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## Central American Membership: Belize among Neighboring Countries

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## Central American Membership: Belize among Neighboring Countries

La pertenencia centroamericana: Belice entre países vecinos

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes external factors that influenced the formation of the Belizean Nation-state from a regional perspective. It highlights the relations between Belize and Central America which have been worked scarcely in the social studies of the region. Among the factors that contributed to build these relationships are i) the formation of the territory in the midst of disputes and colonial interests between Spain and England; ii) the successive migrations that took place in Belize, and that formed a multiethnic and multicultural society, strengthening its ties with Central America; and, iii) the border disputes with Guatemala that caused a sort of externalization of its effects both in its representation of belonging to the region, and in its inclusion within Central American social studies.

**Keywords:** Belize, Central America, Nation-State, territory, circulations, borders.

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza factores externos que incidieron en la formación del Estado nación beliceño desde una perspectiva regional. Resalta las relaciones poco trabajadas en los estudios sociales de la región, entre Belice y Centroamérica. Entre los factores que contribuyeron a construir estas relaciones se mencionan: i) la producción del territorio en medio de disputas e intereses coloniales entre España e Inglaterra, ii) las migraciones sucesivas que tuvieron lugar en Belice y configuraron una sociedad pluriétnica y multicultural, afianzando sus nexos con centroamericana y iii) las disputas fronterizas con Guatemala que provocaron una suerte de externalización de sus efectos tanto en su representación de pertenencia a la región, como en su inclusión dentro de los estudios sociales centroamericanos.

**Palabras clave:** Belice, Centroamérica, Estado nación, territorio, circulaciones, frontera.

### Introduction: Nation-State formations, a birth among others

Does Belize belong to Central America? If we asked this question to people on the street, in several Central American countries, the answers would be varied. A Belizean would obviously answer “yes”. A Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, Honduran or a Costa Rican would probably answer with a hesitant “yes”. In Mexico, its giant neighbor, the answers would vary from the north to the south of the country, depending on knowledgeability and geographical proximity. Some would even place it beyond Central America and others would answer with a “yes” that would bring it closer. Finally, in Guatemala, the answer would be “yes”, but not without first

taking the opportunity to mention the territorial dispute between the two countries. You might even hear an emotional declaration that Belize was once part of Guatemala. Depending on where or to whom we ask the question, the array of answers leads us to become interested, in a general way, in the presence of Belize in the Central American collective imaginary.

The question of 'belonging' and its links is not only of a geographical nature. It concerns an issue that has to do both with processes of 'national identification' and with mechanisms for the consolidation of 'Nation-states' and their relations with other countries. Although the nation-state is a relatively modern formation (Wimmer and Feinstein; Smith; Hobsbawm), the relationships that national populations have established with 'their others' have a long history. The case of Belize is a contemporary example, showing the importance of the outside world in its formation as a nation-state. For example, for Belize to formally become an independent state in 1981, a long process of international recognition was required, both from international organizations such as the OAS and the UN, as well as from each of the presidents of the Central American countries that supported sovereignty of the Belizean state (Shoman, 2009).

On the other hand, the emergence of a nation is also due to both internal and external forces. It is believed, conventionally, that a nation is consolidated when a group of people is self-determined as a group and becomes aware of being part of the same trajectory (Gellner) with common histories and geographies. However, since the 19th century, nations have been built somewhat differently than their official histories tell. The inventions of their national heritages, points of referent and common meanings were a long and collective process, although always in relation to transnational factors. This is to say that this process does not happen in an intentional and self-defined way, but rather each national group is influenced or inspired by the inventions or adaptations of the rest of its neighbors (Thiesse).

This way, nation-states establish political, economic, cultural and diplomatic affiliations with their others; in the context of which their 'belongings' and histories are forged. Thus, following Anderson's famous work, we could say that nations are also 'imagined' and challenged by their neighbors.

According to Hannerz and Gingrich, Belize is a clear example of a "small country", understanding the latter as a socio-anthropological construction, and not as a geographical aspect. In other words, its smallness is justified more by the size of its population and other structural factors rather than its territory (4-6). Its population density remains the lowest in the region. For example, if we compare Belize with El Salvador, which has a similar territory, the Salvadoran population amounts to 7 million inhabitants, while Belize barely reaches 400,000 inhabitants (Statistical Institute of Belize). In addition, several studies highlight its quasi-insular character and its identity divided between Caribbean and Central America (Correa; Ramírez Romero; Cunin and Hoffmann, 2009). This fact lays out a particular experience of

inhabiting the space of the national and gives rise to a series of important transformations that occurred in relatively short periods.

Belize has been represented as a margin of Central America, embodying part of the Caribbean facade of the isthmus (Le Masne). In the 19th century, the territory that is known today as Belize corresponded, together with the Caribbean coast of the isthmus, at the margin of the Spanish Empire, a strategic space where Great Britain established its domination (Demyk, 1995; Toussaint, 2009). As a consequence, the country has been oriented particularly towards the Caribbean (Bolland, 1997a, Bolland, 2002; Twigg 9) and has been imagined as a “different” space within the region, which makes it a kind of strange neighbor with few or no links with the rest of the countries that surround it.

Independent from England since 1981, Belize is the only Central American country whose official language is English; it is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations with a form of government defined as a parliamentary democracy, which follows the British Westminster model; and a two-party political system with moderate alternation in power. In addition, Queen Elisabeth II serves as the head of state, represented by a native governor of the country. From its origin, this small territory nestled in Central America, already sustained intense economic and political relations with the British Empire, Jamaica, Mexico, the Misquita coast in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala (Shoman, 2009).

Belize’s relationship with the Caribbean has been studied more due to its position within modern geopolitics and its colonial history (Bolland, 1992; Macpherson; Wilk), contrasting to the little attention the country has received as part of Central America in recent years’ social science studies. British Honduras, the name by which Belize was known until shortly before its independence, entered the economic and geopolitical relations of the global world system from the 19th century, when it became the colonial empire with the highest rate of exports to the United Kingdom, after the Napoleonic wars (Bulmer-Thomas).

The perceived in-between position, placed within two different regional configurations and distinct and complex identities makes Belize a suitable place to study connections, circulations and links between the local and the regional. In addition, it allows to examine how those international connections are built, which largely define the consolidation of countries and their foreign policies. The paradoxical situation of being commonly described as a Caribbean nation embedded in a continental territory recalls the cross-border experience of Belize with that of other countries such as Guyana (Greene), Dutch Guyana (Wolff) and, at one point, Panama.

The closeness or distance in the construction of the ‘border neighborhood’ between countries is a process of intra and supranational identification that combines subjective (collective sensitivities and perceptions) and structural elements (Hannerz and Gingrich 6; Hansen and Steputtat). In turn, this process is related to historical dynamics that are manifested regionally (Ramírez), through which the relations between countries are characterized by continuities and changes in

their territorial dynamics, the exploitation of their resources and the performance of its power elites in the regional space (Demyk, 2005; Taracena).

However, the nature of historical links is not always explicit, nor is it present within the sociological imagination with which we think about the relationship between countries. It is subject to interpretations, disputes and omissions (Bond and Gilliam). The opacity or clarity with which certain countries are represented within the regional spaces to which they belong depends, among many factors, on contextual aspects of geopolitical, historical and cultural proximity, and on the lasting effects caused by colonial dynamics, territorial disputes and economic developments.

In this Dossier we want to question the place attributed to Belize in Central American social science studies, which, as we know, are not strictly removed from the common senses with which we represent reality (Bauman). Likewise, the articles that make up this Dossier have a double objective: on the one hand, we present some recent studies on Belize, and on the other, we want to highlight the links and connections between Belize and Central America in order to broaden the view of the field of Central American social studies and to make the isthmian -peripheral- representation of the region more complex.

In the following sections we will address three relevant factors in the constitution of Belize and its relations with Central America. The first section refers to the colonial dynamics that gave rise to Belize within the Central American macro-regional configuration, fragmented and disputed by interests between Spain and Great Britain. The second section is related to the historical and contemporary, forced and voluntary, discrete and massive migrations that took place at various times and that led to forms of discontinuous and uneven development in Belize. In particular, Central American migrations give an account of the continuous mobility of not only diverse ethnicities, but also diverse ideas. Lastly, we return to the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala as a 'suspended point' in the development of integration relations between Central America and Belize, provoking, among other motives, the externalization of the effects of the dispute and reinforcing the processes of construction of the Belizean nation.

## **Space Between-Two: Colonial Dynamics and Territory**

The formation and production of Nation-states is fundamentally the result of interventions and negotiations that take place at local levels due to the combination of contextual and proximity factors on a regional scale (Wimmer and Feisntein 764), which is highlighted in this Dossier. The formation of the nation-state revolves around elementary problems related to the territory, which is the basis for its survival and the formation of its identities (Demyk, 1995). The territory is produced from a regional referentiality that is, at the same time, historical and political (Dikeç).

The anchors between identity and mobility are fundamental elements in the conformation of territories (Hoffmann and Morales 12). Therefore, these are built and produced in the midst of disputes that multiple actors, whether they are subalternized subjects, colonial powers or institutions, display in the physical and imagined space that they experience or define as their own. This situation gives rise to the configuration of territorial mechanisms that establish forms of cultural legitimation through which the territory is described, represented and dominated-appropriated (Hoffmann and Morales; Hoffmann, 2014; Gupta and Ferguson). Thus, the relationship between space and mobility implies not only the transit of subjects and their forms of organization, but also the circulation of projects and ideas, which materialize in concrete forms of control and exploitation of territories.

In this process, some territories are shaped as margin, far from the interests of power, and as non-places, due to their nature of transience and impermanence (Augé). However, territories can also result from the intersection of colonial interests, patterns of settlements, legal agreements and cultural transformations that give them the character of spaces between-two.

The formation of Belize illustrates the emergence of a space between-two configured by intersections of colonialist practices that represent different logics of mobility, circulation and appropriation of spaces. On the one hand, the expansionist dynamics of the Spanish crown, oriented towards territorial marking through laws and the right of conquest, and on the other, extractivism and de facto occupation that characterized the settlement patterns of the British empire in the territory.

Unlike the colonial patterns of settlement that marked the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries led by the great imperial powers in dispute in the American continent (Spain and Great Britain), the founding of Belize obeyed factors of a factual, pragmatic and somewhat random nature which later led to strategies of dominance of the territory through cartographic representation devices within the framework of a colonial policy (Hoffmann, 2014), laws and occupation agreements among colonial empires (Shoman, 2009), and racialized administration of the population through censuses (Cunin and Hoffmann, 2012; Correa).

Due to its characteristics, the colonial empires of the time did not consider settling in the area (Toussaint, 1993; Shoman, 2000; Bolland, 1997b). The terrain was considered unsanitary, its climate extremely humid, its surface mostly boggy, and portions of impenetrable jungle. In particular, Spain had established its dominion in a vast area, around the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, ranging from the fort of Bacalar, in present-day Quintana Roo, to the south of Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Thus, transit through Belize was considered a 'compulsory step', but without the intention to settle in. However, the territory was annexed to Spanish jurisdiction after the right of conquest (Toussaint 1993; Shoman, 2009).

The existence of logwood on the Central American coast, from the shores of Nicaragua to Campeche on the Yucatan peninsula, attracted

British sailors and merchants to exploit a vast area where this wood was abundant. Belize was halfway between the south of the Yucatan peninsula and Nicaragua. Thus, in their wake, some of these navigators, many of whom were fleeing the persecution of the colonial authorities, due to infractions imposed by the prohibitions on piracy, decided to take refuge in cayes and islets near the coast of the Caribbean Sea in Belizean territory, right at the mouth of the Belize River (Shoman, 2009; Cunin; Chávez and Domínguez). This gave rise to the formation of the British settlement in the Bay of Honduras.

Murray (20) points out that the price and profits of logwood exceeded four times the profits of the exports of sugar produced in Jamaica from which the British colonial economy was nourished. Logwood produced a black, purple, blue, red and green coloring pigment that was used to dye the fabrics produced for the European textile industry, for which its value was highly appreciated to the point of inaugurating a forest economy between Europe and the West Indies.

As several studies point out, the British also had no particular interest in establishing their permanence in the territory (Toussaint, 1993; Shoman, 2009; Thomson). The inclement weather, the constant threats from the Spanish and their prohibitions to settle in Belize generated in those first settlers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a sensation of inhabiting that hostile land only out of necessity and never as a desired choice. Still, during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost a century after those first arrivals took place and the people of Belize were slowly being conformed. Some descriptions of the space contained a certain contempt for the territory and a tone of unfortunate luck for inhabiting it.

**Ana Cervera's** article in this Dossier illustrates this particular period in the colonial formation of Belize, when forestry activity, imperial tensions and the production of the territory were intermingled. Her article shows how the works of Joseph de Guille, cartographer at the service of the Spanish crown under the orders of Antonio de Cortaire, governor of Yucatán; and James Cock, English lieutenant, 'loyal to the crown', under the command of Superintendent Sir William Burnaby, Governor of Jamaica; account, on the one hand, for the production of territoriality through the appropriation of space by the Spanish authorities and, on the other, of the role of diplomatic relations to negotiate interventions and the British presence in the area at the dawn of the exploitation of Logwood.

If with the exploitation of logwood, British Honduras emerged as a territory-resource (Hoffmann and Morales) before the greedy gaze of the British crown, the extraction of Mahogany, another prized wood, consolidated the definitive interest of the English in Belize, and led to a larger-scale production of the territory. This fact was decisive for the demographic growth of Belize by causing a socio-cultural and economic transformation that led to a less rudimentary, stratified and more regulated social organization that became known as a forestocracy (Iyo *et al.*; Shoman, 2009) and consolidated the position of Belize within the British colonies in the Caribbean.

Enslaved men and women were brought from West Africa via Jamaica to work in logging camps. This mass immigration made possible the flourishing of the 'People of Belize' (Shoman; Toussaint; Henderson) and the development of early colonial institutions that took the form of the English institutions. **Robin Schaffer**, in this Dossier, presents the example of the school in Belize, making a journey from its colonial beginnings to the present, in order to show its divided nature. This has repercussions on its functioning and operability due to articulations and disarticulations between key political actors such as the church and the state. In the same way, **Harry Domínguez** in this Dossier looks at the relationship between the racialization of enslaved labor and the racialized urban distribution of space (Lipsitz). Those factors led into the high levels of marginalizations in which the Belizean Creole population lives in the south of the city nowadays.

The extraction of mahogany not only caused administrative and economic changes, which accelerated colonialism, but also cultural transformations. Processes of race mixing and creolization even turned more complex the relationship between the groups of the colony. These socio-cultural transformations gave way to a socio-racial hierarchy in which the Creoles, a group originally coming from the union between the British and Africans, soon reached spaces of dominance and representation by being considered the support of the colony (Judd; Cunin). All this series of changes resulted in processes of territorial expansion led by the activity of the timber loggers who little by little extended their domains which brought about the reproduction of the colonial state toward the south of their territories. **Joel Wainwright** in this Dossier, affirms that, during this process, the colonial state was organized around authoritarian race and class relations. Thus, colonial authorities pursue both disciplining the workers and controlling the indigenous communities, failing on their goals and making tense Belize's relations with the south, the territory nearby Guatemala.

## Circulations and Formation of a Nation

The case of Belize is a contemporary example of the formation of a Nation-state. It was proclaimed in 1981 as *One People–One Nation* in which the multiple ethnic and linguistic differences would be part of a new group/national identity that would make up the country. The national project rested on the idea of getting rid of colonial ethnic classifications in favor of the new national group. In this regard, the article by **Reynaldo Chi Aguilar**, in this Dossier, shows how accelerated processes of construction of national identity were orchestrated by George Price, who held the position of Prime Minister on several occasions during the second half of the 20th century.

Thus, national history tells that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the small Belizean population -with the exception of the Mayans who already inhabited the territory- had been made up of the union of several migrant groups, of different cultures and languages, and that each

one had had a stake in the construction of the country (Leslie; Iyo et al; Palacio; Shoman, 2011). The dominant narrative holds that the consolidation of Belize was made possible by the supposed shoulder to shoulder work of the British and enslaved Africans who defended the territory from Spanish invasions. Garífuna history recounts the arrival of families on the southern shores of Belize fleeing multiple persecutions in the Caribbean and more directly in Central America. The group is built as a transnational indigenous nation (Agudelo), anchored on the territories of several Central American countries (Palacio). The stories of the Garífuna of Belize highlight their participation in the educational missions of the Catholic Church, which had the consequence of favoring their integration into colonial institutions and thus participating in the construction of the country (Enríquez). Furthermore, national narratives about the Caste War tell how multiple displacements of Mexican populations -Mayas and Mestizos- occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, completely changing the demographics of the British colony (Shoman, 2011). It is said that the contribution to the nation of these populations, called “refugees”, originated the first forms of agricultural activity at an industrial level (Leslie; Bulmer-Thomas y Bulmer-Thomas). Finally, although less studied, national accounts tell that after the abolition of slavery, the British persisted in the Caribbean, promoting migrations from India and the South Asian continent. In this Dossier, **Néstor Véliz-Catalán** proposes to explore migratory flows of agricultural workers that connect India, the Caribbean, Belize and Guatemala as a reflection of this.

The migratory phenomenon and its relationship with the national is essential to try to understand the configuration of this “between-two” country that is built in relations with its neighbors: on the one hand, the history of this new nation, formed by migrations from the past, has unified the Belizean people within a common characteristic; on the other hand, its population continues to grow due to the continuous arrival of people born abroad and their offsprings, thus shaping the plurality of national populations.

The migrations of the 20th century, being contemporary, are not yet part of the national accounts of the history of Belize, despite having drastically transformed the Belizean population. In the 50s and 60s, Central American migrations were defined by a mobility that was limited to localized interregional movements in which Belize was a destination country, particularly to Honduran populations. Starting in the 1980s, due to political crises, migratory flows increased and diversified towards the “Northern” countries, which had a higher degree of development (Olmos). However, although the phenomenon is less studied, Belize is the country in the region, which, since its independence in 1981, has received - and continues to receive - greater Central American immigration, and as a consequence, the population has tripled in the last 40 years (Shoman, 2011).

The migration has an important impact on both the economy and social relations. The article by **Victor Bulmer-Thomas** in this Dossier shows, among others, that a large part of immigrants tends to be farmers

with limited resources who populate rural areas. This has the short-term consequence of increasing the country's poverty level, but in the long term, of actively participating in the development of the economy. In addition, this intense closeness with its neighbors on the continent, in opposition to the British and Caribbean heritage, has diversified the processes of identification of the country both between the Creole and mestizo cultures, as well as between the English, Kriol and Spanish languages (in addition to other minorities) (Correa; Ramírez Romero; Cunin and Hoffmann, 2012). In this way, the national independence project seems to have taken another approach. The Nation, presented then as a single People, is presented today by the authorities as a heterogeneous and multicultural nation composed of different ethnic groups (Cunin and Hoffmann, 2014).

The differences established in the multicultural processes of society have given rise to phenomena of contacts and variations in social practices, particularly visible in the field of sociolinguistics. For example, the article by **Nicté Fuller Medina** in this Dossier illustrates part of the complexity of Belizean multilingualism. The author shows how trilingual people have been transforming Spanish in their ways of speaking, mixing it in practice with English and Kriol. On the other hand, it explains the changes that occur in the language considered national, the Belizean Kriol - a language that has been forming since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the contact between English and African languages (Decker), especially as to the valorization and identity processes that it arouses. These constant and accelerated processes of transformation of social practices are in part a result of the significant increase in the Spanish-speaking population. They fostered, since independence, a kind of fear of the "Latinization" of Belize (Shoman, 2009) because it would have as consequence the erasure of the Caribbean-British roots that characterize the country's identity.

Therefore, one of the outcomes of this resistance to "Spanish" is visible in the published productions that are mostly in English and that tend little by little to diversify into Kriol. **Margaret Schrimpton** in this Dossier shows that, although Belizean literature counts and reflects cross-border and cross-cultural circulations, the texts are mostly produced in English. Indeed, despite being a language spoken by a large part of the population and valued internationally, Spanish has a very small recognition in the country's publications. Therefore, Belizean literature tends to be exported mainly to the Caribbean and Anglophone markets, before being shared with its Spanish-speaking Central American neighbors. This fact plays an extremely important role in the processes of construction of a Central American "imagined community", in which Belizean realities are under-represented.

#### **Dispute and Controversies: The Relationship with the "Other" of the Nation**

It must be taken into account that the territory that corresponds to Central America was born out of "fragmentation" in different republics that, at the time, were part of the Captaincy General of Guatemala, after the independence of 1821, and the failure of the Federation of

the “United Provinces of Central America” (1823-1838). The question of borders, omnipresent in diplomacy and relations between the “sister republics” was the origin in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of a series of more or less intense crises that affected all states without exception (Demyk and Demyk). In other words, we can say that the border dispute between Guatemala and Belize adds to the consolidation processes of the Central American Nation-states. However, its particularity lies in the fact that this dispute involved British colonial powers before being inherited to the Belizean state, and that both the processes of colonization and independence in Belize occurred several centuries after its neighbors.

The externalization of the dispute between Belize and Guatemala already has its long-standing effects that reached a climax between the years 1945-1948, as shown by **Rodrigo Véliz-Estrada** in this Dossier. The author highlights precisely how the dispute between Belize and Guatemala inaugurated the start of the Cold War in Central America and set fire to the climate of international relations in the midst of which Great Britain and the United States sought to consolidate their presence and intervention in the area. The dispute involved neighboring nations like Mexico, to the point of being classified as the “most important issue at the international level” according to diplomatic reports from the disputed powers. In particular, the dispute between Guatemala and Belize has contributed to Belize's relative isolation from the rest of the Central American countries. In a way, it would be interesting to explore the relationship between the effects of the dispute with the general absence of Belize in Central American studies and the consequences in its integration within the others.

The idea of the border is central to the concept of the Nation-state. It has the role of marking the territory and indicating that between those lines specific laws govern the lands and the people. The border is the scene of a spectacle orchestrated by the state that has to be seen and shown. First to its national population; second, to the other states and, third, to immigrants who transit through the territory (Aragon 159). The line that should serve as the border between Guatemala and Belize, was decided in a treaty between Guatemala and Great Britain in 1859 and since then it has been a source of disagreements, negotiations, disputes and diplomatic incidents involving armies. The mediatization of the dispute over the border has played, among other roles, a part in making visible the effective separation between the two countries (Ramirez, in press). In fact, it could be said that all Belizeans have lived their whole lives hearing about the “Guatemalan's claim to Belize” (Shoman, 2018).

Therefore, the relationship with Guatemala has participated - and is participating - in the formation of the “imagined community” of Belize, which tends to be built against its neighbor. “Belize is” because “it is not Guatemala.” In fact, the need to resolve the case and to defend its territory from the threats of invasion from Guatemala has contributed to the consolidation within the young nation. Despite the case has been used in different ways by the political actors to mobilize supporters and generate partisan antipathies, it has also brightened the citizen participation. In

Assad Shoman's text of this Dossier, it is possible to appreciate in detail the conflict resolution process that has taken place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as well as reconfiguration processes in the "traditional" divisions that existed between the political actors and civil society. The "spectacle" that is carried in the media and in political life keeps citizens aware of the Guatemala-Belize case and rekindles deep feelings that (re)produce the permanence of the nation. In Shoman's text we can see that the referendum campaign in 2019 was an occasion to draw inspiration from other nations and request the support of experts from other countries. This recent example shows that, in this conflictive relationship with Guatemala, creative and civic processes are generated on the inside and on the relations with the outside. These relations reaffirm the sovereignty of the nation, understood as the link between citizens and the state, on the one hand, and as a production of nationality based on the relationship with neighboring countries, on the other.

## Conclusion

In the introduction to this Dossier on Belize we wanted to highlight the importance of relations and external factors in the formation of a contemporary nation-state. The example of Belize, that of a Nation-state inserted in Central America, but the result of British colonial dynamics in the Caribbean, illustrates the construction of the not always explicit links and ties between state, territory and the formation of inter-national relations at regional level. Likewise, these processes guide to a certain extent the conformation of interests within the fields of social sciences in Central America, in the framework of which Belize is little approached. This fact is more the result of the absence of Belize in the imaginary of the Central American countries, than a lack of relevant topics that would make the country an object of inclusion in the subjects of studies in the region.

Finally, this Dossier consists of 10 articles from recent works, which show the complexity of Belizean realities and their undoubted relationships with the region. The articles constitute, in themselves, a heterogeneous set, bringing together diverse approaches and disciplines, as well as the trajectories of its participants and their research.

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