa Rica should therefore analyse the possibilities for making the Police Force more robust (La Republica, 11.11.2010).

La Republica republishes an article from the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. It speculates that Iran and Venezuela are planning to make a canal through Nicaragua. In order to do this, Nicaragua needs to control the southern riverbank of the San Juan River, which belongs to Costa Rica (La Republica, 12.11.2010a). In a letter to the editor later in the month a Costa Rican writes: “Costa Ricans: the danger of the Iranian regime is not a problem that others have to deal with, neither is it far from our country. It is a real threat and very close to Costa Rica, it is on our northern border” (La Republica, 23.11.2010a).³³

Further, a Costa Rica oceanographer maintains that Nicaragua wants to make their big lake into a giant hydroelectric dam. Nicaragua has chosen Isla Calero as the location for a hydroelectric press because of sedimentation elsewhere. He also holds that 90% of the water normally flowing towards the Caribbean Ocean will be directed towards the Pacific Ocean, which will cause irreparable harm to the environment (La Nación, 17.11.2010a). In Nicaragua, people in the San Juan area are alerted by the visit of a Brazilian construction company that measured the riverbank of the San Juan River. The people in the area demand to know the truth and are deeply worried about the ecological impact. They wonder why the president is dredging the river and at the same time planning a hydroelectric press (El Nuevo Diario, 27.11.2010a and 28.11.2010).



Illustration 8: “Googling the border” (La Nación, 07.11.2010)

³³ “Costarricenses: el peligro del régimen iraní no es un problema de otros ni lejano a nuestro país. Es una amenaza real y muy cercana a Costa Rica, nada menos que en nuestra frontera norte.”

After becoming an unexpected protagonist in the dispute, Google states that they recognize the error, but that their maps are not official and that foreign policy should not be based on their services (La Nación, 6.11.2010). About a week later they change the borderline to the position given on official maps of Costa Rica. Nicaragua sent a request asking them not to, the Costa Rican newspaper claims (La Nación, 13.11.2010b). The Nicaraguan historian and geographer Jaime Incer Barquero says that Google never places a border without consulting official documents first. The newspaper also informs that the Google office of Central America is placed in Costa Rica and is run by Costa Ricans (La Prensa, 11.11.2010). “Will Google cause the invasions of the future?”³⁴ a Costa Rican asks rhetorically in a letter to the editor, and answers that the thought itself is absurd. But such frivolous and outrageous arguments seem to be valid in Nicaragua, he claims. Costa Ricans like Nicaraguans, but they need leaders focused on the national good, not maniacs sponsored by other countries, the author writes (La Republica, 15.11.2010a).

There are other sides to the conflict as well, and these consider issues that have roots in the borders of a country and in the boundaries of a people. It is about the Nicaraguan image of Costa Rica as transgressing boundaries, and the shared image of Nicaragua as a democracy falling apart. On the northern side of the San Juan River, president Ortega maintains that Costa Rica never gives up the hope of owning the San Juan River. The president claims that:

Costa Rica has continued to escalate its warmongering message, even though they say they do not have an army. It was even the Costa Ricans who broadcast the news about its well-equipped troops boarding airplanes, Rambo-style. Our troops have moved in a simple and humble fashion (El Nuevo Diario, 02.11.2010).³⁵

This is supported by a Nicaraguan historian who claims it has always been the interest of Costa Rica to steal San Juan from Nicaragua, just like they did with Guanacaste (El Nuevo Diario, 03.11.2010a). A Nicaraguan expert in the National Defence also states that Costa Rica always has had expansionist intentions. He also considers that Ortega can cover up problems within the country by drawing attention towards the dredging of the San Juan River (La Prensa, 07.11.2010). On numerous occasions the Costa Rican president Laura Chinchilla informs that Costa Rica does not want the river. She also states that Costa Rica does not dispute the dredging, only the sediments left on Costa Rican ground (El Diario Extra, 11.11.2010b).

³⁴ “Causará Google las invasiones del futuro?”

³⁵ “Costa Rica ha continuando escalando en su mensaje belicista a pesar que dice que no tiene ejército, pero ellos mismos se encargaron de difundir cuando sus tropas elites se estaban montando en los aviones muy bien apetrechados, al estilo Rambo. Nuestras tropas se han desplazado al estilo muy sencillo, humildes.”

The ex-president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Oscar Arias attempts to put things straight in a letter to the editor in Nicaraguan *La Prensa*. He says that the conflict is not about the sovereignty of either state, because it is well defined that the San Juan River belongs to Nicaragua. The conflict is about the re-election of Ortega, but more importantly, it is about Nicaraguans losing their sovereignty as a people. Therefore, the recurrent conflict is no more than an old movie in black and white where Ortega has replaced Somoza, Arias claims (*La Prensa*, 17.11.2010c). An editorial in *La Nación* holds that Ortega's perverse conduct, amorality and mental instability is what makes it possible to, in the end, justify all means and rob the Nicaraguan state of democratic institutions. And this will make it possible for him to be re-elected (*La Nación*, 11.11.2010b).



Illustration 9: “The only state council” (La Prensa, 17.11.2010e)

“Of the dictator and his partner (in plenary).”

That the conflict occurred one year before elections seems anything but accidental to most commentators in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The dredging of the San Juan River is not an attempt to make the river the transatlantic highway it used to be, but rather a way for Ortega to gain votes, the *Economist* states in an article reprinted in Costa Rica (*La Nación*, 12.11.2010a). A Nicaraguan writes that he got jealous when watching the Brazilian elections. It is all transparent, people vote with confidence, and whoever wins, wins. In Nicaragua the problem is that the Supreme Court is ready to let losers win, if it is necessary. The Nicaraguan elections are prehistoric, the author writes (*La Prensa*, 04.11.2010c).

How will it be solved?

This section considers the different diplomatic rounds between the two countries and how these efforts are displayed in the media. It starts out with meetings in the Organization of American States (OAS) and the leader, José Miguel Insulza, coming to both countries to discuss a

possible solution. In Nicaragua it is questioned why Costa Rica skipped bilateral discussions and went straight to OAS (La Prensa, 04.11.2010a). Many articles claim that Costa Rica is afraid of delimitating the border (La Prensa, 06.11.2010b). In Costa Rica there are expressed worries about Ortega wanting to go to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which can allow Nicaragua to be present in the area for years while the court makes its decision. Further, Nicaragua is described in the Costa Rican media as an obstacle to peace and agreement by keeping its troops on the disputed island (La Nación, 04.11.2010a).

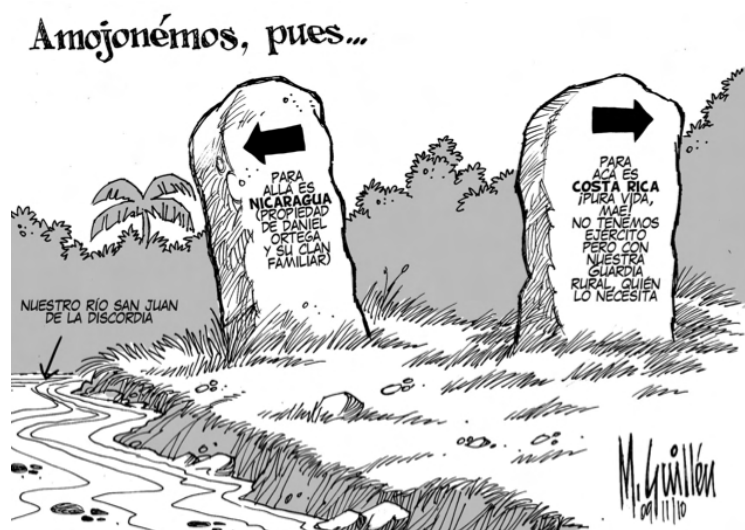


Illustration 10: “Let’s place the boundary marks” (La Prensa, 10.11.2010e)

“This way is Nicaragua, (Property of Daniel Ortega and his family clan).”

“This way is Costa Rica. Pura Vida Man! We do not have an army, but who needs one with our rural police.”

“This is our San Juan River of disagreement.”

Although both countries claim to want a diplomatic solution, they take turns in working against the other through OAS. Insulza visits the two countries, flies over the disputed area and listens to the two versions of the conflict. Before returning to Costa Rica, he informs that a new delimitation must be done, according to the legal treaties. This view coincides with that of Ortega (La Prensa, 08.11.2010a). “You can delimitate OAS”³⁶, writes a Costa Rican in a letter to the editor directed towards Insulza: “It is not clear which moment [...] the Holy Spirit came down and enlightened his bald head with the idea that delimitating the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica is the best thing to do.”³⁷ The author claims the Washington Post was right in calling Insulza a socialist who compromises democracy by supporting left-winged leaders (La Republica, 09.11.2010).

Many more join the debate whose message is to discredit both OAS and its leader Insulza. A

³⁶ “Amojonar la OEA”

³⁷ “No está muy claro en que momento [...] el Espíritu Santo bajó hasta su calvicie y le iluminó que lo mejor era amojonar la frontera entre Nicaragua y Costa Rica.”

political analyst calls Insulza an accomplice of dictators (El Diario Extra, 10.11.2010) and an editorial in the same paper holds that OAS lacks teeth. By not classifying the conflict as an invasion, but merely as a border dispute Insulza protects Nicaragua, which is the invader. Is OAS useful at all? the editorial questions (El Diario Extra, 11.11.2010a). In Nicaragua, the press react to the Costa Rican criticism towards the secretary general of OAS. One newspaper considers that Chinchilla, in an interview with CNN, has an aggressive discourse and “does not lack the desire”³⁸ to attack Nicaragua, only the means (El Nuevo Diario, 10.11.2010).



Illustration 11: The Costa Rican OAS representative (La Prensa, 10.11.2010d)

Both countries extensively report the many meetings in OAS, but the impression given in the newspapers is a self-centred one, with little space given to know or understand the other party. Costa Rica gives Nicaragua 48 hours to pull out their troops off Isla Calero, and maintains that the failure to comply can cause sanctions or a break of diplomatic relations. La Nación states that there was laughter when Costa Rica showed a movie about Google and the border confusion. Diplomats were joking about being careful when using GPS in the future, the newspaper says (La Nación, 10.11.2010a). In Nicaragua the mentioned video is reported as “unfruitful” and that the Nicaraguan delegates were successful against the poor arguments of Costa Rica (La Prensa, 10.11.2010a). A few days later Nicaragua presents a film showing that Costa Rican police really are heavily armed (La Prensa, 13.11.2010).

Nicaragua is given another 24 hours to remove troops, after which Insulza suggests four points to solve the conflict: 1. Continue the bilateral dialogue. 2. Continue the work for a delimitation of the border. 3. Remove troops from any area where they can cause tension. 4. Cooperate to prevent organized crime, weapons and drug trafficking in the border zone. A majority of the OAS countries vote in favour. Nicaragua, however, does not vote because of point number 3,

³⁸ “Ganas no le faltan”

and is accompanied by Venezuela, Guyana and Bolivia. Costa Rican La Nación quotes the Nicaraguan ambassador to OAS saying: this is the start of a new empire, the Costa Rican empire (La Nación, 13.11.2010a).

The next day Ortega says the OAS session was “manipulated” by Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Mexico, in order to maintain drug trafficking in the Caribbean. He also claims drug traffickers to control Costa Rican foreign policy. Not stopping there, the Nicaraguan president manifests that his country should have the right of navigation on the Costa Rican Colorado River (La Prensa, 14.11.2010a).³⁹ It did not take long for reactions to come, the governor of Mexico sent a letter of protest and the governor of Costa Rica says this shows a disrespect for peace and understanding, but that Costa Rica still hopes the conflict will be solved diplomatically (La Nación, 15.11.2010a). In Nicaragua reactions are also strong, an expert in security rejects Ortega’s statements and holds that this proves how little the president knows about organized crime and drug trafficking (El Nuevo Diario, 17.11.2010).



Illustration 12: “The Diplomacy of the Butcher” (La Prensa, 15.11.2010b)

“Who needs the Organisation of American States? A bunch of countries contaminated by drug trafficking!”

“Our constitution, rule of law, political rights.”

A couple of days after the drug accusations, Ortega announces that Nicaragua no longer wants to go to OAS meetings, since they consider the organization inadequate to solve the dispute. The case has to be treated in ICJ, the president states (La Prensa, 16.11.2010). Many Nicaraguans start worrying about their international reputation as a rebellious country. In a column a Nicaraguan asks if it is necessary to discredit OAS in order to save Nicaraguan sovereignty? If we had accepted the resolution we would have started the delimitation, is not that what we want? Or is it something else? Is it now unpatriotic not to vote for Ortega? the author asks (La Prensa, 18.11.2010).

³⁹ See illustration 5.

In the days that follow Costa Rica orders the capture of Edén Pastora on charges of environmental destruction (La Nación, 18.11.2010). Costa Rica also decides to try the case in the International Court of Justice on the matters of violation of sovereignty and stopping forest in Isla Calero from being cut down by “squads” of Nicaraguans every day (La Nación, 19.11.2010a). Even though Costa Rica does not mention the dredging in their charges, the Nicaraguan representative to ICJ states: “The fact that Costa Rica wants to stop Nicaragua from dredging the river is obviously an absurd and illegal matter.”⁴⁰ He continues saying that Costa Rica’s new “battlefront” proves Nicaragua right in declaring OAS as the wrong instance for solving the conflict, and that the southern neighbour is victimising itself for not having an army. They just do not want Nicaragua to take back its river, he concludes (La Prensa, 20.11.2010). The Costa Rican representative to ICJ believes that Nicaragua will comply with a resolution. If they choose not to, they will pay a high prize like Iran and North Korea do, he says (La Nación, 22.11.2010a).



Illustration 13: Brain (La Republica, 19.11.2010c)

“La Machaca is hopefully awaiting that the leaders in the Nicaraguan government start using this organ!”

¡La Machaca aguarda con esperanza, que los dirigentes gubernamentales de Nicaragua, pongan a funcionar este órgano!

It is not only diplomats that disagree about what the outcome should be, also lawyers, historians, geographers and oceanographers see the dispute differently. Both countries consider themselves as being the one with the law and with history on their side. Regarding the borderline, Costa Rica has always won over Nicaragua in international tribunals, a Costa Rican lawyer writes. The limit was set definitely by the Alexander Award in 1897, which states that the southern riverbank is Costa Rican. Nicaragua has accepted this for 113 years. In addition,

⁴⁰ “Obviamente la pretensión de Costa Rica de que Nicaragua no puede dragar el río es una cuestión completamente absurda e ilegal.”

Isla Calero is marked as Costa Rican in Nicaraguan official maps, on what grounds is Nicaragua claiming it now? he asks (La Nación, 17.11.2010c).

The Nicaraguan historian and geographer Jaime Incer Barquero explains why in an article in La Prensa. Geographical changes in the mouth of the river have caused Isla Calero to appear where there was previously only water. These changes are mainly caused by the Costa Rican destruction of forest in order to plant bananas, citrus and oil palms, which cause a lot of sedimentation. The Alexander Award says the limit follows *el primer caño*, the first river arm, and this is the one Nicaragua have cleaned in Isla Calero, the historian maintains (La Prensa, 11.11.2010). A Costa Rican letter to the editor wonders why Nicaragua, if in doubt of the ownership, did not address the issue of Isla Calero during the last round in ICJ in 2009 (La Republica, 16.11.2010b).

Who caused it?

Although the journalistic goal is to be objective, it is hard to look away from the fact that also the media take sides and place blame, especially when it comes to conflicts. During the period of research, Costa Rican journalists and other contributors to the newspapers were often mentioning two names as the source of it all. As one editorial puts it: “Commandant Ortega is one of those people who throw the rock and hide their hand, but even worse, he goes out afterwards and says that someone else threw it at him” (El Diario Extra, 02.11.2010b).⁴¹



Illustration 14: “I do like these little games” (La Republica, 19.11.2010b)

⁴¹ “El comandante Ortega es como esas personas que lanzan la piedra y esconden la mano, pero aún peor, luego sale diciendo que se la tiraron a él.”

In a letter to *La Nación* a person writes that Eden Pastora: “Is now biting the Costa Rican hand that gave him food.”⁴² Pastora used to fight Ortega along these borders, and now he is all of a sudden his best friend. Costa Rica helped Pastora and gave him food through the Sandinista war and the Contra war. If he has forgotten where the border is he should borrow a map in a library, because maps do not lie, the author writes (*La Nación*, 04.11.2010d). Nicaraguan Ex-minister of Education compares the conflict to the instatement of the second Somoza in Nicaragua in 1957. At that time, in order to unite the country, it was alleged that 38 Nicaraguan soldiers had been killed by Honduran troops on the border (*La Nación*, 23.11.2010). The conflict is also compared to the Falkland War in a Costa Rican column, where the author says that invented border conflicts by the military is nothing new, but it is sad that the people still mobilize to favour it (*La Republica*, 08.11.2010).



Illustration 15: Edén Pastora (La Prensa, 24.11.2010b)

“If we have a bachelor saying he is “governing” the country...Why cannot I be a hydraulic engineer and dredging expert?”

“Zero to the left”

The Nicaraguan newspapers are a bit more diverse in their explications. An editorial in *La Prensa* states that there is no doubt about Ortega’s gains from the conflict, but maintains that the disputed area is Nicaraguan. The editorial claims that both governors have made mistakes, especially Ortega by pulling out of OAS, claiming neighbouring countries to be drug affiliated and putting a military commandant and not an engineer in charge of the dredging (*La Prensa*, 17.11.2010b). A Nicaraguan reader, among many, writes in a letter that violating sovereignty is as bad as violating constitutional rights, and any person doing this should be declared and treated as a traitor, which is what Ortega is (*La Prensa*, 10.11.2010c).

⁴² “Ahora muerde la mano tica que le dio de comer.”



Illustration 16: “Sovereignty and ‘sovereigns’” (La Prensa, 23.11.2010)

“Harbour Head: For my land I will live my life! (Even if it is a swamp)”

“Ortega’s dictatorship: Uy!”

But not only Daniel Ortega and Edén Pastora, are viewed as troublemakers. In Nicaragua, many consider the Costa Rican expansionism to be the root of the conflict. The Nicaraguan ambassador to ICJ holds that every time there are plans to clean or dredge the river, the problems with Costa Rica start. “What do you think about Costa Rica constantly stating that Nicaragua has invaded their country, and also the constant calls for peace, selling the idea that Nicaragua is a warmongering country?”⁴³ La Prensa asks him. He answers: Just do a search in Google and you will see who spends the most on their military forces.⁴⁴ I think it is ironic that they are acting like this towards us. We are in our own country, this is no attack on Costa Rica. Unfortunately, all the problems we have had come from the possibility of making a canal. There is a lot of interest in our river and our lake, the ambassador says (La Prensa, 15.11.2010a).

Yet another letter to the editor claims that throughout history Costa Rica has always talked about its “natural borders”, managing to annex both Nicoya and Guanacaste, always getting closer to San Juan and Lake Nicaragua (La Prensa, 24.11.2010a). The Nicaraguan journalist, Wilder Pérez states that Costa Rica has expanded its borders and made a big circle around itself:

[...] Costa Rica has always been a country that likes to, well, be big. They have borders with Ecuador, for example, which they should not have. He, he. They have borders with Colombia, which they should not have. Panama lies between. So, we call this a very, very, very expansionist country.⁴⁵

⁴³ “Qué piensa usted sobre esa constante aseveración de Costa Rica de que Nicaragua invadió a su país y también sobre los constantes llamados a la paz vendiendo la idea de que Nicaragua es un país guerrerrista?”

⁴⁴ CIA Factbook claims both Costa Rica and Nicaragua to spend 0.6 % of GDP on the military (CIA Factbook 2012). SIPRI lists that Costa Rica spends less than 0,05% and Nicaragua 0,7% of GDP (SIPRI 2012).

⁴⁵ “[...] Costa Rica que siempre ha sido un país que le gusta mucho, pues, ser grande, tiene fronteras con Ecuador, por ejemplo, no debería. He, he. Tiene frontera con Colombia, no debería. En medio esta Panamá. Entonces, es un país muy, muy, muy expansionista le llama.”

An editorial in the Costa Rican newspaper *El Diario Extra* suggests that someone should give Ortega history classes, because everyone knows that Guanacaste was a separate province that chose to belong to Costa Rica. Also, according to the limits set by the Spaniards, all of Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, as well as the San Juan River belonged to Costa Rica. "And just to make it hurt even more, the source of all this information is no less than Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, their national hero", the editorial states (*El Diario Extra*, 09.11.2010).⁴⁶

Who is the victim?

This question is naturally linked to the previous because it is through comparing actions one decides what is good or bad, right or wrong. In the news items researched the two countries were constantly compared. The authors of news items were evaluating and re-evaluating who were morally superior and who were the wrongdoers.

During the conflict, many Costa Ricans think the process of reaching a solution is too slow. Suggestions are made towards strengthening the police or to use other means to stop the conflict. The Costa Rican president, Laura Chinchilla rules out such options and says that: "[...] the vocation for peace, it is something almost genetic, it is in the DNA of our people" (*La Nación*, 11.11.2010a).⁴⁷ Nevertheless voices are calling for the borders to stop accepting Nicaraguan immigrants, and to limit the amount of remittance Nicaraguans can send to their families. If borders close during Christmas, this will affect all the Nicaraguans going home during the holidays, a Costa Rican journalist holds (*La Republica*, 13.11.2010). The many rumours of closed borders cause Nicaraguans to stay in Costa Rica, fearing that they will not be able to return, Nicaraguan news report (*El Nuevo Diario*, 22.11.2010a).

In a column a Costa Rican writes that the conflict is a way to show the world why Costa Rica is an example to follow, why they have chosen liberty and not oppression, why reason is worth more than the demagoguery of the ignorant, and why a pencil in a child's hand is more powerful than arms. And the writer concludes: "We are demonstrating that we are a small republic that was born to be giant" (*La Republica*, 12.11.2010b).⁴⁸ A Costa Rican lawyer, on the other hand, states that it is time for Costa Ricans to admit that they are not Caucasian, that the country is

⁴⁶ "Y para que le duela más, la fuente de toda esta información es nada más y nada menos que Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, su héroe nacional."

⁴⁷ "[...] la vocación de paz, que es algo casi genético, está en el ADN de nuestro pueblo."

⁴⁸ "Demostremos por qué somos un pueblo pequeño, que nació para ser gigante".

not developed and not the Switzerland of Latin America. He writes the reason Costa Ricans give Nicaraguans work is not that Costa Ricans are generous or angel-like, it is because the country benefits from it. In the social media Isla Calero, a swamp, has been turned into a magical land with elves and unicorns. Many people have put the Costa Rican flag in their Facebook profile picture, is that really being patriotic? the author asks. During these weeks Costa Ricans have proved that they are not pacifist, they have rather reflected what an egoistic and closed society is able to think and say (La Nación, 25.11.2010).



¡Las tropas costarricenses listas para invadir tierras nicas!

Illustration 17: “The Costa Rican troops ready to invade Nicaragua!” (La Republica, 15.11.2010b)

But symbolic actions are important at times when the national image is threatened, and both countries use them. In the Costa Rican capital, 4000 children dressed in white, teachers, athletes and families march under the slogan: “We have the right to live in peace.” (La Nación, 13.11.2010c).⁴⁹ The same day Nicaraguan El Nuevo Diario notes that Chinchilla gains benefits from the march, and that the children participating were unaware of the conflict (El Nuevo Diario, 13.11.2010b). A couple of days later, Nicaraguan students march in support of the sovereignty of the San Juan River with signs saying: “Costa Ricans are gay, the San Juan River is Nicaraguan” (La Prensa, 17.11.2010a).⁵⁰

According to Costa Rican statistics from 2008 there are about a quarter of a million Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica (INEC 2008). The Costa Rican journalist Carlos Arguedas estimated the number of Nicaraguan immigrants to be about one million during our interview in 2011. Regardless of the actual numbers, or the Costa Rican perception of it, immigration between the countries complicates matters. According to the UN Human Development Index

⁴⁹ “Tenemos derecho a vivir en paz.”

⁵⁰ “Ticos, maricas, el río San Juan es nica”

from 2011, which intends to measure living standards through different variables, Nicaragua is ranked as number 129. Almost halfway to the top is Costa Rica at number 69 (UNDP 2011). As the salaries are twice as high, there are few Costa Ricans who emigrate to Nicaragua to work. The main exchange of people from Costa Rica to Nicaragua is through tourism.

This lopsided relationship also affects the presentations of the conflict in the media. Because the dispute is not only between states, it is also inside Costa Rica. After a Molotov cocktail is thrown at the Nicaraguan embassy in Costa Rica (El Nuevo Diario, 13.11.2010a), the media show an increased awareness of the xenophobia following the conflict. A Costa Rican journalist writes that she has never harvested coffee and never grown an orchid, and she does not think these symbols of Costa Rica are “the best in the world.” She likes Argentinian tango, and Nicaraguan beer better: “Frankly, I am embarrassed to live in a country without an army where people die of laughter if someone imitates how Nicaraguans speak. I think the xenophobia that for years has characterised many Costa Ricans is as deplorable as Ortega’s arguments.”⁵¹ Are Costa Ricans really respectful, tolerant and pacific when they give Nicaraguans the jobs they do not want? It is hypocritical, she concludes (La Nación, 16.11.2010).

In the same fashion a Nicaraguan journalist notes that words can hurt more than bullets, and hopes that this “war of words” will come to an end. So far there has been no Nicaraguan attack on the Costa Rican embassy, Nicaraguans have not tried to tell Costa Ricans that they are less worthy, he states. But in their eyes we are: “[...] victims of impurity, while they are blessed by the grace of being an extract of European aristocracy. They are descendants of the crown, while we are ‘sons and daughters of corn.’”⁵² Only with mutual respect can this be solved, he states (La Prensa, 17.11.2010d). From both countries there are also calls for reconciliation, one Costa Rican writes that people from the two countries should unite since the conflict is only a show of politics and economic interests (La Nación, 21.11.2010b). In Nicaragua the evangelical community calls for peace, and that Costa Rica should be treated with respect (El Nuevo Diario, 16.11.2010).

⁵¹ “A mí, francamente, me da mucha vergüenza vivir en un país sin ejército donde la gente se parte de risa cuando alguien imita la forma de hablar de un nicaragüense. Me parece que la xenofobia que ha caracterizado a muchos costarricenses por años es tan lamentable como los argumentos de Ortega.”

⁵² “[...] victimados por la impureza nosotros y bendecidos ellos por la gracia de ser el extracto de la aristocracia europea. Descendientes de la corona ellos, “hijos del maíz” nosotros.” The phrase “sons and daughters of corn” is part of the indigenous mythology in the area. This mythology claims that people are made from corn (Rojas 1999).

As the dispute started when Costa Rica claimed Nicaragua to be cutting down trees and putting sediments from the San Juan River in Costa Rican territory, the question of environmental protection is central. And perhaps side-lined with the desire to protect nature, lays the desire to protect the national image. Ex presidential candidate of Costa Rica, Ottón Solís, claims that the Nicaraguan invasion is not only attacking the land and the people, it is also attacking Costa Rican environmentalism (La Nación, 15.11.2010b). However, less than one week earlier, Nicaraguan news inform that the Climate Justice Tribunal for Central America has judged Chinchilla responsible for favouring transnational capital by facilitating the construction of an open-air mine. The mine can cause pollution of the water in the San Juan River as well as neighbouring communities, it violates social and cultural rights and destroys farming ground, the resolution holds. Although not binding, it was a moral hit for Costa Rica, which sells itself as an environmentalist country, the newspaper states (La Prensa, 10.11.2010b).



Illustration 18: “Asserín, asserán, the timber of...Isla Calero” (La Republica, 20.11.2010)

A Costa Rican sedimentologist and environmental geologist says that the actions of Nicaragua in the San Juan River will rupture the environmental equilibrium and alter natural currents in the Caribbean. This will have consequences for flora and fauna, animals threatened with extinction and the people living there. He calls for the action of environmentalist groups (La Nación, 14.11.2010). So does another reader who thinks the silence of the environmental groups is suspicious. “Where are the environmentalists? [...] “Has Chavez got them silenced?”⁵³ he asks (La Nación, 19.11.2010b). In Nicaragua environmentalist groups have examined the zone and conclude that there has been no environmental damage as a cause of the dredging. Quite on the contrary they hold that Costa Rica is deforesting their side of the river. The director of one of the organisations says water from Costa Rican rivers is dirtier than water

⁵³ “¿Es que Chávez los tiene silenciados?”

from Nicaragua, and claims: “I think there are double standards in the focus on environmental preservation of our southern neighbour” (El Nuevo Diario, 27.11.2010b, La Prensa, 27.11.2010).⁵⁴

Will it happen again?

“The river again!”⁵⁵ is the title of a Costa Rican opinion. The author writes that she refuses to believe that there will be another hundred years of discussion about the legal treaties of the river. There are more important issues, she states (La Republica, 03.11.2010). But the river keeps returning to public consciousness, never being what it really is – a river. It is more. It is a border, it is history and it is a myth.

Our future depends on the San Juan River, it has been our spine since colonial times, a Nicaraguan historian writes (El Nuevo Diario, 21.11.2010). Nicaraguan and Costa Rican artists unite in an article where they state that the historical destiny of the San Juan River is to unify Central America. The artists write that it is like nature has given Nicaragua a river where all the peace in the world lies. The river is like a lesson of serenity. This peace and harmony must be guarded, the artists say (El Nuevo Diario, 22.11.2010b).

On the Costa Rican side, the belief in peace seems to be the answer. Costa Rica not only contributes to pacify their own country, they pacify the entire world. This difficult task, which Costa Rica has embarked upon, is something the coming generations of Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans and the continent as a whole will benefit from, an editorial claims (La Republica, 27.11.2010). As a globalised world is starting to render the economic theory of the 19 century as insufficient, maybe it is also so for political borders, territorial rights and sovereignty? It is the Costa Rican director of the Foundation for peace and democracy who asks the question. He holds that when the Spanish crown pulled out of Central America they left little clarity of where to draw the borders. For the people in the newly established states these, more or less arbitrary, lines drew their identity, and the people outside became Others. But history shows that the countries of the isthmus have not been successful in building cooperation and friendship to construct a common future. Hopefully this can change, he writes (La Nación, 12.11.2010c).

⁵⁴ “Creo que hay una doble moral en el enfoque de preservación medioambiental de nuestro vecino del Sur.”

⁵⁵ “¡Otra vez el río!”

The news items referred to in this chapter show a diversity of views and opinions among and about Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans. The news items have shown some stereotypes to be used more frequently than others, and also that these are contested. In the next chapter I will present a numerical overview of the representation of six important stereotypes.

7 Counting stereotypes

A small content analysis has been conducted since only a selection of the news items could be included in chapter 6. The analysis is directed towards a count of words in the news items (Priest 2010: 84). Such an approach can summarise important stereotypes found in the news items, and crosscheck the findings from my other methods. A content analysis also shows the number of references in the media to the chosen stereotypes, which can be an indicator of how well manifested they are in society.

In this work of research, many different points of view must be considered. Some important angles are the Nicaraguan view of themselves and the Nicaraguan view of Costa Ricans, the Costa Rican view of themselves and the Costa Rican view of Nicaraguans. As seen in chapter 6, the discursive relationship between the countries is partly dialectical, but often the point of view of one country is ignored or rejected by the other. The same trend is found in the stereotypes searched for in this chapter. Six stereotypes frequently used in the news items have been looked up, and each occurrence has been counted. The words are: *peace*, *xenophobia*, *Guanacaste*, *environment*, *armed* and *democracy*. Particularly *Guanacaste* and *xenophobia* must be viewed as mainly representing Nicaraguan views of Costa Rica and Costa Ricans. The other four are claimed and contested by both countries.

Words related to the six stereotypes with the same meaning or the same stem of the word, such as for example *peaceful*, *environmental*, *environmentalist*, *arms*, *disarmed* and *democratic*, are also counted. The word *democracy* is chosen to present the divide between civilized and uncivilized, often displayed in the media through references to democracy or the lack of it. The word *Guanacaste* is chosen because the Nicaraguan media use it as a metaphor of Costa Rican expansionism, referring to it more often than the word *expansionist*.

Some of the words are used in other contexts than the stereotype searched for. The word *environment* can for example refer to an *environment for dialogue*. Therefore words have only been counted when they refer to the chosen stereotypes. Titles that include one of the stereotypes, for example *Board of Peace and Sovereignty*, have been counted when used in relation to the conflict. Nicaraguan and Costa Rican newspapers were searched separately. A total of 472 words were counted in Nicaraguan newspapers and 493 in Costa Rican.

Each stereotype has been categorised as positive, neutral or negative in relation to Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Words marked as negative mean they describe one of the countries negatively, neutral means there is no particular sentiment displayed, and positive means the context of the word commends one of the countries. Through this categorisation it becomes visible how the six words are used in describing national stereotypes, and stereotypes about the other. The four numbers highlighted in each chart show the two words with the highest number of references about each country.

Table 3: Costa Rican Newspapers Word Count

	Negative CR	Negative N	Neutral	Positive CR	Positive N	Total
Peace	4	12	80	<u>75</u>	0	171
Xenophobia	16	0	1	4	0	21
Guanacaste	0	1	4	0	0	5
Environment	1	<u>89</u>	35	11	2	138
Armed	14	<u>44</u>	26	<u>29</u>	0	113
Democracy	0	12	12	20	1	45
Sum						493

Table 4: Nicaraguan Newspapers Word Count

	Negative CR	Negative N	Neutral	Positive CR	Positive N	Total
Peace	12	3	52	13	<u>32</u>	112
Xenophobia	<u>42</u>	0	4	2	1	49
Guanacaste	0	0	0	0	12	12
Environment	24	<u>56</u>	58	0	28	166
Armed	<u>42</u>	16	38	4	1	101
Democracy	1	17	9	3	2	32
Sum						472

In Costa Rican newspapers peace has been mentioned the most, 171 times. The majority of the mentions are positive towards Costa Rica, 75 times, or neutral, 80 times. Nicaragua is not mentioned positively in relation to peace, but 12 times the country is referred to as working against peace. Costa Rica is mentioned negatively 4 times in letters to the editor where the country’s peaceful image is disputed. In Nicaraguan newspapers peace is mentioned 112 times, 52 of these mentions are neutral. Nicaragua is referred to as a peaceful country 32 times, and as an obstacle to peace 3 times. Costa Rican media are cited 13 times saying they are peaceful. However, 12 times it is claimed in Nicaraguan media that Costa Rica is a peace pretender.

In Nicaraguan newspapers, environment has been mentioned the most, 166 times during the month of November 2010. About one third of the mentions are negative citations from Costa Rican media on the environmental damage related to the conflict. This is however referred to by Nicaraguan media as an *alleged* damage. Costa Rica is not mentioned positively in relation to environment, but 24 times the country is mentioned negatively and Costa Rican environmentalism is disputed. Nicaragua is mentioned positively on environmental issues almost once a day in the time of research, 28 times. By comparison, the word environment is mentioned 138 times in Costa Rican newspapers. 89 of these are negative towards Nicaragua, referring to destruction of forest on Isla Calero. Both when Costa Rica is mentioned negatively and when Nicaragua is mentioned positively it is in citations from their northern neighbour's newspapers. Costa Rica is mentioned positively 11 times.

For both countries the third most mentioned stereotype considers armament. Costa Rican media mention armament 113 times. 29 of these are positive towards Costa Rica's demilitarisation, but there are no positive mentions of Nicaragua. Nicaragua is mentioned as armed 44 times. There are claims of Costa Rican armament 14 times, either by Nicaraguan media or by Costa Ricans calling for a stronger national defence. In Nicaragua armament is mentioned 101 times, 42 of these hold that Costa Rica has heavy weapons and an army, 4 times the Costa Rican media are cited saying the opposite. 16 times negative referrals to an armed invasion by Nicaragua are cited, mainly claimed by Costa Rica or Mexico.

From the three stereotypes environment, peace and armed there is a steep drop in mentions to the other three stereotypes searched for. Xenophobia is mentioned more than twice as many times in Nicaragua than it is in Costa Rica. Out of 49 mentions in Nicaraguan media, 42 refer to Costa Rican xenophobia towards Nicaraguans. In Costa Rica the trend is almost similar, out of 21 mentions, only 4 refute Costa Rican xenophobia. Costa Rican xenophobia, particularly towards Nicaraguans, is pointed out 16 times. Further, democracy is mentioned 45 times in Costa Rican newspapers, 20 of them are positive to the Costa Rican democracy, 12 of them hold that Nicaragua is destroying theirs. In Nicaragua 17 out of 32 mentions of democracy claim that the Nicaraguan democracy is declining. The last stereotype refers to Costa Rican expansionism, expressed by the Nicaraguan media through the loss of Guanacaste. In Nicaraguan newspapers there are 12 references to this incident, all of them claim that the province should have belonged to Nicaragua. In Costa Rica the opposite is only stated once, and four times the province is mentioned as an important national symbol.

In relation to the adjectives found in Chapter 4 there is a certain degree of overlapping, possibly indicating that some stereotypes were important both during the conflict and one year after. For example the Costa Rican view of themselves as pacifist, and the Nicaraguan view of Costa Ricans as racists/xenophobic seem to be relevant for both the questionnaires and the content analysis. The questionnaires has missed some important stereotypes that have been revealed through the examination of the news items, particularly concerning the Nicaraguan view of Costa Ricans as expansionist.

Part III
Analysis

Introduction to the analysis

In this last part of my thesis I will connect the findings presented in the previous chapters to the analytical framework in an analysis aiming to answer my main research question:

What does the Isla Calero conflict reveal about stereotypes about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

The perspectives analysed through my other five research questions will contribute to this:

- 1. Which stereotypes were (re)produced in the media coverage of the Isla Calero conflict?*
- 2. Which stereotypes were (re)produced when Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans spoke about the Isla Calero conflict?*
- 3. How are perceptions of Us and an Other created historically within and between these countries?*
- 4. Why were stereotypes describing Us and an Other used in the context of the Isla Calero conflict?*
- 5. How were the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican societies reconstructed in relation to each other during this conflict?*

8 Combining theories and findings

In my analysis I am borrowing important perspectives from each of the five theoreticians presented in chapter 2. The theoretical perspectives are used to broaden my interpretation and understanding of the findings from the questionnaires, interviews, observations and news items. This approach can also indicate the fruitfulness of the theories on this specific case, as well as shed light on the material in a new way. Since the five theoreticians have varying angles of viewing group formation, each contribute to a different focus in the analysis. The object of the analysis is to understand the stereotypes used by different groups related to the Isla Calero conflict, and how stereotyping affects perceptions Us and an Other among Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The power to define an Other (Said)

Have stereotypes about the Other over time turned into unquestionable truths in Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

Costa Rica and Nicaragua have many historical links, both countries have indigenous populations and the languages are similar. One would think that these features would be of importance for two neighbouring countries. However, the research in this thesis shows that the similarities of the countries are often downplayed and differences emphasised. In order to take a closer look at the construction of the Other in these societies, it can be useful to look at their power relationships. By this it is not meant who has the strongest national defence, but which country has the power to define the Other.

This power is one of Said's main arguments for how the Orient could be created and defined by the West. According to Said the relationship between these two parts of the world was a monologue presented by the West for the West about the Orient. The power relationship between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and vice versa, is more complex. Both countries have the power to define the other in certain contexts, particularly on the national stage. Because of a lack of interaction with the other, the discourses of the two countries turn into two-way monologues, similar to the relationship between the West and the Orient.

In Nicaragua, Costa Rica is perceived to hold the defining power, regionally and internationally,

but it is a contested power. The Nicaraguan journalist, Wilder Pérez, called Costa Rica “the good girl”⁵⁶ when referring to the country’s international reputation as an ecological and peaceful country. This also implies that he perceives Nicaragua to be unfairly labelled as something less than “good”, maybe even bad. Nicaragua, possibly being the weaker party in the game of international representation, uses the national arena to distribute stereotypes opposing the Costa Rican image as a country of peace.

When Nicaraguans chose adjectives about Costa Rica in the questionnaires, the most important were racist and egocentric. Counting the use of stereotypes about Costa Ricans in the Nicaraguan newspapers, the most used representations were xenophobic and armed. This shows a coherence between the answers in the questionnaires and the newspaper articles which indicates that Nicaraguans are representing Costa Ricans to be the opposite of peaceful and inclusive: they are racists, armed and only thinking about themselves.

Going back up the river from San Juan de Nicaragua, a day’s journey in a river boat, I got to know a 21 year old man who had worked in Costa Rican construction for one year. He had recently got a job in the local city hall in Nicaragua and said: I am not going back to Costa Rica. I did not have any problems there because my skin is so light, but that guy, he says, pointing at a bearded man sitting on the opposite bench, they would have called him different things. They are racists, he claimed.

Apart from the stereotype of Costa Ricans as racists, I noted something else during the conversation with the young man. It was something I interpreted as a sense of pride.⁵⁷ When talking about Costa Rican racism there was no sense of pity towards Nicaraguans in his voice, it was rather said as a matter of fact, as an unquestionable truth, promoting the moral and cultural superiority of Nicaraguans. A newspaper-text from the year before reveals a similar frame of thought. “Sometimes offensive words hurt more than bullets”⁵⁸, the author writes. As opposed to Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans have refrained from polluting the countries’ relations with insults and have not portrayed Costa Ricans as racially inferior, he states (La Prensa, 17.11.2010d). However, the Nicaraguan journalist, Wilder Pérez, does admit to making fun of Costa Ricans during the conflict:

⁵⁶ “La niña linda”

⁵⁷ As mentioned in the introduction to part II, it can sometimes be difficult to know if I am reproducing stereotypes, and this is one example. I do, however, believe the material sufficient to back up this claim.

⁵⁸ “A veces las palabras ofensivas, hieren más que las balas.”

We Nicaraguans, to do, ehh, we often make jokes. He he, and we made every type of joke. We said, in general: We do not want to see any Tico [...]. In fact, well, here a Costa Rica person, apart from these types of jokes, it is not, well, we do not look down upon them.⁵⁹

Nicaraguan newspapers did refer to Costa Rican media during the time of research, but it was mostly done to dispute the Costa Rican point of view. Therefore Costa Rica had little power to represent itself in the Nicaraguan media, and also among people as there are few Costa Rican emigrants in Nicaragua. But Nicaragua cannot represent Costa Rica in the same streamlined and institutionalised way that Said describes in *Orientalism*. This is mainly because Costa Rica has had a longer time to consolidate its national identity, making it hard for Nicaragua to create a new interpretation. Therefore the Nicaraguan representation of Costa Rica mainly centres round disputing stereotypes Costa Ricans already have made for themselves. In this process Nicaragua seeks to deconstruct the Costa Rican perception of having ties to Europe, its peacefulness and idea of a more developed civilisation. By doing so, these traits become devaluated, in some sense made available to Nicaragua, hinting at a road ahead towards these desired images.

On the southern side of the river, in Costa Rica, the national identity as pacifist was contrasted with Daniel Ortega and Edén Pastora. The ridicule over using Google to start a border conflict was accompanied with sympathy towards the Nicaraguan people being governed in such an uncivilised way. A Costa Rican writes in a column:

[...] I know the phrase “The people get the governors they deserve” is not true. How could it be when Nicaragua has nurtured Rubén Darío, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro and intellectuals and artists that honour the Central American culture? (La Nación, 28.11.2010).⁶⁰

Although defending the Nicaraguan right for a better future and recognising their cultural history, the underlying question seems to be: How did it go so wrong? It must be something about Nicaraguans that is different from Costa Ricans. Through his question the Costa Rican author is implicitly depriving the Nicaraguan people of will and authority, portraying them as unable or unwilling to oppose the despot governing them.

Once again it is the power of representation. Nicaragua, as viewed from Costa Rica, is in many

⁵⁹ “Nosotros en Nicaragua para hacer, ehh, somos muy pesados para hacer bromas. He he, y hacíamos todos tipos de bromas. Y decíamos, en general: no queremos ver a ningún Tico [...]. De hecho, pues, aquí una persona costarricense, fuera de esa broma y eso, no hay digamos, no hay menosprecio.”

⁶⁰ “[...] sé que es falsa la frase que dice ‘Los pueblos tienen los Gobiernos que se merecen’. ¿Cómo puede ser eso cierto si Nicaragua es el suelo nutrido de Rubén Darío, Pedro Joaquín Chamorro e intelectuales y artistas que honran la cultura centroamericana?”

ways similar to the Orient, as described by Said. Although the physical distance between Costa Rica and Nicaragua is short, the psychological distance is, arguably, long. Through the Costa Rican image of a close connection to Europe, the perception of belonging does not lie entirely in Central America. To some extent the Costa Rican identity is imagined to be on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Nicaragua then, being close but also far away, is not given the benefit the Orient had as something exotic and completely different, even if racialised and stereotyped. Nicaragua seen from Costa Rica is a country that had similar opportunities, but wasted them. It is a country that chose conflict and war, military force and poverty. And in the eyes of some Costa Ricans, this stereotype of the Nicaraguan way of life is now spreading across the border, particularly through immigrants.

Said considers that once the Orient was created in the West, it came to be viewed only through these stereotypes, and interactions did not change this. This is to some degree valid also for the Costa Rican relation to Nicaraguans. In the questionnaires, Costa Ricans chose workers and poor to represent Nicaraguans. For many Costa Ricans, the main contact with Nicaraguans is through immigrants working in housekeeping, on plantations or in construction. This creates an uneven power relation and gives Costa Ricans the power to define Nicaraguans through previously established stereotypes, and these are maintained even when the two groups interact. The boat keeper on the dock in Barra del Colorado had these thoughts:

The Nicaraguans mainly work in the fields. They do more difficult tasks than the Costa Ricans. The Costa Ricans do not want hard work in the fields no more, because the Costa Ricans have a formation that is more, more educated. Therefore he [the Costa Rican] works in the banks, use computers, do you understand? Their clothes, their nice ties, they have big cars, businesses, five star bars where there are only, there are wealthy people [...].⁶¹

In the news items researched, Nicaraguan immigrants were increasingly mentioned in the Costa Rican media because of their growing worry of being expelled from the country. At the end of November 2010, the Costa Rican president went out in person to assure Nicaraguans that they would be allowed back into Costa Rica after the Christmas holiday (La Nación, 22.11.2010b). After the attack on the Nicaraguan embassy, various articles on the xenophobia among Costa Ricans were presented in the country's media. These representations contributed to building the image of Nicaraguans as pitiful, workers or poor. Sandoval-García claims that the Nicaraguan

⁶¹ "Porque el nicaragüense por la mayor parte él trabaja en el campo. Hace tareas más difíciles que el costarricense. El costarricense no quiere ya trabajo muy duro de campo, porque el costarricense tiene una formación más, más formativa de estudio. Entonces él trabaja en bancos, su computadora, me entiende? Su ropa, su buena corbata, tiene su "high-carro", su negocio, sus bares de cinco estrellas donde solo hay gente hay, fina [...]."

immigrants also incorporate such stigmatisations, increasingly viewing themselves the way they are represented (Sandoval-García 2004: xvii). In a sense the Nicaraguan immigrant in Costa Rica becomes voiceless in the stride for representation, allowing the Costa Rican stereotypes to dominate.

The Nicaraguans within Nicaragua are mainly represented in the Costa Rican newspaper coverage on issues regarding armament and destruction of nature. One Costa Rican writes in an commentary: “Poor Nicaragua, so poor and so armed.”⁶² By comparing the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan expenses on education and the military he concludes that Costa Ricans have been blessed (La Republica, 23.11.2010b). The boat keeper in Barra del Colorado believed Nicaraguans mainly to be interested in armament and the policeman in the same village claimed that Nicaragua spends most of its money on the military. By emphasising Nicaraguan armament, the Costa Rican peacefulness is promoted. The incident with the detained military trucks sheds light on this. In the Costa Rican media the detained trucks became symbols of war, of Nicaraguan desire for violence. Describing the trucks as resembling a “war scene from Iraq” gave an impression of Nicaraguan aggressiveness penetrating the Costa Rican society, frightening the peaceful life of its citizens.

The same pattern of representation goes for the destruction of nature on Isla Calero. It is referred to in Costa Rican newspapers more than 80 times during my month of research. When constructing the Orient, institutionalising a representation was made possible through repetition and a one-sided story. This can also be seen in these Costa Rican representations of Nicaragua. When downplaying one’s own negative sides, such as the gold mine Las Crucitas, which was mentioned more frequently in Nicaraguan media, one representation becomes the only truth. If repeated enough times people will eventually stop questioning its validity.

In Nicaragua and Costa Rica a one-way discourse has allowed for the construction of persistent stereotypes. Through stereotyping Costa Ricans as armed and xenophobic, Nicaraguans seek to deconstruct the most important components of the Costa Rican identity, namely the images of Costa Rican inclusiveness, demobilisation and peacefulness. The lack of opposing voices contributes to the construction of Nicaraguan stereotypes about Costa Ricans.

⁶² “Pobre Nicaragua, tan pobre y tan armada.”

In Costa Rica the most persistent stereotypes are created through contrasting their own society to the Nicaraguan. Following this, Costa Ricans are promoted as civilised, peaceful and developed, Nicaraguans as uneducated, uncivilised and prone to be violent. This categorisation makes it easy for Costa Ricans to explain the Isla Calero conflict, it started because Nicaraguans are conflict seeking and ignorant destroyers of nature. That Nicaraguans must do the hard labour and remain poor, is another issue beyond questioning for many Costa Ricans. The Nicaraguans have, after all, chosen this themselves.

Defining the imagined community (Anderson)

What roles do history, maps and other features of the nation play in defining national stereotypes – the imagined community – within Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

Having viewed stereotypes that exist about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, it is time to examine stereotypes inside the two societies. During the time of research, many people submitted commentaries to Costa Rican newspapers concerning the national image of the country. In an article mentioned in Chapter 6, a Costa Rican journalist distances herself from nationalist expressions caused by the ongoing conflict. The article was called “I do not have a flag.”⁶³ In an answer to her, a graduate from the Law Faculty at the University of Costa Rica titles his response “I do have a flag.”⁶⁴ He holds that:

As a good Costa Rican, friendly, generous, enterprising, proud of our past, of our history, of our idiosyncrasy and our national achievements, I have to disagree with everything written in the mentioned article. The Tico is obliging, loving and a good friend; the generalised xenophobia, that according to the author we are referring to, appears to be a pandemic, is not valid for the Costa Rican society (La Nación, 20.11.2010).⁶⁵

The author is clearly proud of Costa Rica, and emphasises the country’s history, and the different mind-set of the Costa Rican. Anderson claims the Imagined Community to be constructed through “homogenous empty time”, a shared perception of continuity between the past, the present and the future. In both Costa Rica and Nicaragua references to the past are important tools for the construction of the present, and they are used frequently. Therefore, to understand their national stereotypes today one must look to history. Viewing the adjectives

⁶³ “Yo no tengo bandera”

⁶⁴ “Yo sí tengo bandera”

⁶⁵ “Como buen costarricense, amistoso, generoso, emprendedor, orgulloso de nuestro pasado, de nuestra historia, de nuestra idiosincrasia y de nuestros logros como país, debo diferir de todo lo escrito en el artículo mencionado al inicio. El tico es servicial, cariñoso y buen amigo; la xenofobia generalizada, que según la autora de las líneas que aquí citamos, parece ser pandemia, no calza en la sociedad costarricense.”

chosen by Costa Ricans about themselves in the questionnaires, americanised and pacifist were the most important. The count of stereotypes in the newspapers displays Costa Ricans as peaceful and unarmed. As Costa Rica experienced both social and political turmoil until they abolished their army in 1948, it can be claimed that these stereotypes most likely have been constructed during the past 60 years of Costa Rican history.

Although this is recent history, peacefulness and willingness to be without a defence are now considered ancient traits of the Costa Rican society. It has become naturalised into the Costa Rican identity. So deep is the idea of the Costa Rican peacefulness that Laura Chinchilla claimed peace to be in the DNA of the Costa Rican people (La Nación, 11.11.2010a). Sandoval-García claims that the Costa Rican self perception is problematic because, in her own eyes, Costa Rica does not need self-criticism. She is generous, a model country able to unite people of all backgrounds (Sandoval-García 2004: 38). This view is shared by the Costa Rican newspaper La Republica, which in an editorial holds that Costa Rica contributes to pacifying the entire world (La Republica, 27.11.2010).

Costa Rica has made an effort to consolidate a national identity. The pre-colonial and colonial periods, as well as the 19th and early 20th century, have to a large extent been suppressed in the creation of the Costa Rican national identity. The major emphasis is on the past 60 years. This can be related to what Anderson writes about systematically imposed nationalism in colonies, which was maintained through important institutions such as the map, the museum and the census. The census has been important for the Costa Rican national identity in creating the stereotype of the country's "white" population, which connotes a connection to Europe and a predisposition to a civilised culture.

One North American historian claims that since Costa Rica had a small indigenous population before the conquest, and as the majority was killed in the process: "[...] this whitest of Central American countries was less burdened by exploitative colonial hierarchies. Consequently, it was less politically explosive, too" (Chasteen 2011: 305). This shows the manifestation of the myth of Costa Rican "whiteness" and its reproduction also outside the country. By keeping the African-American and indigenous populations outside the main narrative, the Costa Rican census appears to be homogenous. This makes it easier to create and maintain the Costa Rican imagined community of a "white" egalitarian middle class.

However, during the month of research, no articles in the Costa Rican media claimed that Costa Ricans are “whiter” than other people in Central America. Skin-colour and the European blood of the Costa Ricans were mentioned, but it was done as criticism towards these stereotypes. A Costa Rican lawyer writes that Costa Ricans have to admit that they are not Caucasian and not the Switzerland of Latin America (La Nación, 25.11.2010). The Costa Rican journalist Alvaro Murillo wrote a column in La Nación saying he wanted to put a Nicaraguan flag in his car to see what happened, but he did not dare to, afraid of the consequences.

Surely I would have met a “pure” Tico considering my experiment as an unacceptable provocation [...]. This moment proves how false the Costa Rican self-perception is, we think we are angels of diversity just because we have a cultural predisposition to “come from far away” [...].⁶⁶

If you are Nicaraguan and poor you are doubly exposed as an alien, the journalist writes (La Nación, 17.11.2010b).

The Nicaraguan national image is more diffuse than the Costa Rican, and national stereotypes have not manifested themselves to the same degree. This may be because of the few decades of relative peace and the divided political situation in Nicaragua. The dictatorial rule associated with the Somoza clan leaves no room for romanticising. Neither does the war between the Sandinistas and the Contras. Therefore, the recent past as a source of belonging is more difficult to adopt into the Nicaraguan identity. However, moving back in time almost one hundred years, an important Nicaraguan national symbol is found. Augusto Sandino, the first martyr in the struggle against foreign intervention, is thoroughly mythologised. Salman Rushdie noted this during his stay in Nicaragua in 1986: “I was struck by the fact that it was Sandino’s hat, and not his face, that had become the most potent icon in Nicaragua. [...] Or to put it another way: Sandino had become his hat” (Rushdie 1987: 22).

Sandino’s legacy contributed to a recreation of the Nicaraguan society when the FSLN was formed in the 1960s, and later when the FSLN took power after Somoza’s fall. Today there is little left of the revolutionary image of the FSLN, but Sandino still remains the undisputed national image of resistance and courage. Sandino along with more recent martyrs such as Carlos Fonseca, are the Nicaraguan link between the past, the present and the future. The dead are given the power to consolidate the imagined community of the living.

⁶⁶ “Seguro me hubiera topado con algún tico “puro” que hubiera sentido mi experimento como una provocación inaceptable [...]. Este momento demuestra cuán falsa es la autopercepción de los ticos, que nos creemos ángeles de la diversidad solo porque tenemos predisposición cultural a “pasar de lejitos” [...].”

Since defending sovereignty is a strong uniting factor in Nicaragua, the perceived gap between the countries increases. As willing cooperation with the United States marks the Costa Rican past, Nicaraguans consider their own moral standards to be of greater value. This division may also be why the Isla Calero conflict gained the amount of support it did in Nicaragua, despite Ortega's incentive to be re-elected.

Anderson holds that the map establishes the boundaries of the imagined community. In a way it was a map that started the whole conflict, and maps thus became of vital importance to establish the boundaries of both Costa Rica and Nicaragua. As demonstrated in illustrations 2 to 5, both countries sought to demonstrate their right over Isla Calero through the use of maps and the legal treaties connected to them. However, Nicaragua went further. During the conflict, the defence of sovereignty in the present became linked to the past through references to Guanacaste.

When Guanacaste belonged to Nicaragua the country was prosperous. It was on its way to development through trade and education and through a trans-isthmus canal. But the canal was never constructed, and conflicts impeded national development. What is left is a sense of loss, of Nicaragua being robbed of the future it saw coming after independence. Guanacaste becomes a symbol of the unfulfilled promises of the past, a symbol of Costa Rica taking what they want from Nicaragua. The San Juan River is still the hope for the future, and it must be protected from Costa Rica no matter which president is in charge, and no matter who benefits from it.

A quote in an editorial in *La Prensa* illustrates that the protection of national boundaries becomes separated from the politics behind it. During a dispute over the San Juan River under the Somoza regime, a member of the opposition, Luis Pasos Argüello said: "Somoza is a dictator and I keep away from him. But in this case I will fight shoulder to shoulder with a rifle in my hand to defend the San Juan River" (*La Prensa*, 05.11.2010).⁶⁷ The fear of Costa Rica taking the San Juan River is real for many Nicaraguans. My canoe guide truly became upset when I told him that the 2009 ICJ judgement allowed Costa Ricans to freely use the San Juan River. He asked me: Would you have liked that people from other countries took advantage of your nature?

⁶⁷ "Somoza es un dictador y me mantengo largo de él. Pero en este caso yo pelearía hombro a hombro y rifle en mano por defender el río San Juan."

Continuing, the adjectives Nicaraguans selected about themselves in the questionnaires were generous and workers. In the newspapers the most repeated representations were peaceful and, a bit surprising, environmental destruction. However, this negative reference was almost without exception referred to as accusations from Costa Rica, and did not serve to show Nicaragua as a destructor of nature.

Whereas the Costa Rican national stereotypes found in the newspapers and the questionnaires were quite synchronised, it is hard to say the same about the Nicaraguan. The media representations claiming Nicaragua to be peaceful during the conflict often came as a response to Costa Rican criticism. One Nicaraguan immigrant in Costa Rica says: “There exists a judging campaign to make believe that the Nicaraguans are warmongers and militarist, when in practice the Nicaraguans love peace because of our negative experiences with the military in the past [...]” (El Nuevo Diario, 25.11.2010).⁶⁸ Regarding the Nicaraguan environmentalism it is the same tendency, environmentalist groups and regular people compare Nicaragua to Costa Rica, before concluding that Costa Rica has double standards, and that Nicaragua is the true nature conserver (El Nuevo Diario, 27.11.2010b, La Prensa, 27.11.2010).

Further, there were no easily distinguishable references to Nicaraguans as workers or the generosity of the Nicaraguan people in either the news items or interviews regarding the conflict. It is, however, possible to draw a line between generosity and the previously commented pride. By this it is meant the Nicaraguan idea of being more inclusive than Costa Ricans and abstaining from racism. The division in Nicaraguan national stereotypes must be seen in relation to Costa Rica. As mentioned, Nicaragua is, in many ways, constructing their national identity through opposing stereotypes made in Costa Rica. By emphasising Nicaraguan peacefulness and environmentalism, the country is promoting itself in the same wrapping as Costa Rica, and at the same time deconstructing an image of the country as violent and destructive.

The imagined community coined by Anderson is a useful point of departure in viewing how national stereotypes have come into existence historically and through the census and the map

⁶⁸ “A su juicio, existe una campaña para hacer creer que los nicaragüenses son guerreristas y belicosos, cuando en la práctica los nicaragüenses aman la paz por las experiencias militares negativas del pasado.”

in Costa Rican and Nicaraguan societies. In Costa Rica the imagined community has been created through systematic repetition of two stereotypes in particular, peacefulness and “whiteness”. Both are considered to be ancient traits of the Costa Rican identity, used with the aim of creating stability through linking the present to an idolised image of the past. Also in Nicaragua the imagined community rests on historical myths. By linking the present Isla Calero conflict, to images of the past, such as Guanacaste and Sandino, the Nicaraguan national identity is (re)created through an image of national defence. Also, through a mirroring practice of Costa Rican stereotypes, Nicaragua is trying to make a connection to the future.

The past, the present and the future (Lincoln)

How has the repetition of rituals, myths or select moments from the past (re)constructed or deconstructed national identities in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and their relation to each other, historically and during the Isla Calero conflict?

In both countries people marched for peace during the conflict. In Nicaragua, students marched under banners saying: “Costa Ricans are gay, the San Juan River is Nicaraguan”. In Costa Rica, children and athletes used the slogan: “We have the right to live in peace”. These expressions indicate two different stances in relation to the conflict. To some degree the Costa Rican slogan displays the country as a victim of Nicaraguan aggression. The Nicaraguan banner, on the other hand, manifests the country’s sovereign right over the San Juan River, while also claiming that Nicaraguans are tougher and more macho than Costa Ricans.

The ritual of marching is a common way of showing unity, a way to manifest support for a cause or for the nation itself. Lincoln holds rituals to be symbolic actions to evoke feelings of unity or separation. Paradoxically, both countries are marching for peace, but their slogans do not intend to bring the two countries closer together. Rather than evoking feelings of affinity the slogans promote estrangement. Once again the countries use two parallel discourses that do not cross paths.

Viewing the Nicaraguan slogan, the manifestation of sovereignty was a central part of the discourse during the conflict. Particularly the repetition in the media, and among people, of the loss of Guanacaste became important. Guanacaste can be viewed as a myth, which according to Lincoln is a recollection of an episode from the past, given authority. It is uncertain which status

the loss of Guanacaste had in the Nicaraguan society before the Isla Calero conflict. Nevertheless, when the conflict started, the story, or even legend, of Guanacaste was equipped with credibility and authority. Recounting the loss of Guanacaste reconstructed and re-established the Nicaraguan identity and contributed to a social mobilisation against Costa Rican expansionism. Costa Rican media, however, largely ignored this. Guanacaste was mentioned in the Nicaraguan media 12 times as an example of Costa Rican expansionism. In Costa Rican media the contrary was only stated once.

Also the San Juan River was to some extent given a higher status through the perceived threat of losing it to Costa Rica. From being a forgotten region of Nicaragua, all eyes were turned towards the San Juan River during the conflict. Tourist campaigns and carnivals were created to draw people. The San Juan River became the very artery of Nicaraguan life, an image of development, natural beauty and sovereignty. It became a myth people would defend at any cost. The media contributed to building this myth by time after time referring to Costa Rica's desire in taking the San Juan River. It did not help that Costa Rican media on numerous occasions stated that the river was not an object of interest, only the disputed island. Through these myths, the Costa Rican expansionism was constructed in the Nicaraguan society during the conflict. The Nicaraguan media did not question the validity of these myths once, and neither did people one year after.

Costa Rica's slogan plays on the country's inherent desire for peace, a myth thoroughly repeated in the media during the conflict. Throughout the month of research, peace and disarmament were repeated more than one hundred times. This frequency of repetition must arguably have influenced the Costa Rican newspaper readers to some extent. Episodes from the past, such as the abolition of the Costa Rican army, or the peace efforts of Oscar Ariás, were recounted in the media, but not with great frequency. It seems that there was no need to elevate the status of Costa Rican historical episodes during the conflict. The myth of the country's peacefulness is so obvious that details are unnecessary, it is a cause that will mobilise people at any time. However, the practice of contrasting Costa Rica with Nicaragua, for example through the slogan referring to "the Costa Rican right to live in peace", enhanced the Costa Rican sense of peacefulness while labelling Nicaragua as an invader.

Lincoln writes that if a myth is deprived of authority, it loses the ability to mobilise sentiment. Nicaragua was actively deconstructing the image of Costa Rican environmentalism and

peacefulness during the conflict, questioning the validity of these myths. Most of the news items discrediting Costa Rican environmentalism were based on the Costa Rican pollution of the San Juan River. The man I spoke to on the boat going back up the San Juan River claimed: Costa Rica is not as ecological as they say. Four years ago fish died in the river, and also in the sea from all the pesticides the farms along the river use, he said. The same type of deconstruction is done when the Costa Rican peacefulness is scrutinised by Nicaraguan society, planting a profound distrust in the truth of Costa Rican disarmament.

Costa Rica on the other hand is emphasising Nicaragua's turbulent history of internal disputes and foreign interventions, giving it authority and elevating it to the status of myth. This allows for a generalisation of all Nicaraguans as violent. As Costa Rica has no army, Nicaragua is perceived to make Costa Rica insecure, from the outside by the presence of troops on Isla Calero, from the inside by immigrants. A Costa Rican woman I spoke to on a farm in Guanacaste told me that: Europe was civilised a long time before Costa Rica, but we were civilised a long time before Nicaragua. The Nicaraguans bring a lot of diseases. They also have a history of violence that they bring here, she claimed.

The Molotov cocktail that hit the Nicaraguan embassy in Costa Rica and the claims of closing the borders for immigrants, brought an alteration in the idea of the peace/war relation between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. This happening can be seen in relation to what Lincoln calls "symbolic inversion", namely a reversal of a symbolical order that can produce a change. The attack on the Nicaraguan embassy violated the Costa Rican identity of peacefulness, and brought to the surface a latent cleavage, the difficult relationship between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants. Most of the references to Costa Rican xenophobia in the country's newspapers were written during the time after the attack on the embassy.

Attempts were made to bridge the cleavage, and the Costa Rican president assured the rights of the Nicaraguan immigrants, but the reconciliation was not fruitful. In Nicaragua the perception of Costa Ricans as peace pretenders and racists was strengthened, and within Costa Rica it became hard to maintain an image of unity. As one Costa Rican wrote: "Costa Rica is a fragmented and dysfunctional country, divided in many ways. The cause and the origin are the resentments and intransigence between us" (La Republica, 19.11.2010a).⁶⁹

⁶⁹ "Costa Rica es un país fragmentado, disfuncional, dividido en muchos sentidos. La causa y el origen son los resentimientos y la intransigencia entre nosotros mismos."

Lincoln's thoughts on myths, rituals and classification are particularly relevant to view the power of myths and rituals in constructing and deconstructing images of Us and an Other. In Nicaragua, the image of Costa Rican expansionism was (re)constructed, and the Costa Rican identity as peaceful and environmental was deconstructed. In Costa Rica the peaceful image was maintained through contrasting and constructing the violent Nicaraguan. Also Lincoln's view on "symbolic inversion" sheds light on how the Molotov cocktail forced Costa Rica to face the Nicaraguan stereotype of xenophobia and how Costa Rican unity temporarily was deconstructed through this happening.

Stereotypes as unchangeable facts (Hall)

Have there been naturalisations of stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans? Stereotypes refer to imagination as much as "reality". How is the binary nature of stereotypes shown in these two societies?

Stereotypes, connected to Us or an Other, are as much products of imagination as they are of the perception of "reality". The Costa Rican perception as "whiter" than their surrounding countries is a myth. It is a narrative that has gained authority. It is also an imagined reality made possible by rejecting all information that contradicts this myth, for example by keeping the indigenous and African-American populations of Costa Rica away from public discourse (Sandoval-García 2004: 83). As Hall mentions, stereotypes are rigid systems of analysing the world, and they expel contradicting information. Stereotypes also present difference as a natural cause beyond history.

My guide on the San Juan River worked in Costa Rica one year. He told me: In Costa Rica they often say that we [the Nicaraguans] speak funny, and they laugh at us or make jokes about how we speak. I do not understand that, they speak just as unclearly to us, he claimed. If difference lies within the DNA of the Costa Rican people, their peacefulness and civility will be hard to change, and also hard to obtain for others. Through naturalising an identity as "white", peaceful and European, it becomes easier for Costa Ricans to maintain a boundary towards Nicaraguans, African-Americans or indigenous peoples, making difference appear as an unchangeable fact.

Further, relating to Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica, Sandoval-García has recognised a radicalisation of the labelling of these immigrants in the media. He holds it is common to use water related tropes, such as a “human wave”, Costa Rica being “swamped”, to describe Nicaraguan immigrants as a mass out of control. Sandoval-García registered the use of such metaphors already in 1995 (Sandoval-García 2004: 34).

The belief in massive Nicaraguan immigration is now well manifested in the Costa Rican society, and this was displayed by many of my informants. According to the journalist in *La Nación* there are about one million Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. The woman I spoke to on a farm in Guanacaste went further, she claimed half of the Nicaraguan population to be in Costa Rica working. A hotel owner in Barra del Colorado said: There are 3,5 million Costa Ricans, but 6,5 million people live in the country. The rest are immigrants. You can imagine for yourself when they come from Nicaragua with five or six children, but here we give them houses, everybody gets one, he said.

As Hall and Said establish, the lack of interaction and a selective focus makes it easier for stereotyped presentations of the Other to be created. It is recognised that Nicaraguan immigrants are needed for the Costa Rican economy, but positive aspects of immigration were mostly left out in favour of negative by my informants and by the media in both countries.

Labour immigration is different in the two countries. The Costa Ricans working in Nicaragua are fewer, and are mainly engaged in businesses or high-end jobs. Nicaraguans working in Costa Rica are primarily employed as housekeepers, cooks, working in the field or in construction. Most Nicaraguans know someone who has worked in Costa Rica, and the stories of injustice against fellow Nicaraguans are not sparse. The stories about positive encounters, however, are. This contributes to a sense of injustice, of Costa Ricans neglecting that Nicaraguan immigrants have made the country’s development the past decades possible. The negative focus contributes to creating and naturalising the stereotype of Costa Ricans as racists within the Nicaraguan society.

However, many Nicaraguans are dependent on Costa Rica. Remittances sent from immigrants in Costa Rica are an important source of income for many Nicaraguan families. Further, Costa Rica has received Nicaraguan immigrants almost since the two countries’ independence, providing the imagination of a better life for many Nicaraguans. These aspects of immigration

were largely excluded from the Nicaraguan discourse, but they were frequently recognised in Costa Rica.

Many letters to the editor printed during the conflict were criticising Ortega for his lack of gratitude towards the help and generosity Costa Ricans has shown Nicaraguan immigrants. One Costa Rican priest, having worked for years among poor people in Nicaragua, writes that more than 500 000 Nicaraguan immigrants have been welcomed with open arms by Costa Rica. Thanks to Costa Rican generosity thousands of students, who have fled from Nicaragua, will be graduating from Costa Rican schools and universities. “Show a minimum of gratitude [...] towards the noble and peaceful Costa Rican people”, he demands of Ortega (La Nación, 29.11.2010).⁷⁰

These examples of the countries’ selective focus on Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica points to an important aspect of stereotypes, as described by Hall. The creation of stereotypes happens between imagination and “reality”. In this case the stereotypes are created between the imagination of the inclusive Costa Rica being “swamped” by Nicaraguans, the Nicaraguan perception of Costa Ricans as ungrateful and racists, and the fact that Costa Rica and Nicaragua need each other. Contributing to this pattern is the Costa Rican myth of “whiteness” and peacefulness, which is maintained through expelling contradicting information, while at the same time producing the stereotype of the Costa Rican racist in Nicaragua.

Globalisation and minorities (Appadurai)

How have the five dimensions (ethnoscape, technoscape, financescape, mediascape and ideoscape) that Appadurai associates with globalisation affected the perception of the nation-state in Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

The role of the nation-state is changing, a letter to the editor in a Costa Rican newspaper pointed out. The author hoped the future would bring better relations between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The changes in the nation-state can, as Appadurai mentions, also bring difficulties. With increased globalisation in every aspect of life, boundaries become more difficult to maintain. Today tourists from all over the world are visiting Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The ever changing composition of nationalities and ethnicities within the countries has proved to be

⁷⁰ “Muestre usted un mínimo gesto de gratitud [...] con el noble y civilista pueblo costarricense.”

troubling for some. As was commented in the previous section, in Costa Rica the numbers of Nicaraguan immigrants are believed to be far higher than they really are. Also the immigrants are characterised as a threat to Costa Ricans, bringing disease and violence. This brings forward the difficulties Nicaraguan immigrants are facing in Costa Rica: they are needed, but undesired. According to Appadurai, this binary opposition is key to understanding why minorities are viewed as a threat.

The thought of being dependent on undesired Others can be one explanation for the Costa Rican fear of losing their national ethos, of having their peace traditions polluted by foreigners. Interestingly, North American or European tourists do not seem to be associated with the same fear. In the questionnaires, *americanised* was one of the most selected adjectives. An editorial from a Costa Rican newspaper states that while the country is defending itself without arms, good news has arrived: three US travel agencies are recommending Costa Rica as their prime destination (La Republica, 27.11.2010). In Nicaragua the idea of what binds the country together is less clear, and therefore a changing population may be perceived as less threatening. Nicaragua is not experiencing the same amount of work immigration as Costa Rica. Tourism is, however, developing and is by many greeted as a way out of poverty. Also, Nicaragua is more dependent on oil money from Venezuela than it is on any particular minority.

During the conflict, it became important, particularly for some Costa Ricans to establish less fluid boundaries. Examples of this were seen when suggestions were put forward about blocking the borders for Nicaraguan immigrants and stopping remittances. This can be understood in relation to the financescapes and ethnoscapescapes described by Appadurai. Such suggestions would have controlled the flow of money and people in and out of Costa Rica. It would have harmed the Other as well as defined the number of “them” among “us”. The same initiatives were not seen in Nicaragua, although the Nicaraguan journalist Wilder Pérez said he had joked about not wanting to see any Costa Rican during the conflict.

Aspects of the financescapes and technoscapes were played out during the conflict, exemplified through the speculations about a hydraulic dam, a deep-water port, a US military base and a canal in the San Juan River. Sceptical eyes of both Nicaragua and Costa Rica were directed towards the money given from Venezuela to support the dredging project. A commentary in Nicaraguan *La Prensa* states that the conflict is created to distract Nicaraguans and to pat Chavez on the back, since he is the one paying for it (La Prensa, 09.11.2010). The Costa Rican

worries about Nicaragua's relation to Iran and the international canal project, must also be understood in relation to the same forces of globalisation. The Other becomes hard to define when it is multinational, in possession of money and technology, and composed by a delinquent trio of leaders undesired by North American and European powers.

The mediascape, as coined by Appadurai, claims that if media reports are happening far away, the audiences have little opportunity to verify the information. Therefore the thoughts and opinions of the receiver become dependent on the media, making it a powerful constructor of imagined worlds. The Isla Calero conflict happened as far away from the two countries' capitals it is possible to come. The Caribbean border is a desolate area, in many ways forgotten by both countries. Therefore the centre/periphery relation plays an important part in the construction of imagined worlds in this conflict.

All the major newspapers are located in San José or Managua, and the access to the villages close to Isla Calero is difficult. News reports were often based on official statements by governmental sources in the two capitals. The disputed area was visited only during the beginning of the conflict, and not by all newspapers. In a way the exoticness and wildness of the area became factors that enhanced the importance of the conflict, especially for urban consumers of media information.

A Costa Rican lawyer claims that the disputed swamp has been made into a magical land with elves and unicorns. He also states that:

What I consider deplorable is the pseudo-patriotic sentiments with smell of xenophobia that all of a sudden have attacked many Costa Ricans. The same people that probably, like me, knew that Isla Calero existed but who, also like me, would have been unable to find it quickly on a map (La Nación, 25.11.2010).⁷¹

This indicates the power of representation in the media of events that are far away. Two of the three journalists I interviewed had been to the conflict area at the beginning of the conflict, but had limited knowledge of what the other country was writing about the dispute. The journalist in Costa Rican La Republica had neither visited the conflict area, nor spoken to Nicaraguans apart from official communications. The journalist in La Nación had not read any articles written by Nicaraguan newspapers, but claimed: "Well, they had a very hard position, you know, towards

⁷¹ "Lo que me parece deplorable es ese sentimiento pseudopatriótico con tufo a xenofobia que, de pronto, ha asaltado a muchos costarricenses. Los mismos que probablemente, como yo, sabían que isla Calero existía pero que, también como yo, habrían sido incapaces de ubicarla rápidamente en el mapa."

our country. I believe the position of Costa Rica was a little milder, a little softer.”⁷² The Nicaraguan journalist in *La Prensa* did read Costa Rican newspapers, and criticised them for only citing the Costa Rican president and the chancellor whom he considers to be very offensive towards Nicaraguans.

The limited interaction between the media of the two countries has caused the conflict to be represented mainly from one side. This allows imagined worlds to grow, as no opposing images defy them. Such a situation lends tremendous power in the representation of the media, and the formation of opinions among its consumers. One article in *El Diario Extra* must be noted as an exception, it did include reactions towards the conflict in Nicaraguan newspapers (*El Diario Extra*, 04.11.2010).

In the two villages on either side of the border there were more or less unison agreement among the informants that the area was forgotten by the state before the conflict, and that the politicians and press in the capitals were playing out the conflict between them. The woman in the lunch stand in Barra del Colorado said: The conflict was not a problem for us, it was between two governors and did not affect us. I believe Isla Calero belongs to Costa Rica, but we just live here. We have got nothing to do with what they are doing, she stated. A fisherman in the same village told me: The news is making the conflict a lot more scandalous than it really was. We do not see it as a problem between people, it is only a political issue, he claimed. In San Juan de Nicaragua tensions were more noticeable and the conflict was still affecting working conditions for people along the river and within the village. As mostly Costa Rican media reach the village, it was hard to get information about how the inhabitants of San Juan de Nicaragua perceived the Nicaraguan media coverage.

Another way globalisation can be viewed is through the ideoscape mentioned by Appadurai. The possible re-election of Daniel Ortega, and the timing of the Isla Calero conflict, made the ideological opposites democracy/autocracy subjects of debate. On numerous occasions, the declining Nicaraguan democracy was commented on, in both countries and in all researched newspapers. A Nicaraguan journalist writes in a letter to *La Prensa*: “Daniel Ortega, is moving towards the re-election, abusing and violating – just like the Somozas did – the Political

⁷² “Entonces, era un posición de ellos que es muy dura, verdad, hacía nuestro país. Yo creo que la posición de Costa Rica fue un poco más apacible, más suave.”

Constitution of the Republic” (La Prensa, 08.11.2010b).⁷³ Further, the cooperation with Venezuela and other left-winged members of ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the peoples of our America), such as Cuba, Ecuador and Guyana throughout the conflict, reworked impressions of Nicaragua as a red scare. Costa Rica’s ideological, political and historical ties to the United States are in stark contrast to the Nicaragua, Iran, Venezuela trio. Indeed, this coupling is perceived to be a threat so imminent that a Costa Rican found it best to advise his fellow citizens: “Iran is bordering us in the north” (La Republica, 23.11.2010a).⁷⁴

Viewing the five dimensions of globalisation defined by Appadurai, his claim that the majority may feel threatened by the minority is particularly relevant to analyse the perceived danger Nicaraguan immigrants pose to the Costa Rican society. Sandoval-García, Huhn, Molina and Palmer all describe the Costa Rican identity undergoing a crisis, the sources of which possibly can be explained through the different aspects of globalisation. It is unlikely that the Nicaraguan immigrants, through the forces of globalisation, will be able to challenge the Costa Rican majority in any way. Still, they are a reminder of the loss of the Costa Rican national ethos.

Further, Costa Rica perceives the transnational flows of money and technology to Nicaragua as a threat. Particularly since the countries cooperating with Nicaragua have a different ideological stance. Therefore, through different forces of globalisation, Nicaragua is reconstructed as a communist threat with new and powerful friends. The immigrants inside Costa Rica increasingly become connected to this idea of Nicaragua. They turn into the feared small number as described by Appadurai, the cell, the spy or the revolutionary.

In Nicaragua the national identity is loosely defined, and the country’s borders have always been somewhat porous. Therefore changes can be adapted more easily in Nicaragua than in Costa Rica, and the ethnoscape becomes less threatening. Development is desired in Nicaragua, therefore transnational flows of money, technology and people mostly bring a positive connotation. Finally, the mediascapes contributed to the creation of “imagined worlds” in both countries, exaggerating the conflict and sparking negative sentiments about the other through the lack of dialogue between the countries.

⁷³ “Daniel Ortega, que va camino hacia la reelección, atropellando y violando —igual que lo hacían los Somoza— la Constitución Política de la República.”

⁷⁴ “Irán: Frontera Norte de Costa Rica.”

9 Review of research questions and findings

At last I shall make a cautious attempt at answering my research questions. The analytical framework of this thesis have guided my interpretation of the material and made important processes of group formation visible. Still, mine is only one of many possible readings of stereotypes among and about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Hopefully this chapter can contribute to an insight into the many different points of view, shedding light on the stereotypes that were (re)produced in the context of the Isla Calero conflict. I will first present my five subordinate research questions before answering my main research question.

Which stereotypes were (re)produced in the media coverage of the Isla Calero conflict?

Through the media coverage of the conflict, the superiority of each country was promoted by pointing out the negative sides of the other. Nicaragua represented itself as peaceful and environmental through disputing the image of Costa Rica as demilitarised and ecological. By doing this, any Costa Rican criticism of Nicaraguan environmental destruction or military presence in Isla Calero, was rendered false or invalid. This allowed Nicaraguans to claim these assets for themselves. Moreover, the xenophobia experienced by Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica was taken as an attack on Nicaragua itself. Through the media the stereotype of Costa Ricans as racists was maintained during the conflict.

In Costa Rican media the Nicaraguan “invasion” of Isla Calero caused ridicule and anger, framing Nicaraguans as militarists who brainlessly were cutting down forest on Isla Calero. The Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica were presented as either unwanted or pitied, following the calls for closed borders and the attack on the embassy. Through comparing Costa Rica to these stereotyped representations of the Nicaraguan Other, the Costa Rican identity as peaceful, democratic and unarmed was enhanced. Also through the Costa Rican media, Nicaragua was increasingly recreated as a red scare. This image was also transferred to Nicaraguans, increasing the perceived ideological divide.

2. Which stereotypes were (re)produced when Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans spoke about the Isla Calero conflict?

When my Nicaraguan informants were explaining the legal rights of Nicaragua in claiming the tip of the Calero Island, they were (re)producing stereotypes about Costa Ricans. Apart from assuring the existence of the caño, informants explained the Costa Rican expansionism in the

past and connected it to the present, claiming that the San Juan River could be taken just like Guanacaste. Further, Costa Rica as an ecological country was contested. Informants claimed that the ecological image of Costa Rica was false and nothing but a facade. Nobody questioned the Nicaraguan actions on Isla Calero. A few of the informants claimed to have experienced Costa Rican racism, based on skin-colour and ridicule of the Nicaraguan way of speaking.

Most of the Costa Ricans I met made references to their national and international reputation as a peaceful country. Although many informants recognised that the conflict was a political issue, the source of it was considered to be solely Nicaraguan. One informant explained the conflict through the different mentality and formation of the Nicaraguans. Others pitied the Nicaraguans for being governed by a dictator who is taking money away from education and using it on warfare. None of the informants were in doubt about the Costa Rican legal right to the entire Calero Island. My informants in Barra del Colorado expressed an overarching distrust of Nicaragua, and what the country's next move may be.

How are perceptions of Us and an Other created historically within and between these countries?

In Costa Rica the imagined community has been consolidated through a belief in inherent peace traditions. It is an idea born after the abolition of the army in 1948, but the image is revered as ancient psychological and even physiological traits of the inhabitants. The democratic development in the country is explained through the myth of the "white" roots of the Costa Rican. Through repeating these myths, the Other is removed from the Us, and the difference vis á vis African-Americans, indigenous or Nicaraguans becomes naturalised and unchangeable.

Although the imagined community in Nicaragua has been fragmented by war and internal disputes, Augusto Sandino has become an icon heavily loaded with national identity and pride. He serves as a reminder of Nicaraguan trueness to principles, courage and bravery. During the conflict, the willingness to protect sovereignty from Costa Rican expansionism was evoked through the ideals of Sandino, strengthening national identity and maintaining the distance to the cowardly Costa Rican Other.

Why were stereotypes describing Us and an Other used in the context of the Isla Calero conflict?

Analysing the discourses of the newspapers and the informants, the countries' one-way

relationship becomes visible. To transmit stereotypes about themselves and about the other, both countries use the power of representation on the national arena. Opposing argumentation is largely ignored. This lack of dialogue leaves the stereotypes undisputed within the two countries, a tendency enhanced by the effects of the mediascape. In the context of the Isla Calero conflict, it became important for both countries to define boundaries, both those of the nation and those of people. Stereotypes about Us and an Other thus became a tool in this process.

As globalisation increases the fluidity of boundaries, many Costa Ricans feared their national identity threatened. Stereotyping Nicaraguans during the conflict was a way to maintain national unity and define both external and internal Others. Whether or not the conflict was made to boost support for Ortega's re-election, it managed to unite Nicaraguans. Particularly one aspect became important: disputing Costa Rica's national stereotypes. Thus, through contesting the Costa Rican image, a Nicaraguan identity appeared, and the boundary towards Costa Rica was maintained.

How were the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican societies reconstructed in relation to each other during this conflict?

Discourse can put together or pull apart the social fabric. The use of repetition, myths and deconstruction was employed by both countries to reconstruct national identity. In Nicaragua social mobilisation was achieved through linking the past to the present, through recounting the loss of Guanacaste and claiming the San Juan River to be threatened in the same way. When supporting Nicaragua during the conflict, the participants were connected in "homogenous empty time", united through time and space. Further, if the San Juan River is the path to development, Costa Rica's expansionism threatened also Nicaragua's future. This aspect contributed to a deconstruction of similarities between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, deepening the gap between the countries.

The Costa Rican president made use of diplomatic institutions to solve the dispute. The Nicaraguan withdrawal from OAS, and the frayed reputation of both Daniel Ortega and Edén Pastora, contributed to a recreation of the delinquent Other, Nicaragua as the rebel. This reconstructed the image of a peaceful Costa Rican society. However, the reconstruction of this image was set back as social cleavages appeared after the attack on the Nicaraguan embassy. Nevertheless, during a time when the Costa Rican national identity lacked credibility, the Isla

Calero conflict became a needed symbol to restore a belief in the nation's peacefulness and demobilisation.

Finally, building on the answers from my five subordinate research questions, I will attempt to answer my main research question:

What does the Isla Calero conflict reveal about stereotypes about Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica and Nicaragua?

Although Costa Ricans recognised that the Isla Calero conflict was a political game, the Nicaraguan people were implicitly blamed for allowing Ortega to govern them. The perceived lack of democracy, peace and North-American influence in Nicaragua, is explained by Costa Ricans through the different disposition of the Nicaraguan. This makes it easier for Costa Ricans to naturalise their psychological superiority over Nicaraguans. Through making Nicaraguan history into myth, Costa Ricans construct the Nicaraguans as having an inherent lust for violence and destruction, and to have chosen to be poor, uncivilised and workers.

In Nicaragua, the Costa Rican national identity as peaceful is attacked, deconstructed and proven to be neither sacred nor special. Costa Ricans are (re)constructed as expansionist and a threat to Nicaraguan sovereignty. This contributes to strengthen the Nicaraguan self-perception as brave and independent defenders of national boundaries. The perception of Costa Rican xenophobia became even more consolidated in the Nicaraguan society during the conflict, contributing to the stereotype of Costa Rican falseness and promoting proudness among Nicaraguans for handling the conflict without violent or xenophobic expressions.

Through their discourses, both Costa Rica and Nicaragua seek to achieve much the same. Both countries want to promote themselves as peaceful and environmental. Through such self-promoting discourses, imagined communities are constructed and the borders between Us and an Other are consolidated. But the willingness to actually achieve peace is left out from the countries' discursive strategies. Both Nicaragua and Costa Rica fuel their own hegemony of representation, making room for the other mainly through negative or stereotyped descriptions. Dialogue is the key to solve many conflicts, and the lack of it is one way to reinforce or prolong disputes. My research from two time periods shows that the stereotypes used during the conflict are relevant also a year later. The disputes connected to the San Juan River have gone on for centuries, and new conflicts are emerging at a steady rate. One way to change the negative

relations would be for Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans to start deconstructing the stereotypes related to Us and an Other.

Hopefully this thesis has contributed to a better understanding of the stereotypes used by Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans in maintaining a boundary towards the other, and the many components at play in this process. As a student of peace and conflict, I believe that understanding group formation and the production of stereotypes can be one way to improve or change difficult relations. As described here, stereotypes are complex products of history, myth, power relations and globalisation. They are powerful and can mobilise groups of people, but they can also be deconstructed. I hope my study can provide insights into how stereotypes have been used to fuel the conflict between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and also the possibility of deconstructing these to bring about a focus on the similarities between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans.

Epilogue

The conflict over Isla Calero was sent to ICJ in November 2010, but it was far from settled. From 2010 until the present there have been continuous reports in the media on different issues in the border zone. This is a summary of some of them.

In January 2011 Nicaragua reports that Costa Rica is expanding their military infrastructure close to the border and is planning a possible attack (El Nuevo Diario, 09.01.2011) Later in the month, the Costa Rican chancellor goes on a European tour to expose the conflict to other diplomatic instances questioning the aid money Europe gives Nicaragua (La Nación, 29.01.2011). Nicaragua starts removing their troops from Isla Calero late in January. The Costa Rican authorities, however, consider it to be part of a trick to confuse the judges of the International Court of Justice (La Nación, 01.02.2011)

The 8th of March the ICJ makes a temporarily judgement on the Isla Calero issue, received positively by both countries. The statement holds that both countries shall refrain from sending civilians, police or security personnel to the disputed territory, including the caño. Costa Rica is however allowed to dispatch personnel charged with the protection of the environment and wetlands. Both parties have to refrain from actions that can aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court makes its final decision (ICJ 2011: 21-22).

Nicaragua celebrates that the ruling did not mention the dredging and that it was referred to the “caño” in Spanish. This can indicate that the court regards one side of it to be Costa Rican and the other to be Nicaraguan, law experts claim (El Nuevo Diario, 09.03.2011). In Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla considers the ruling to be a convincing victory (La Nación, 09.03.2011a). International law experts accentuate Costa Rica being given the environmental responsibility over the disputed area. Oscar Arías, however, is worried that Nicaragua may be allowed to continue the dredging (La Nación, 09.03.2011b).

Late in 2011, the Nicaraguan media start writing about the road Costa Rica is constructing along the San Juan River. The Nicaraguan historian Jaime Incer Barquero claims the road to be an attack on the Nicaraguan ecosystem and sovereignty, contradictory of the Costa Rican environmental propaganda (La Prensa, 04.12.2011). As a cause of the road construction and the consequent pollution of the San Juan River, Nicaragua reports Costa Rica to the Central

American Court of Justice and the ICJ (La Prensa, 04.05.2012). Costa Rica, however, rejects Nicaragua's claim to the Central American Court of Justice since the country is not a member of this instance (La Nación, 04.07.2012) Costa Rica starts a replantation of forest in the area where the road has been constructed with the help of volunteers and school children (Radio Santa Clara 2012).

In May 2012 Nicaragua announces a yellow alert. It demands a stand-by disaster surveillance of the San Juan River. The river keeps deteriorating as a cause of the road construction and Costa Rica's false environmental politics, Wilder Pérez writes (La Prensa, 30.05.2012). In the beginning of July 2012, the Nicaraguan general assembly unanimously voted in favour of a legal regime approving the construction of an inter-oceanic canal through the San Juan River. This may promote economic development, but not necessarily social development, some critics say (El Nuevo Diario, 04.07.2012). Costa Ricans are alerted by the news of the canal since the southern side of the river belongs to them. A Nicaraguan member of the opposition claims that the canal is Ortega's way to the "promised land". She also states that Ortega is preparing himself in case Hugo Chavez falls and Nicaragua is left without funding (La Nación, 04.07.2012).

It is still uncertain when the International Court of Justice will make a judgement regarding the Isla Calero conflict.

References

Primary sources

Interviews:

Barra del Colorado 28.09.2011 and 29.09.2011

Boat keeper
Cashier
Cook
Fishermen
Hairdresser
Hotel owner
Police officer
Social Development Unit Worker
Teacher

Guanacaste 28.08.2011

Farm owner

The San Juan River and San Juan de Nicaragua: 22-26.10.2011

Cashier in grocery store
City Hall employee
Guide
Hostel owner
Soldier

Journalists

Arguedas, Carlos (2011): *Interview with Anne Natvig*. La Nación, San José, Costa Rica 22.09.2011.

Cambronero, Natasha (2011): *Interview with Anne Natvig*. La Republica, San José, Costa Rica 23.09.2011.

Pérez, Wilder (2011): *Interview with Anne Natvig*. La Prensa, Managua, Nicaragua 18.10.2011.

Newspaper items:

El Diario Extra

Diario Extra, El, 02.11.2010a: 3: *Ejercito de Nicaragua acampa en suelo tico*
Diario Extra, El, 02.11.2010b: 6: *Señor, paciencia con el gobierno de Nicaragua)*
Diario Extra, El, 03.11.2010: 5: *Nicas invasores nos apuntan con fusiles AK-47*
Diario Extra, El, 04.11.2010: 6: *Diputados Nicas en sesión a orillas del San Juan*
Diario Extra, El, 09.11.2010: 6: *Que la OEA no se deje engañar*

Diario Extra, El, 10.11.2010: 7: *OEA es cómplice de dictadores latinoamericanos*
 Diario Extra, El, 11.11.2010a: 6: *La incapacidad de la OEA*
 Diario Extra, El, 11.11.2010b: 7: *Siento frustración por lentitud de los organismos internacionales*
 Diario Extra, El, 12.11.2010a: 7: *Nicaragua se arma hasta los dientes*
 Diario Extra, El, 12.11.2010b: 8: *Detienen 6 camiones de guerra Nicas en Limón*

La Nación

Nación, La, 01.11.2010: 39A: *Precisiones sobre el dragado del San Juan*
 Nación, La, 02.11.2010: 5A: *Policías y avionetas cambian rutina en Barra del Colorado*
 Nación, La, 04.11.2010a: 4A: *Negativa Nica a retirar tropas atasca acuerdo en la OEA*
 Nación, La, 04.11.2010b: 5A: *Pescadores temen represalias por conflicto*
 Nación, La, 04.11.2010c: 5A: *Map of the Google boundary*
 Nación, La, 04.11.2010d: 28A: *Pastora, olvidadizo*
 Nación, La, 06.11.2010: 18A: *Google reconoce error en mapa que traza límites en sector de isla Calero*
 Nación, La, 07.11.2010: 27A: *Googling the border*
 Nación, La, 10.11.2010a: 6A: *País da 48 horas a Nicaragua para retirar tropas de isla Calero*
 Nación, La, 10.11.2010b: 26A: *Una agresión intolerable.*
 Nación, La, 11.11.2010a: 4A: *Chinchilla clama al mundo apoyo contra invasión de tropas nicas*
 Nación, La, 11.11.2010b: 28A: *La gran lección*
 Nación, La, 12.11.2010a: 7A: *Dragado de votos*
 Nación, La, 12.11.2010b: 7A: *Nicaragua trajo camiones militares por Limón.*
 Nación, La, 12.11.2010c: 31A: *Las fronteras merecen nuevos paradigmas*
 Nación, La, 13.11.2010a: 4A: *OEA llama a Nicaragua a retirar tropas de isla Calero*
 Nación, La, 13.11.2010b: 5A: *Corregido error en mapa de 'Google Earth'*
 Nación, La, 13.11.2010c: 5A: *Niños marcharon en nombre de la paz*
 Nación, La, 14.11.2010: 27A: *Dragado del río San Juan*
 Nación, La, 15.11.2010a: 8A: *Reproches a Ortega por ataques a Costa Rica, OEA y otros países*
 Nación, La, 15.11.2010b: 49A: *Las fronteras de la razón*
 Nación, La, 16.11.2010: 31A: *Yo no tengo bandera*
 Nación, La, 17.11.2010a: 31A: *El megaproyecto Brito: negocio de fondo de los políticos nicas*
 Nación, La, 17.11.2010b: 31A: *Más seguro sin bandera*
 Nación, La, 17.11.2010c: 33A: *Triunfo en San Juan!*
 Nación, La, 18.11.2010: 4A: *Fiscalía de Pococí gira orden de captura contra Edén Pastora*

- Nación, La, 19.11.2010a: 4A: *Costa Rica, urgida, demanda a Nicaragua ante Corte de La Haya*
- Nación, La, 19.11.2010b: 34A: *Silencio sospechoso*
- Nación, La, 20.11.2010: 32A: *Yo sí tengo bandera*
- Nación, La, 21.11.2010a: 5A: *Ejército nica abre nuevo puesto junto al río San Juan*
- Nación, La, 21.11.2010b: 30A: *Despertemos*
- Nación, La, 22.11.2010a: 8A: *Todo litigo depende de acciones de las partes*
- Nación, La, 22.11.2010b: 12A: *Chinchilla: Nicaragüenses no deben tener temor*
- Nación, La, 23.11.2010: 35A: *De Morokón a Harbour Head*
- Nación, La, 25.11.2010: 36A: *Un falso patriotismo*
- Nación, La, 28.11.2010: 32A: *Esta patria, que amamos tanto*
- Nación, La, 29.11.2010: 52A: *Carta del padre Juan Álvarez a Daniel Ortega*
- Nación, La, 29.01.2011: 36A: *Diplomacia personal*
- Nación, La, 01.02.2011: 4A: *País juzga aparente retiro nica de Calero como 'engaño'*
- Nación, La, 09.03.2011a: 6A: *País logra retiro de tropas y custodia ambiental a Calero*
- Nación, La, 09.03.2011b: 8A: *Expertos satisfechos... Arias teme a Ortega*
- Nación, La, online, 04.07.2012: *País en alerta ante canal interoceánico en Nicaragua*
 <<http://www.nacion.com/2012-07-04/ElPais/Pais-en-alerta-ante-canal-interoceanico-en-Nicaragua.aspx>> [Accessed 12.07.2012]

El Nuevo Diario

- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 01.11.2010: *Costa Rica acude a OEA*
 <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87012>> [Accessed 01.04.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 02.11.2010: *No saldremos*
 <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87081>> [Accessed 15.03.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 03.11.2010a: *Denuncia tica es por vieja pretensión de quitarnos el San Juan* <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87197>> [Accessed 15.03.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 03.11.2010b: *Ríosanjuaneños cierran filas en defensa del río*
 <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87189>> [Accessed 01.04.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 05.11.2010: *Costa Rica puede estar buscando agua del Cocibolca*
 <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87362>> [Accessed 16.03.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 10.11.2010: *Enorme ofensiva Tica*
 <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87663>> [Accessed 02.04.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 13.11.2010a: *Atacan con coctel molotov embajada de Nicaragua en Costa Rica* <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87880>> [Accessed 18.03.2012]
- Nuevo Diario, El, online, 13.11.2010b: *Chinchilla saca provecho a una marcha de niños*

<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/87875> [Accessed 17.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 16.11.2010: *Sabiduría palabra clave en el tema del Río San Juan*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88135> [Accessed 17.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 17.11.2010: *Ortega abrió “caja de Pandora” en cuanto a seguridad* < <http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88198> [Accessed 19.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 21.11.2010: *No basta proclamar que el río San Juan es nica*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88481> [Accessed 03.04.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 22.11.2010a: *“Guerra sicóloga inmoral”*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88524> [Accessed 19.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 22.11.2010b: *Intelectuales por la fraternidad entre ticos y nicas*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88562> [Accessed 03.04.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 22.11.2010c: *No hay tal Nuevo puesto militar en San Juan*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88565> [Accessed 15.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 25.11.2010: *No nos hierren con armas de fuego, sino con palabras*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/88759> [Accessed 11.05.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 27.11.2010a: *Alerta por Brito*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/89040> [Accessed 16.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 27.11.2010b: *Río San Juan “atacado” por descargas tico-nica*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/89086> [Accessed 18.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 28.11.2010: *Dragado para que?*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/89110> [Accessed 16.03.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 09.01.2011: *Ticos se atrincheran*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/92008> [Accessed 12.05.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 09.03.2011: *Un fallo por la paz*
<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/nacionales/96565> [Accessed 12.05.2012]

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 04.07.2012: *Aprueban régimen jurídico para el Canal Interoceánico* <<http://www.elnuevodiario.com.ni/politica/256789>> [Accessed 12.07.2012]

La Prensa

Prensa, La, 02.11.2010a: 1A, 7A: *Coreanos llegan hoy para hablar sobre puerto en Monkey Point*

Prensa, La, 02.11.2010b: 7A: *Ticos acuden a la OEA por dragado*

Prensa, La, 04.11.2010a: 1A, 6A: *Nicaragua deja mal parada a Costa Rica*

Prensa, La, 04.11.2010b: 6A: *Temor en Río San Juan*

Prensa, La, 04.11.2010c: 11A: *En letra pequeña*

Prensa, La, 05.11.2010: 8A: *Lo nacional y lo político en el caso del San Juan*

- Prensa, La, 06.11.2010a: 1: *Map of the boundary marks*
- Prensa, La, 06.11.2010b: 1A, 7A: *Ticos temen a mojones*
- Prensa, La, 07.11.2010: 1A: *Costa Rica tiene intención expansionista*
- Prensa, La, 08.11.2010a: 5A: *Insulza: diálogo y mojones*
- Prensa, La, 08.11.2010b: 8A: *Paradoja de los sandinistas*
- Prensa, La, 09.11.2010: 9A: *El conflicto fronterizo Costa Rica-Nicaragua*
- Prensa, La, 10.11.2010a: 1A, 6A: *OEA manda a dialogar*
- Prensa, La, 10.11.2010b: 4A: *Condena moral contra Costa Rica*
- Prensa, La, 10.11.2010c: 10A: *Salvemos la Patria*
- Prensa, La, 10.11.2010d: 10A: *The Costa Rican OAS representative*
- Prensa, La, 10.11.2010e: 11A: *Let's place the boundary marks*
- Prensa, La, 11.11.2010: 1A, 12A: *Cambios geográficos no desplazan la frontera*
- Prensa, La, 12.11.2010a: 1A, 6A: *Costa Rica con grave provocación*
- Prensa, La, 12.11.2010b: 1A, 6A: *Diputados: tropas están en suelo nica*
- Prensa, La, 12.11.2010c: 8A: *A Costa Rican matador*
- Prensa, La, 13.11.2010: 1A, 6A: *OEA condiciona diálogo*
- Prensa, La, 14.11.2010a: 1A, 5A: *Nicaragua no acatará pedido OEA*
- Prensa, La, 14.11.2010b: 5A: *Map of the Colorado River*
- Prensa, La, 15.11.2010a: 1A, 7A: *Experto: "El San Juan es el fondo de todo el problema"*
- Prensa, La, 15.11.2010b: 9A: *The diplomacy of the butcher*
- Prensa, La, 16.11.2010: 1A, 6A: *Ortega dice que sólo tratará conflicto en La Haya*
- Prensa, La, 17.11.2010a: 1A, 6A: *Insulza desmiente a ticos sobre comisión OEA*
- Prensa, La, 17.11.2010b: 10A: *Verdad y error del ex presidente Arias*
- Prensa, La, 17.11.2010c: 11A: *La verdadera violación a la soberanía de Nicaragua*
- Prensa, La, 17.11.2010d: 11A: *El odio no es la solución*
- Prensa, La, 17.11.2010e: 11A: *The only state council*
- Prensa, La, 18.11.2010: 9A: *En letra pequeña*
- Prensa, La, 20.11.2010: 1A, 6A: *Dragado es un derecho absoluto de Nicaragua*
- Prensa, La, 23.11.2010: 11A: *Sovereignty and "sovereigns"*
- Prensa, La, 24.11.2010a: 9A: *Costa Rica siempre ha insistido, Nicaragua siempre ha cedido*
- Prensa, La, 24.11.2010b: 9A: *Edén Pastora*
- Prensa, La, 27.11.2010: 1A, 7A: *"Ecológicos" ticos despalan en el San Juan*
- Prensa, La, online, 04.12.2011: *El río y la carretera*
 <<http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2011/12/04/entrevista/82708-rio-carretera>>
 [Accessed 12.05.2012]
- Prensa, La, online, 04.05.2012: *Chinchilla denuncia supuesto corrupción en carretera que afecta el río San Juan* <<http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2012/05/04/planeta/100309-chinchilla-denuncia-supuesta-corrupcion>> [Accessed 12.05.2012]
- Prensa, La, online, 30.05.2012: *Alerta amarilla para el río San Juan*
 <<http://www.laprensa.com.ni/2012/05/30/ambito/103163-alerta-amarilla-rio-sann>>
 [Accessed 12.07.2012]

La Republica

- Republica, La, 03.11.2010: 18: *¡Otra vez el río!*
Republica, La, 04.11.2010: 6: *Map of Isla Calero and the canal*
Republica, La, 08.11.2010: 23: *Conflictos fronterizos*
Republica, La, 09.11.2010: 18: *Amojonar la OEA*
Republica, La, 11.11.2010: 8, 9: *Costa Rica vs. Nicaragua: opciones pacíficas y más*

Republica, La, 12.11.2010a: 11: *Irán y Venezuela planifican un canal interoceánico en Nicaragua*

Republica, La, 12.11.2010b: 14: *Hoy tenemos una oportunidad*
Republica, La, 13.11.2010: 6: *Costa Rica sí tendría armas contra invasión nica*
Republica, La, 15.11.2010a: 26: *Causará Google las invasiones del futuro?*
Republica, La, 15.11.2010b: 27: *The Costa Rican troops ready to invade Nicaragua!*

Republica, La, 16.11.2010a: 18: *River man*
Republica, La, 16.11.2010b: 20: *El pleito con Nicaragua*
Republica, La, 19.11.2010a: 13: *La “lucha” no es entre nosotros*
Republica, La, 19.11.2010b: 13: *I do like these little games*
Republica, La, 19.11.2010c: 15: *Brain*
Republica, La, 20.11.2010: 14: *Asserín asserán...the timber of Isla Calero!*
Republica, La, 23.11.2010a: 14: *Irán: Frontera Norte de Costa Rica*
Republica, La, 23.11.2010b: 14: *Nicaragua pobre, Nicaragua armada*
Republica, La, 27.11.2010: 14: *Trabajar es más valiente que pelear*

Secondary sources

Anderson, Benedict (2006): *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Appadurai, Arjun (1996): *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Appadurai, Arjun (2006): *Fear of Small Numbers. An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

BBC, online, 11.01.2012: *Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega begins new presidential term*
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-16482258> -16482258> [Accessed 26.04.2012]

Blum, William (2004): *Killing Hope. US Military & CIA Interventions since World War II*. London: Zed Books.

Bryman, Alan (2003): 'Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Further Reflections on their Integration'. In Julia Brannen (ed.) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. London: Ashgate.

Bryman, Alan (2008): *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burns, E. Bradford and Julie A. Charlip (2007): *Latin America: An Interpretive History*. New Jersey: Pearson, Prentice Hall.

Chasteen, John Charles (2008): *Americanos. Latin America's Struggle for Independence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chasteen, John Charles (2011): *Born in Blood & Fire. A concise history of Latin America*. New York: W. W. Norton.

CIA, Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, online, 2012: *Country Comparison: Military Expenditures* <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2034rank.html>> [Accessed 04.06.2012]

Díaz Loria, Manuel (2012): *Información Calero Diario Extra*. <Email to Anne Natvig (05.02.2012)>

Economist, The, online, 11.11.2010: *Dredging up votes* <<http://www.economist.com/node/17463483>> [Accessed 23.04.2012]

Fonseca, Juan Carlos Solórzano (2002): 'La sociedad colonial 1575-1821'. In Ana María Botey Sobrado (ed.) *Costa Rica, estado, economía, sociedad y cultura. Desde las sociedades autóctonas hasta 1914*. San José: Editorial UCR.

Geology, online, 2012: *Central America Map – Central America Satellite Image* <<http://geology.com/world/central-america-satellite-image.shtml>> [Accessed 29.05.2012]

Hall, Stuart (2001): 'The Spectacle of the 'Other''. In Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates (eds.) *Discourse Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Hall, Stuart (2002): 'The Spectacle of the 'Other''. In Stuart Hall (ed.) *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage in association with the Open University.

Huhn, Sebastian (2009): *Contested Cornerstones of Nonviolent National Self-Perception in Costa Rica: A Historical Approach*. Research Paper, German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA).

Høivik, Tord and Solveig Aas (1981): 'Demilitarization in Costa Rica: A Farewell to Arms?'. *Journal of Peace Research*. Vol. 18, No. 4

ICJ, International Court of Justice (13.07.2009): *Dispute regarding navigational and related rights (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)*. Hague.

ICJ, International Court of Justice (08.03.2011): *Certain activities carried out by Nicaragua in the border area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua). Request for the indication of provisional measures*. Hague.

INCB, International Narcotics Control Board (2012): *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2011*. New York: United Nations

INEC, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de Costa Rica, 2008: *C.01. Población migrante, país de inmigración-residencia, por sexo y ciudadanía 2003-2008* <<http://www.inec.go.cr/Web/Home/GeneradorPagina.aspx>> [Accessed 23.04.2012].

Lincoln, Bruce (1989): *Discourse and the Construction of Society. Comparative studies of myth, ritual and classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Longley, Kyle (1993): 'Peaceful Costa Rica, the First Battleground: The United States and the Costa Rican Revolution of 1948'. *The Americas*. Vol. 50, No. 2

Miller, Robert L. and John D. Brewer (2003): *The A-Z of Social Research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Millett, Richard L. (2007): 'Nicaragua. The Politics of Frustration'. In Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline (eds.) *Latin American Politics and Development*. Colorado: Westview Press.

Molina, Iván and Steven Palmer (2007): *The history of Costa Rica*. San José: Editorial, University of Costa Rica.

Nuevo Diario, El, online, 2012: *Quienes somos* <http://elnuevodiario.com.do/app/corp_quienessomos.aspx> [Accessed 30.03.2012].

Priest, Susanna Hornig (2010): *Doing Media Research. An Introduction*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Quirós, Claudia (2003): *La Era de la Encomienda*. San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica.

Rabella, Joaquim (2004): *Aproximación a la Historia del Río San Juan*. Managua: MARENA.

Radio Santa Clara, online, 15.03.2012: *Escolares y voluntarios empezaron reforestación en carretera fronteriza con Nicaragua* <<http://www.radiosantaclara.org/article/escolares-y-voluntarios-empezaron-reforestacion-en/>> [Accessed 13.05.2012]

Recopilación de documentos, La, a, online: *Cañas-Jerez* <<http://www.manfut.org/cronologia/jerez.html>> [Accessed 13.04.2012]

Recopilación de documentos, La, b, online: *Laudo Alexander, No. 1* <<http://www.manfut.org/cronologia/laudo1.html>> [Accessed 13.04.2012]

Recopilación de documentos, La, c, online: *Laudo del presidente de los EE. UU. , Mr. Grover Cleveland* <<http://www.manfut.org/cronologia/cleveland.html>> [Accessed 13.04.2012]

Reuters, online, 16.11.2011: *Nicaragua's Ortega to enjoy 2/3 majority in Congress* <<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCATRE7AF2D820111116>> [Accessed 12.04.2012]

- Rojas, Eugenia Ibarra (1999): *Las Manchas del Jaguar. Huellas indígenas en la historia de Costa Rica*. San Jose: Editorial, Universidad de Costa Rica.
- Rushdie, Salman (1987): *The Jaguar Smile. A Nicaraguan Journey*. London: Pan Books, Picador.
- Said, Edward W. (1979): *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage books.
- Said, Edward W. (2004): *Orientalismen*. Otta: Cappelen.
- Sandoval-García, Carlos (2004): *Threatening Others. Nicaraguans and the Formation of National Identities in Costa Rica*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Seligson, Mitchell A. (2007): 'Costa Rica'. In Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline (eds.) *Latin American Politics and Development*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Seligson, Mitchell A. and John A. Booth (1993): 'Political Culture and Regime Type: Evidence from Nicaragua and Costa Rica'. *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 55, No. 3
- SIPRI, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, online, 2012: *Military Expenditure*⁷⁵ <<http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4>> [Accessed 17.03.2012]
- Smith, Wayne S. (1987): 'Lies about Nicaragua'. *Foreign Policy*. No. 67
- Store Norske Leksikon, online, 21.07.2009 : *Nicaragua - Historie* <<http://snl.no/Nicaragua/historie>> [Accessed 11.04.2012]
- Tico Times, online, 24.11.2010: *Costa Rican Court Strikes Down Las Crucitas Gold Mine Project* <http://www.ticotimes.net/Current-Edition/News-Briefs/Costa-Rican-Court-Strikes-Down-Las-Crucitas-Gold-Mine-Project_Wednesday-November-24-2010> [Accessed 26.04.2012]
- Time World, online, 10.10.2009: *Costa Rica's President: It's Not Easy Staying Green* <<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1927452,00.html>> [Accessed 26.04.2012]
- UNDP, United Nations Development Programme, online, 2011: *Human development Index and its components* <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table1.pdf> [Accessed 02.04.2012]
- Vilas, Carlos M. (1992): 'Family Affairs: Class, Lineage and Politics in Contemporary Nicaragua'. *Journal of Latin American Studies*. Vol. 24, No. 2

⁷⁵ From this link the search words: *Costa Rica* and *Nicaragua* have been used.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire group 1:

Cuestionario

Marcar con un **C** los 5 adjetivos que más relacione con la gente de Costa Rica. Marcar con un **N** los 5 adjetivos que más relacione con la gente de Nicaragua. Los adjetivos marcados pueden ser los mismos. Si no tiene un opinión o no quiere responder puede marcar esto bajo de los adjetivos.

Sexo

	Mujer
	Hombre

Adjetivos

	Aburridos
	Violentos
	Altos
	Sucios
	Arrogantes
	Silenciosos
	Cobardes
	Ricos
	Críticos
	Pobres
	Ecológicos
	Pacifistas
	Egocéntricos
	No ser de fiar
	Orgullosos

	Justos
	Limpios
	Generosos
	Obediente a la ley
	Educados
	Pequeños
	Determinados
	Racistas
	Consumidores
	Sensibles
	Civilizados
	Sin educación
	Americanizados
	Trabajadores
	Agresivos

	Sin opinión
	No quiero responder

Appendix 2

Questionnaire group 2:

Cuestionario

Busca 5 adjetivos que parece son estereotipos de la gente de Costa Rica y marca estos con un **C**.
Busca 5 adjetivos que parece son estereotipos de la gente de Nicaragua y marca estos con un **N**.
Los adjetivos marcados pueden ser los mismos. Si no tiene un opinión o no quiere responder puede marcar esto bajo de los adjetivos.

Sexo

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mujer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hombre

Adjetivos

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aburridos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Violentos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Altos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sucios
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrogantes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Silenciosos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cobardes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ricos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Críticos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pobres
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ecológicos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pacifistas
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Egocéntricos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No ser de fiar
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Orgullosos

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Justos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limpios
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Generosos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Obediente a la ley
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educados
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pequeños
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Determinados
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Racistas
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consumidores
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensibles
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Civilizados
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sin educación
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Americanizados
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trabajadores
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agresivos

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sin opinión
<input type="checkbox"/>	No quiero responder