Complex Associative Systems:
Cooperation amid Diversity

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Contents

Introduction

Diverse people, from within and outside the government, have always cooperated to solve—and create—public problems. But in the last decades public spaces have been increasingly populated by hybrid forms of cooperation, bringing together individuals and organizations from a great variety of settings: government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, labor unions, consumers, international organizations, etc. To illustrate this trend, one can mention the growing numbers of civil society associations and networks, such as those specialized in human rights, education, democracy or the environment, which provide goods and services and seek to involve "external actors" (beneficiaries, donors, sponsors, experts and the like) in their decision making procedures. But one can also cite many other forms of cooperation that span the traditional boundaries between state, market and civil society: policy networks, participatory councils, advisory bodies, etc. Also significant is the extent to which states have not only accepted but even fomented citizen participation as a form of public governance.

Some of these cases operate in very narrow spaces—a neighborhood or town—while others work in the international or even global sphere. Similarly, while some of them are interested in concrete issues, others deal with such general and abstract topics as the environment, global development or international peace. But whatever their concrete area or interest, these groupings always bring together many participants, both individual and collective, with great diversity of interests. Moreover, these cooperative efforts may

be quite informal, being little more than a series of meetings among acquaintances interested in common matters, but they can also be highly institutionalized, creating quite complex organizations with recognizable participants, areas of interest and forms of action. There is also wide variation in the functions that these forms of cooperation may perform, for example, consultancy, co-decision, monitoring, citizens' control of government or market powers, or mutual control between political, social and market forces.

As these types of structures have become more common in many places and regions of the world, they have changed the face and dynamics of politics, giving rise to more de-centralized, disperse, inclusive and horizontal social and political relations. But they have also created new problems, generating new frontiers, new kinds of political exclusion, new forms of power concentration and new sources of conflict. Moreover, in certain circumstances, they can become very exacting, demanding great amounts of time, energy and other valuable resources from their members. And, as any other form of social action, they can have—desirable or undesirable—unintended consequences, for both their participants and society in general.

Important research on multi-centered and multi-level governance, network coordination or hybrid organizations testifies to the importance of these emergent or renewed social and political structures. Nonetheless, from our perspective, additional conceptual effort is required to disentangle the logic that underlies their functioning and the organization principles that regulate and orient their political design.

This book seeks to contribute to a better understanding of this type of organizations and structures of relations. To that end, it presents a conceptual framework to analyze the conditions that characterize their internal functioning and the mechanisms that regulate their operation. Based on this analysis, the book also proposes a set of criteria to evaluate their performance.

To distinguish this type of organization from other associative experiences, we conceptualize them as complex associative systems. While we acknowledge the usefulness of such neighboring concepts as governance networks or governance structures, we also remark that they emphasize the function of governing rather than the as-

sociative action itself, which is our main concern in this research. Similarly, while we draw on the literature on social networks (and related theories and approaches), we also observe that this concept usually covers linkages of which participants may be unaware and that have to be unearthed, so to speak, by researchers; in contrast, the associative systems that we analyze have proper names and both their members and interested observers are aware of their existence. In other words, we are interested in conscious, purposive associative action, rather than on underlying, unconscious connections. But, more fundamentally, we focus specifically on complex associative systems, rather than on neighboring phenomena, because—as this book shall endeavor to demonstrate—complex associative association has its own distinctive properties. The complex associative systems that emerge from this action are shaped by a series of tensions, especially the tension between the simultaneous autonomy and interdependence of its members. The mix of dynamism and instability that characterizes these systems is a direct result of those tensions. This is why we insist that complex associative action should be analyzed, understood and evaluated on its own terms, rather than on those of neighboring fields.

Similarly, it is true that CAS operate at the interface between differentiated social sub-systems (economic, political, scientific and so on), and therefore they share many characteristics with non-governmental, non-profit and civil society organizations. But what distinguishes the complex associative systems that we analyze here is not their location in an intermediate social space, but their ability to span social borders, bringing together individuals and groups from different sectors (civil society, business, government, higher education and many others). In other words, while NGOs and non-profit organizations are usual participants in complex associative systems, they are not normally the only ones. But, of course, as any other associative phenomena, they may be analyzed in terms of their complexity—and when this complexity is great enough, they may be usefully approached through the CAS ideal type. Indeed, as explained in chapter 3, one of our cases is a set of networks of collaboration between universities and business firms aimed at sharing and generating knowledge.

It would be unwise to try summarizing, let alone comprehensively analyzing, the different topics in which these cooperative efforts are interested, or the different actions that they perform, or the concrete organizational structures that they create. Rather, our strategy is to focus on the *associative logic* that guides and restricts these efforts and the *forms of association* that they create. As shall be argued below, behind their enormous variety, these cooperative efforts must confront similar associative challenges; while facing such challenges, they create forms of organization that share some basic properties; these properties give rise to a number of typical associative dilemmas and tensions; and the way these tensions and dilemmas are managed crucially affects the success or failure of the associative enterprise.

For the purposes of this book, we conceptualize these organizations and structures of relations as complex associative systems (CAS). As a preliminary description, we can say that CAS are constituted by significantly heterogeneous actors (individuals, groups or organizations); they cross territorial, institutional or identity borders; their decision-making mechanisms are usually collective; they include varied, imprecise and ambiguous forms of representation; their decision-making capacities are unevenly dispersed and potentially conflictive; their organizational boundaries are flexible or diffuse. People who take part in CAS usually respond to different logics or codes, such as money, law, scientific and technical knowledge or a variety of social norms; they come from different institutional settings, such as the market, politics, universities, NGOs or civil society in general; they have different functional purposes, like profit, power or the advancement of diverse causes; the resources that they bring to the system—like money, power and political capacity—are mutually incommensurable.

But CAS are not mere mixtures of institutional logic and values from different systems, institutional spheres, organizational patterns or diverse cultures. Rather, they have emergent properties and a set of unique characteristics, which combined in different ways give rise to a number of distinctive tensions. One of the most significant tensions is that among diverging criteria for problem solving, for example those based on the expectations of profit and market effi-

ciency versus those guided by political rationality and those based on the search for scientific truth.

In fact, it can be said that, as a species, CAS consist precisely of those tensions; each member of this species is a particular, and generally unstable, balance of such tensions. As the following analysis shall show, most of those tensions derive from two opposite forces: the simultaneous autonomy and interdependency of participants. Therefore, it is not surprising that—precisely because the main problem that CAS face is how to integrate, coordinate and manage these tensions—conventional criteria and standards are scarcely useful to evaluate their performance.

As part of our preliminary description of CAS, we need to locate them within a broader space: the associative world. Associations and other kinds of associative practices can be classified according to their level of complexity. This means that, regardless of their origin, areas of interest, size, and the nature of their resources, associations can be located along a continuum marked by two limits: highest and lowest levels of complexity. This location, in turn, depends on the relative degree of autonomy and interdependency among strategic participants and on the degree of dynamism of the structure.

Classified according to this criterion, CAS are an ideal type located at the highest extreme of complexity. This classification does not entail any normative assumption. Complexity, by itself, is morally neutral and, depending on an infinite number of circumstances (among them, the goals pursued by the participants), different levels of complexity can have either good or bad consequences. Thus, our ideal type is just a methodological strategy that should help us identify the logic of CAS and an analytical tool that we will use to understand and explain specific cases by observing how close they come to, or how far they differ from, that type.

CAS may be created to deal with private matters, but their promises and their problems, their successes and failures, are most dramatically visible in the public sphere. Therefore, our analysis will be restricted to instances of CAS that operate predominantly in the public sphere. Following a methodological strategy of maximum variation, we analyze such cases with a twofold objective: to substantiate our theoretical reflections and to explain those cases themselves.

Two of our four main cases are predominantly political (the Chapultepec Accord and the Trilateral Commission), one is predominantly scientific (a group of knowledge networks) while the fourth is an effort to change the regulation of academic careers within a Mexican university (the UNAM Claustro). The public spaces within which these cases operate vary widely, going from the confined public space of the UNAM Claustro to the three continents for which the Trilateral Commission wants to speak. Our cases are different in several other respects: origins, membership size and type, field of interest, objectives, level of formalization and degree of participation of instituted authorities. However all of them comprise moderately or highly complex interactions and they exhibit several of the key features of CAS.

The general questions that our case studies and our theoretical and comparative reflections seek to answer are the following: What are the distinctive properties and characteristics of CAS? What internal factors and mechanisms facilitate or inhibit their functioning? What are the particular tensions and dilemmas that CAS face? What institutional and political conditions allow CAS to coordinate the actions of their members, process their differences and conflicts, make decisions, and solve common problems? In what sense and to what extent does the system becomes stable by placing its heterogeneous or differentiated actors on a convergent trajectory? What principles should the system follow in order to be perceived as legitimately representative of the people and organizations interested in the topic that it addresses? How is authority built within such a system?

To address these general questions, the book is organized in three parts. Part I introduces the analytical framework and the cases considered. In Chapter 1 we sketch our overall proposal for the analysis and evaluation of CAS, introducing the conceptual referents that support it. We also identify the properties that define CAS, as well as the observable characteristics that enable us to define them empirically. Chapter 2 reviews the connection of CAS to neighboring associative experiences. We begin by locating CAS within public spaces. Afterward, given that trans-nationalization may increase complexity, we briefly review the literature on international relations,

multi-level governance, and transnational collective action. And in order to determine the nature of CAS we distinguish them from other associational arrangements such as so-called dark networks, social networks in general, corporatist structures and associations.

In Chapter 3, we provide a general preliminary description of our cases. The aim of this description is double: to familiarize the reader with these cases (their origins, their goals, their members, and so forth) and show that they are, indeed, complex associative systems, with the requisite properties and characteristics. The analysis of these cases is performed in subsequent chapters, according to the theme that they best represent. This analysis is central to our investigation. But it should be clarified that, strictly speaking, our aim in this book is not to analyze a series of cases, but rather to use those cases to identify, characterize, analyze and evaluate the species to which they belong: complex associative systems. In other words, cases serve to illustrate and substantiate the analytical model that this book aims to construct. This is why the book is organized by themes, rather than by cases.

Part II is concerned with the social dimension of CAS. We concentrate in two integrative factors that help the system coordinate and integrate the actions of their diverse members: trust and "translation" (the latter understood, metaphorically, as the creation of a common "language" for participants). Each of these factors is related to the key problems of the internal operation of CAS: cohesion and communication. Chapter 4 focuses on trust and shows how diverse and autonomous actors manage to create a relatively cohesive system of association without forsaking their diversity and autonomy. In dealing with the problem of communication and the necessity of creating a common language to discuss and reach agreements, Chapter 5 focuses on translation at both the structural and individual levels and analyzes the relationship between trust and translation.

Part III includes chapters 6 to 8. It focuses on three key political dimensions of CAS: decision-making, representation and leadership. Conceiving CAS as consensus building arenas, Chapter 6 directs attention to decision and collective decision-making mechanisms with particular emphasis on deliberation and negotiation. Chapters 7 and 8 respectively review the concepts of representation and leadership,

and highlight their meanings and requisites according to the nature of CAS.

Thus, in chapters 4 to 8, which contain the main part of our model, we successively focus on each of the social and political elements that have significant influence on the internal functioning of CAS. In addition, we observe the main relations among these elements.

The concluding chapter presents an integrated vision of CAS and emphasizes the dilemmas that constitute such systems, paying particular attention to the tensions between autonomy and interdependence, legitimacy and efficacy, cooperation and conflict, stability and dynamism, and closure and openness. In this chapter we propose that CAS should be evaluated according to their efficacy, their associational performance, and their legitimacy.

This book brings together, in a single narrative, some of our studies on specific aspects of CAS. Those specific studies are cited in the relevant parts of the following text; in these studies, the interested reader can find more extended discussions and more detailed empirical evidence on some of the topics and cases addressed. Some of our initial arguments have been nourished and refined during our participation in various collective projects. Particularly important in this respect has been our involvement in the Network for the Study of Associative Performance (REDA).

PART I

Model and Cases

Chapter 1

Complex Associative Systems: a Model

As every observer can easily realize, contemporary societies have myriads of policy networks or councils that bring together political, business and civil society agents and have important political influence or even veto power in matters of public interest. These and similar state-society interfaces often include transnational participants, such as multinational corporations and international organizations. Markets also teem with analogous forms of associations, for example in the form of networks of firms or cooperative production of goods and services (e.g. Hage and Alter 1997 and Schneider et al. 2006). Something similar occurs in civil society, where systems of cooperation among organizations, citizens and movements have become common.

To be sure these entities are extremely variegated. Their goals, resources, procedures, membership, alliances, conflicts and many other relevant features seem to defy any classification. But, beneath those incommensurable idiosyncrasies, many of them share a basic organizational logic: they are dynamic forms of cooperation, their participants are autonomous but interdependent and their organizational structure seems to be a continuous succession of tentative balances.

To put this basic logic into focus and facilitate the analysis of the associative entities that are governed by it, we propose the concept of complex associative systems (CAS), which we define as more or less formalized entities that deal with collective problems and conflicts through the cooperation of highly heterogeneous social and

political actors. CAS usually span many social entities: territories, administrative jurisdictions, institutions, identities, etc. Although they usually include many private actors, most of their actions occur in public spaces. And although they often seek to advance particular interests, they show a marked preference for collective decision-making.

This preliminary definition, which will be modified as the analysis proceeds, draws on the many perspectives that have been used to study these entities. Theories of governance, for example, have analyzed them as governance structures, governance networks or public action networks. Organization theories have proposed an "ecological" approach to them. Economic theories have seen them as "hybrid" organizations.

But while we draw on these and similar perspectives, such as collective action theories, we also think that most of them have a common weakness: they see these associative efforts as mixtures of different logics—for example, as a combination of market and hierarchy or as the intersection of market, state and civil society—thus ruling out, beforehand, the possibility to analyze them as entities in their own right. In contrast to those approaches, our definition sees these efforts as something more than the sum or combination of different organizational logics. It sees them as distinctive entities with emergent properties—properties that arise not from the simple juxtaposition of different organizational principles but from their creative interaction. This is why these entities, in spite of their obvious and numerous differences, share a set of properties and, to a lesser extent, a number of specific characteristics. These entities also share important integration problems, which in turn have significant consequences for the way they coordinate the actions of their members and process their potential conflicts, especially given their heterogeneous composition and frequently overlapping jurisdictions. These problems have several implications for their evolution and performance.

Since these entities are so numerous and influential in modern societies, the importance of understanding and explaining them adequately is self-evident. In Latin America, they have often been seen as forms of *democratic innovation*, able to extend democracy

beyond its traditional representative procedures (e.g. Isunza and Gurza 2010); or as mechanisms of social participation, part of broader socio-state interfaces (e.g. Hevia and Isunza 2010 and 2012, and Font 2004); or as efforts to develop the right to participate and as important steps in the construction of citizenship (e.g. Cunill 1997 and Dagnino 2006). Beyond this region, they have been seen as part of a broad and important category of social phenomena that find no place in the dichotomous world of markets and states. In this regard, Elinor Ostrom's work on governing the commons deserves special mention. In contrast to the mainstream literature, which tends to see them as simply chaotic, she analyzed them as complex, non-hierarchical systems arising from the interaction of multiple decision-making centers. This led her to underline the importance of trust and cooperation, of reaching agreements among diverse actors and, in particular, of agreed-upon rules oriented to the creation of institutions (Ostrom 2014). Even more ambitiously, in his analysis of public policy networks, Messner suggests that these entities have flourished as a result of simultaneous processes of differentiation and interdependence of different subsystems, such as the state, market and civil society (1999), but also as a consequence of processes of globalization and communication that have modified the way collective action organizations are integrated.

Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that by studying these entities we can gain a better understanding of the deep and powerful currents that are shaping today's societies.

The objective of this chapter is to introduce our overall scheme for such a study, identifying the main properties and some characteristics of CAS and outlining an approach to explain their functioning and evaluate their performance.

An Ideal Type: Assumptions and Components

Our conceptual approach to CAS starts out from four basic assumptions. First, to analyze a diversity of phenomena like these, avoiding the opposite dangers of artificial standardization and conceptual indeterminacy, one should follow the Weberian's methodological

strategy of the ideal type. As sociologists well know, this type is not an empirical average; neither is it the outlining of a morally desirable model, nor a realistic description of really existing cases. Rather, it is an analytically pure type, put together by abstracting the most distinctive elements of the phenomenon in question from the accidents, inconsistencies and ambiguities of real life. This abstract model is then used as a standard for explaining and understanding particular cases and for generating hypothesis about their possible development.[1]

Secondly, as various critics have pointed out, instrumental rationality cannot generate a grand theory of current organized society. In congruence with this skepticism, we take it for granted that:

> … it is unlikely that students of organizations ever will be able to capture the variety and complexity of contemporary organizational society in a single grand theory… The best we can do is, probably, to locate mechanisms or causal patterns that are frequent, and to point out to some conditions that make them more or less likely (Brunson and Olsen 1998: 22).[2]

Hence, instead of trying to account for all forms of association, we restrict our attention to a subset—that we call complex associative systems—trying to identify their characteristics, possibilities, risks and failures.

Third, we assume that any associative effort that operates in the public space needs to be both efficacious and legitimate. This means that, to be sustainable, cooperation in such a space must be perceived as both practically relevant and normatively correct. Based on this assumption, we are interested in determining, in general terms, the ability of CAS to comply with these double requirements.

Finally, although we recognize that differences in the social, political and cultural contexts in which CAS operate are obviously important, in this book we direct most of our attention to the internal functioning of these systems.[3] The idea is not to neglect or underes-

[1] On these implications of the ideal type see Coser 1977: 223-224.

[2] See also Elster (1998) and Warren (2001).

[3] Other works, like Cadena-Roa (2010) and Natal-Martínez (2010), have reviewed and discussed diverse perspectives about the relations between associations and their environment.

timate contextual factors but to place emphasis on how they are internalized in complex associative systems. For example, although we acknowledge that participants have different social origins, we devote fewer efforts to tracing those origins than to analyzing how that diversity facilitates or obstructs the development of trust, understanding, decision-making capacity and other internal elements of CAS. In other words, our main concern is to explain how participants—coming from their own contexts, with the problems, interests and views that are important there—interact with each other, thereby creating a complex system of relations that often crystallize in a succession of unstable organizational structures with their own logic and momentum.

Besides making these assumptions, we also rely on the insights provided by studies of social networks, decision and organization; the concepts developed by authors who approach networks as complex systems and those who have proposed the ecological theories of organization; the different advances presented in the scholarly literature on trust, translation, political representation, leadership and other components of our model; and the empirical findings about several types of complex organizations.

With these assumptions, concepts and findings, we go on to tackle two main questions. First, how able are CAS to coordinate the actions of their members, process their differences and conflicts, make decisions and solve common problems? What factors and mechanisms facilitate or obstruct the performance of these tasks?

To answer these questions, we propose a model that seeks to analyze and evaluate the functioning of CAS through the combination of four main elements: the distinctive properties of CAS, which determine their functioning and performance; the characteristics of these systems, that is to say, the visible manifestations of those properties; the mechanisms and factors that allow CAS to function, decide and act; the criteria that can be used to evaluate their performance. Table 1.1 presents the basic components of this model.

Table 1.1
Conceptual Model for the Analysis and Evaluation of cas

Properties	Individual autonomy Systemic autonomy Interdependence Dynamism
General Characteristics	Collective origin and heterogeneous membership Voluntary entry and formally free exit Preference for collective decisions Problem-solving orientation Multiple, inconsistent and shifting goals Scarce institutionalization
Factors and Mechanisms that Facilitate Integration and Functioning	Trust and translation (social dimension) Decision-making, representation and leadership (political dimension)
Evaluation	Functional (effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency) Associative (capacity for coordination, legitimacy and social contribution)

Source: own construction.

As mentioned earlier, the key to understanding the properties of complex associative systems is to recall that they have emergent properties that distinguish them from other associative experiences. It should also be emphasized that these are systems of relations: their main units are the interactions of their members (individuals, organizations, associations, representatives, firms or institutions). Finally, these systems are not accidental or subconscious: they usually have a proper name, they have a recognizable organizational structure and their participants join them knowingly and purposefully.

As shall be elaborated upon below, these systems of relations have four basic properties: their members are autonomous from each other and from the system itself; the system, as a whole, is autonomous, which means that it is not subordinated to any particular organization, institution or any other public or private entity; but although autonomous, members are interdependent, since none of them, alone, can solve the problems or handle the issue that the system as a whole is meant to deal with; and the system is dynamic,

with continuously evolving structure, membership, rules and even goals.

These properties not only distinguish CAS from other associative phenomena, like formal organizations, institutions, firms, networks and the like. They also largely explain their functioning, their structure and their performance. Perhaps even more importantly, they give these systems their characteristic complexity and produce the series of tensions that, as shall be analyzed in the rest of this book, make any internal equilibrium inevitably tentative and precarious. So important are these tensions that it would be no exaggeration to say that they are what complex associative systems consist of. Perhaps the most important of these tensions is the simultaneous autonomy and interdependence of participants.

Interacting with the relevant elements of the context, these properties give rise to a set of observable characteristics that all CAS share to a certain extent. As explained below, these characteristics concern the way the system is created, the types of membership, their structures, the bases of their authority and their level of institutionalization. The main analytical function of this list of characteristics is double: it allows us to identify relevant cases of CAS and describe them.

Having identified the main properties of these systems and identified the most common characteristics, the next step is to explain how they function. According to our model, the operation of CAS is possible thanks to the existence of a series of factors and mechanisms that are closely interrelated but that, for analytical purposes, can be classified in two categories. The first category, which is distinctively sociological, includes one integrating factor—trust—and one communicative mechanism—translation. The main utility of these two elements is to foster cohesion and facilitate understanding among the diverse and autonomous members of the system. The second category is predominantly political and includes the two most important mechanisms for making decisions and building consensus—negotiation and deliberation—as well as two other mechanisms for constructing authority—representation and leadership.

These factors, individually and in combination, produce chronically unstable equilibriums in different parts of the system. This is

why it is so important to conceptualize and define them accurately, critically observing their possibilities and limitations as well as their mutual relations. Only in this way can one explain and evaluate the performance of these systems and identify some of the principles and norms that they should follow in order to be both efficacious and legitimate.

This evaluation is the fourth, and last, element of our model. One consequence of the complexity of these systems is that the criteria that are usually applied to assess the performance of organizations are of very limited utility. And, in the absence of shared criteria, participants often draw diverging and even contradictory conclusions about the achievements and failures of their associated work.

To escape from this confusion, we propose that the performance of CAS should be assessed at two levels: functional and associative. Functional performance mainly concerns the extent to which the system accomplishes its practical purposes. It comprehends three main criteria: the capacity of the system to produce results (effectiveness), its capacity to achieve its goals (efficacy) and the cost-effectiveness and fairness of its actions and decisions (efficiency). This functional performance is obviously indispensable for the success of the system. Yet, by itself, it provides no information on what is truly distinctive of CAS: their capacity to coordinate and integrate the actions of diverse, autonomous and interdependent participants, their controversial legitimacy and their capacity to invigorate associative life in general. These are the aspects that should be considered when analyzing CAS' functional performance —the one that merits most attention in this book.

The rest of the chapter will deal with each of these four parts in succession.

PROPERTIES

Associative systems may be classified according to different criteria, depending on the needs and scope of the investigation. For our purposes, a criterion that should be emphasized is the degree of complexity, since it would enable us to achieve better levels of abs-

traction and generalization. From our viewpoint, complexity is different, and relatively independent, from other criteria commonly used to describe and classify associations and organizations—like size, territorial extent, field of interest, functional purposes and so on.

As an ideal type CAS may be defined by a combination of four properties that affect the nature of relations and interactions among their units: individual autonomy, systemic autonomy, interdependency and dynamism. As explained below, this complexity implies, among other things, a heterogeneous composition, the use of collective decision-making mechanisms and a preference for consensus.

Complex associations are autonomous in a double sense—individual and systemic.[4] On the one hand, every participant (individual or group) is autonomous and remains so even as interaction and collaboration become more intense. Being autonomous in this sense means that members, or their representatives, have an effective capacity for self-rule, controlling their own resources, defining their objectives, choosing their own courses of action and, particularly, freely deciding to stay within the system or leave it.

On the other hand, the entire system is autonomous, in the sense that it is not directly subject to a superior entity that regulates and controls its actions. This systemic, or collective, autonomy means that the associative system as a whole can govern itself—obviously within the limits set by the laws and authorities of the country or group of countries in which it operates—freely creating its own rules and procedures, making its own decisions and defining its goals.

A consequence of this double autonomy is that there are no previously established rules determining the rights and obligations of members and the procedures that should regulate their interaction.

[4] This distinction is roughly similar to the one proposed by Warren (2001). For him "Autonomy means that individuals—both individually and collectively—hold their interests with due consideration, and are able to provide reasons for holding them" (p. 62). In this context, autonomy in its individual dimension "has nothing to do with separateness, anomie, individualism, or even self-sufficiency. Rather, it has to do with individuals' capacity to take part in critical examination of self and others, to participate in reasoning processes, and to arrive at judgments they can defend in public argument-capacities that are, in the end, delicate and valuable social and political achievements" (p. 63). Autonomy in its political dimension refers to "the public reasoning through which collective judgments are justified." (p. 61).

Rather, these rules are flexible and adopted through internal discussion and consensus. Moreover, participants are reasonably free to express their opinions and choose their options. For the same reason, these associations operate in a context characterized by high degrees of uncertainty regarding their procedures but also with respect to their results, since the rules of interaction, the objectives, the problems and the ways to solve them are collectively and autonomously defined and decided upon by participants. To set and achieve their common goals, these complex associational configurations depend on communication and information flows and involve a tension between cooperation and conflict—both stemming from the diversity of interests, resources and needs of their members.

It should be pointed out that the individual and systemic autonomy that distinguishes these systems is not a fixed property. Rather, autonomy is defined and redefined as relations are restructured and decision-making procedures are adapted to changing circumstances and preferences. Moreover, autonomy implies a permanent risk of "colonization" by political actors (parties, legislators, regulators or other government agents), the market, other civil society organizations, their sponsors or some experts. Yet, the pressures of these actors may be alleviated through norms, institutional mechanisms, and operational rules that help process and solve inconsistencies and conflicts.[5] Norms about the equitable representation of members, mechanisms that facilitate the rotation of leadership, the predominance of a liberal, non-compulsory, mode of representation and the decision-making mechanisms themselves may help preserve or destroy the autonomy of the system.

The next property, interdependence, means that all participants are mutually dependent on the resources of the others to arrive at a solution for relevant problems. Schmitter aptly describes this interdependency at the decision-making level: the problem is how to reach a consensus through the horizontal interaction of actors with conflicting interests, when each participant is independent enough to resist any attempts by the others to impose their preferred solution, and all are interdependent enough to lose if a collective solution

[5] As Warren (2001: 68) claims: "Individual and political autonomy … depend on political institutions that simultaneously protect and constitute them".

cannot be found (2001: 7). He concludes that to be interdependent, participants do not have to be equal in wealth, size or capacities; it suffices that they are able to support or hurt each other.[6]

The fourth property is dynamism, and the consequent instability. Although authors focusing on the scarcity of organizational resources would suggest otherwise, the survival or persistence of CAS is not a decisive standard to evaluate their performance; what matters most is their stabilization—conceptualized as convergence—and their potential for creating new associations.

In sum, individual and system autonomy, interdependence and dynamism are the distinctive properties of CAS. The correct identification of these properties is a condition for analyzing and explaining these systems and for defining appropriate standards for assessing their performance.

However, the degree to which these properties are present in a specific case and in a particular moment is not fixed beforehand; it should be empirically determined in any particular case. This is because properties involve major tensions and permanent unstable equilibriums between autonomy and interdependence, frequently manifested as pressures for colonization or control from the market, the state or other civil society organizations or powers.

CHARACTERISTICS

These basic properties translate into a set of visible characteristics. Thus, the first step in determining whether a given associative phenomenon is, indeed, a complex associative system is to observe whether it possesses these characteristics. Moreover, besides helping in the identification of relevant cases, this list of common characteristics also provides important clues for understanding the functioning and evaluating the performance of CAS.

[6] Based on Matsuyama (1995), March (1997: 24) proposes three kinds of interaction that lead organizations to mutually redefine their decisions and decision-making processes: competition, cooperation and imitation. Schneider, et al. (2006: 28) define a broader set of categories to refer to the connections that exist in associative systems; this set includes different degrees and forms of cooperation and competition, as well as neutrality and no relationship.

To begin with, CAS do not usually have a single founder. On the contrary, they normally result from the convergence of multiple initiatives from various actors. This original diversity is afterward reflected in the composition of the system, which is significantly heterogeneous, integrated by both individuals and groups.

Entry into these systems is usually voluntary, as is exit from them. Yet, although nobody is forced to enter, not everyone is invited or admitted. Similarly, exit, while formally free, may convey significant costs, due to the high level of interdependence among members. In other words, exit is voluntary but selective and exit is free but costly.

Since members are autonomous and free to leave the system, it is obvious that their interests and preferences cannot be easily sacrificed, even for the sake of those of the majority or the system as a whole. Therefore, to ensure that members stay and cooperate, the system has to make its decisions in a collective way, ensuring that everyone has an effective opportunity to take part and that the views of everyone are taken into account.

With these characteristics, CAS can hardly be expected to be united around a shared ideal, a single cause or a single shared interest. What normally holds these systems together is the perception of a problem that cannot be solved by any of the participants alone. In this sense, it can be said that CAS are pragmatic problem-solving entities. This feature has obvious consequences for the structure of the system, which can take two extreme forms: it may be a decentralized, scarcely formalized structure with loosely connected participants; or it may be a more formalized body, created on the initiative of the official authorities but still relatively autonomous from them and endowed with the ability to act in fields that require the consensus or agreement of actors whose interests, causes and positions are actually or potentially conflictive.

But although all members perceive that there is a problem that affects everyone and must be solved collectively, the exact definition of that problem and the way it should be solved is not determined beforehand. Therefore, in complex associative systems, the aims and goals of the interaction—not only the means to achieve them—are usually defined in the course of the interaction itself. Not surprisingly, they tend to be multiple, inconsistent and shifting, evolving as the interaction proceeds.

A further characteristic of CAS is their low level of institutionalization. This is evident in many parts and aspects of the systems. For example, membership tends to be elastic and the boundaries of the systems are often diffuse. Exchanges between participants are difficult because the resources that each of them offers and expects in return are frequently incommensurable. Moreover, not only is the internal authority structure horizontal and flexible but often also ambiguous and unstable. Similarly, although usually there are formally recognized sites of authority and especially important meetings where the main decisions are expected to be made, the truth is that many strategic decisions (e.g., those that imply risks and uncertainty) may be made at any point of the organizational structure and at any time during the life of the system. In addition, even when the purposes that guide the functioning of CAS may be acceptable, these systems face serious legitimacy problems, partly stemming from the varied, imprecise and sometimes ambiguous forms of representation that prevail within them.

It would be possible to extend the list of common characteristics, but the above suffice to illustrate the outlook of real-existing complex associative systems. But before moving on to the next subject, it is important to mention here, briefly, the issue of heterogeneity as it can affect the way in which CAS are perceived. The level of heterogeneity or homogeneity is being increasingly recognized as a central criterion for the analysis of organized collective action. In his review of formal models of collective action, Oliver (1993) shows that new approaches to collective decisions and their effects on efficacy have paid less attention to size and more to heterogeneity.[7] It should be underscored, however, that heterogeneity has varying meanings. It may simply mean that members or participants have diverse sociodemographic profiles (age, sex, education, employment, and the like) or that there are great "psychological" or "social" distances between distinct members or participants. To avoid this ambiguity, it seems reasonable to adopt, as a starting point, the more pragmatic solution proposed by Steward and Conway (1996): they focus on differences that are significant for the situation. Following this advice, in the

[7] According to Oliver (1993)—and in opposition to Olson (1965)—size is a contingent (not a general) criterion (p. 285).

case of CAS we can prioritize the following problems: inconsistencies in individual preferences and identities that generate conflict and confusion in the decision-making process;[8] the diversity of interests and resources (information, political resources, economic and symbolic assets, and so on) that affect the exchanges among participants; the diversity of conceptions about the ends, purposes and goals of the organization; and the different conceptions about the problem to be addressed and the best ways to solve it.

Yet, it is evident that not any kind of relationship among heterogeneous actors should be classified as complex. Among the most obvious exemptions are corporatist and patron-client relations, which have a marked hierarchical character; such is also the case of hidden or "dark" networks whose members are highly interdependent but not always autonomous, as discussed in Chapter 2. Nor is heterogeneity necessarily associated to conflict. Indeed, homogeneity can provoke predatory competition, whereas heterogeneity can facilitate the establishment of complementary and cooperative relations. Hence, in our view, heterogeneity should be seen as a characteristic closer to institutional or functional differentiation. As shall be discussed in chapter 4, differentiation creates the need for processes and mechanisms of translation that generate common languages and makes consensus within the system possible.

Factors and Mechanisms

If CAS have all these properties and characteristics, the big mystery would be not how they manage to produce results but how they are able to exist at all. Our answer is that they do so thanks to the combination of at least six internal factors and mechanisms.

The first of these is interpersonal trust. Trust is important everywhere, but where institutional rules are weak or otherwise insufficient, people would hardly agree to cooperate unless they trust each other. This requirement presents no major problem in groups that share a strong identity, a distinctive ideology or even a particular

[8] See March (1997) on interactive inconsistencies.

interest. In these circumstances, trust finds such a favorable environment that its development seems almost spontaneous. But among people who are very different and come from various social fields, interpersonal trust is like a delicate plant that must be carefully nurtured. As will be analyzed in chapter 4, we argue that to flourish in these conditions, trust needs to be a subtle combination of three main components: normative, technical and strategic. The survival of CAS, not only their performance, largely depends on their capacity to achieve such a virtuous combination.

The second element in this list is social translation. Given their social and professional diversity, members of CAS cannot be expected to understand each other, let alone reach consensual agreements, unless they manage to find a common "language." Therefore, much of the effort performed by these systems consists in creating, maintaining and socializing such a language. However, if CAS are to retain their distinctive complexity, it is essential that their members do not forget their "native languages." Thus, what these systems require is not so much a sort of "national", exclusive language, but a lingua franca that can coexist with the different languages of their members. Given the importance of this task, which is usually performed both by some special "translators" and by the system as a whole, it would not be exaggerated to say that CAS are systems of translation, constantly seeking to find the right balance between linguistic similarity and diversity.

Thus, in the absence of institutionally guaranteed cohesion and communication, trust and translation are indispensable for the existence of CAS. But how are these systems able to make decisions and binding agreements?

As previously argued, participants who value their autonomy dearly cannot be compelled to renounce their identities and cast off their constitutive characteristics. Thus, consensus helps the organization retain its members, at the same time helping members preserve their autonomy and identity. Many authors have persuasively made this point (for example, Brunsson and Olsen 1998: 29, Ahrne and Brunsson 2005: 442, and Elster 1999). Yet, it is important to consider that, contrary to what they usually claim, consensus does not amount to unanimity. Rather, as Schmitter (2001: 7) affirms, in

the context of horizontal interactions, consensus implies that no decision can be taken against the expressed opposition of any participant. One of the main mechanisms for building this kind of consensus is negotiation, which entails both compromise (accepting a position that lies midway between the preferences of two or more actors) and mutual adjustment (taking into account the intensity of other members' preferences). Thus, it is understandable that, from very different standpoints, authors like March, Schmitter and Messner affirm that negotiation is the mechanism of choice for collective decision-making among interdependent and diverse actors. However, as we shall argue in chapter 5, complex associative systems need another key mechanism: deliberation, which essentially consists in trying to convince one's adversaries that one's position is justified.[9] Otherwise, the system can easily degenerate into a market, thus losing its capacity to be a forum for the expression of diverse views. In this sense, the success of CAS also depends on their capacity to find the appropriate balance between negotiation and deliberation.

Yet, although deliberation and negotiation are essential, they are insufficient. To exist over a significant period, CAS do not only need to make a number of decisions. They need to develop a political structure within which these decisions are embedded. In particular, such a structure should define, in a legitimate way, two basic issues: who has the right to participate in what matters and who is entitled to collectively make binding decisions. As we shall argue in chapters 7 and 8, these definitions are made through representation and leadership.

Obviously, not all members can participate personally in every important activity. Moreover, some participants in the system take part not in their own right but as representatives of someone else. Therefore, some form of representation is indispensable. However, in contrast to what happens in legal contracts and formal political institutions, where the procedures and rules of representation are usually well defined, CAS have no recognized guidelines on this matter. Thus, although members of CAS and the people with whom they interact are normally aware of the existence of representation within

[9] For an in-depth study of the relationship between autonomy and democratic deliberation, see Warren (2001).

the system, they often disagree on who represents whom and in what respects.

To explain how CAS manage to solve this problem, we propose the concept of complex associative representation: a subtle combination of different kinds of representatives and different forms and principles of representation that creates its own structure. This structure includes, among other elements, the constituency for which representatives speak and the rules by which they are held accountable. As in the case of the previous factors and mechanisms, the successful construction of this structure requires finding the right mix of principles and mechanisms of representation.

Representation is part of a broader task that CAS have to face by themselves, unaided by precise institutional rules and traditions: the formation of authority. Formal organizations, such as business firms and government agencies, usually have quite precise organizational charts, defining the main lines of authority and subordination. Such is not the case of the systems analyzed here. However, CAS cannot dispense with authority: some decisions are so specific, unexpected and urgent that they cannot be taken by consensus but have to be made by special groups of individuals. Moreover, most decisions, whether consensual or not, have to be enforced; and, when the need arrives, sanctions and rewards have to be administered. This authority is usually constructed not only through representation but also by means of leadership.

But the leadership that CAS need is very different from that which one finds in others fields, for example, in business firms and formal political institutions. Complex associative leadership is a soft yet efficacious form of political direction requiring a set of distinctive capacities and inclinations. This leadership is not necessarily exercised in formal authority positions. Rather, it is often located at the interfaces of the system since reputation and prestige depend on the capacity to articulate different conceptions, interests, and languages. Not surprisingly, people who occupy these positions have often been described as "translators", negotiators, brokers, "symbolic analysts", gatekeepers or, more generally, as border personnel. Yet, CAS leadership also entails the capacity to give orders and make unpleasant decisions. Thus, complex associative leadership consists

of—like all the preceding mechanisms and factors—a sort of delicate equilibrium—in this case, between coordination and superiority.

What results from these two mechanisms—complex associative representation and leadership—is usually a political structure in which no participant has absolute authority and each has a certain degree of autonomy. Therefore, authority is dynamically dispersed within the system.[10] This situation is a potential source of conflict, given that each group, community or organization that participates in the system has its own leaders who may compete for authority (Ahrne and Brunsson 2005). This situation also creates uncertainty and confusion, thus making it difficult to determine who should be held responsible for the decisions and actions made in the name of the association.

These factors and mechanisms—trust, translation, negotiation, deliberation, representation and leadership—are all interconnected. For example, trust is, primarily, a factor that facilitates cohesion within the system. Yet, it also plays a crucial role in fostering compliance and commitment among members with inconsistent interests. As has been previously argued, unlike the state and many other compulsive organizations, these systems are not governed by coercion or law. Therefore, their decisions are often issued as standards rather than as compulsory rules. Borrowing the words of March (1997: 26), we could affirm that a complex associative system

> is not a world of precise contracts but of informal, loose understandings and expectations. As a result, decision making often emphasizes trust and loyalty, in parallel with a widespread belief that these qualities are hard to find and sustain, and power comes from being thought to be trustworthy.

In this respect, it is significant that even game theory (at least in its latest versions) refers less to negotiation skills and more to trust and reputation as the key mechanisms for decision-making.

[10] This authority pattern has been found in high tech firms networks (Hage and Alter 1997), policy networks (Messner 1999), policy networks in multi-level systems, such as the European Union (Hoogh and Marks 2001) and knowledge networks (Luna and Velasco 2006).

The result of this combination is that CAS are in constant search for the right equilibrium within each of the above mechanisms and factors, and among all of them operating together. Thus, it is only natural that CAS face important coordination and integration problems, their legitimacy is uncertain and their authority is problematic. Such problems should be kept in mind when evaluating their performance. Because consensus is so important, stabilization and convergence are crucial evaluative criteria, far more important than the achievement of preset goals or the mere survival of the organization.

PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION

As many critics have persuasively shown, instrumental rationality does not necessarily provide the best interpretation of organizations and their performance. This does not mean, however, that efficiency and efficacy are irrelevant in the evaluation of performance. What it does mean is that there are other dimensions of performance that are equally or even more important than the rational calculations of actors, and that efficiency and effectiveness can result from a variety of structural arrangements, not only from those that are hierarchical and centralized. This why it is so important to analyze the performance of organizations whose relational structures are almost horizontal and whose decision-making methods are predominantly collective.

From our perspective, while CAS can reinvigorate associative life, they are also—from social and political points of view—fragile structures of relations. They consist of multiple tensions that give them dynamism but also make their existence precarious. Therefore, their performance consists in creating, maintaining and almost permanently renewing the equilibrium among these tensions.

With this in view, it is clear that CAS performance has to be assessed at two equally important and interrelated levels: functional (or practical) and associative. Roughly speaking, the former level has to do with effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency, that is, with the traditional ways to assess performance. In contrast, associative performance refers to the system's capacity to coordinate the actions of its

members in legitimate ways and make positive contributions to associational life in general.

Functional performance: components and dimensions

As mentioned, the three basic components of functional or practical performance are effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency. An agent is usually considered effective to the extent that it is capable of having the intended or expected effects. However, effectiveness, while important, is too vague. It does not evaluate that effect by comparing it to a given standard. Efficacy is more precise. It normally means not only the "power or capacity to produce effects" in general, but more specifically, also the "power to effect the object intended."[11] This is associated with the capacity for achieving precise, previously stated goals. But, as previously argued, in the case of CAS, problem-solving involves a complex process of definition and redefinition of the issues addressed. Therefore CAS efficacy has to be evaluated dynamically, considering the resolution of problems arisen during the interaction itself, rather than solely the achievement of previously set goals.

By itself, efficacy is about achieving goals and says nothing about the costs of doing so. Efficiency is the notion that attempts to fill this void. An agent or action is efficient to the extent that it achieves its goals at the lowest costs (as expressed, for example, in time, technical resources, money or physical effort). It implies a balance between means and ends, between costs and benefits. This notion is critical for evaluating CAS performance, since it is clear that assessments will vary greatly according to which combinations of criteria and standards are taken into account. Therefore it requires a more detailed attention than the others.

It is worth noting that functional performance—as mentioned by any of its three criteria—has normative, technical and exchange dimensions. The decisions made and the actions taken by CAS may be assessed along these three dimensions, each with its corresponding distinctive question:

[11] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, September 30, 2009.

1. Normative dimension. Whether decisions and actions are right: the extent to which they comply with the normative standards of participants.

2. Technical dimension. Whether they are true or accurate: how successful they are in solving the problems that the system is meant to address and in finding correct answers to relevant questions.

3. Exchange dimension. Whether they are profitable for everyone: how much they satisfy the interests of all participants and how well they deal with their concerns.

Actions and decisions must perform reasonably well in each of these three dimensions simultaneously. An action that is judged normatively sound but fails to bring about accurate solutions to the problems or profitable results to participants would be practically useless. One that has technically accurate and profitable consequences but violates norms and rules that are fundamental to some participants may undermine collaboration. In other words, a good decision or action should be—at the same time—right, true or accurate, and profitable.[12]

To further complicate matters, given that CAS bring together people from different institutional settings and therefore have a highly heterogeneous membership, each of the three dimensions listed above necessarily comprises a variety of standards. The norms and values held by participants are obviously different, and all of them must be taken into account when determining whether a decision or action was right or wrong. Similarly, to determine whether a given decision was correct, it is necessary to consider the definitions of truth and accuracy that prevail in all the participant entities. The same holds for finding out whether the results of an action were profitable.

Equally, or even more importantly, those dimensions also comprise the standards created by the system itself. The relevant norms, the nature of the technical problems to be solved, and the interests and goals of participants are defined, shaped and transformed by

[12] According to Weber (2005: 51), "The efficiency of the solution of material problems depends on the participation of those concerned, on openness to criticism, on horizontal structures of interaction and on democratic procedures for implementation."

means of the interaction itself. To the extent that the interaction crystallizes into a genuinely new entity and becomes autonomous from its sponsors, the system acquires its own performance standards.

Table 1.2 shows how these criteria and dimensions should be combined in the analysis of the practical or functional performance of CAS. To illustrate how this combination should proceed, one can take the case of efficiency, the most sophisticated of the three evaluation criteria mentioned above.

TABLE 1. 2
CRITERIA AND DIMENSIONS
FOR ASSESSING PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

Criterion/ Dimension	*Normative*	*Technical*	*Exchange*
Effectiveness	Ability to produce normatively sound results	Ability to produce technically correct results	Ability to produce profitable results
Efficacy	Capacity to achieve normatively sound concrete goals	Capacity to solve specific problems	Capacity to provide practical benefits for participants
Efficiency	Compliance with the relevant norms (values, laws, rules and so on) of participants and of the system as a whole	Capacity to solve technical or scientific problems at the lowest possible cost	Capacity to provide tangible benefits for each and all participants

SOURCE: own construction.

The analysis of efficiency should proceed in three basic steps. The first is a normative one, which at first sight may seem rather strange given that efficiency is often seen as an exclusively empirical criterion. But a decision that violates fundamental normative or legal standards may be unacceptable, unsustainable or counterproductive —hence inefficient—even if at first sight it appeared to be technically sound and economically profitable. Thus, to analyze the efficiency of an action or decision one should begin by determining whether it complies with the norms, values, laws, rules and so on that are important for all the participants and to the system as a whole.

Only after this step should the analysis focus on the truth (or accuracy) and profitability of the actions and decisions. The second step of the analysis assesses these matters in a purely technical sense: CAS are to be considered efficient in so far as they find accurate solutions to the problems they are meant to address at the lowest possible cost, measured in cognitive, economic, technological and related terms. Although sophisticated tools may be used to gather information in this respect, the assessment made by participants themselves should be the most important input.

But, as said above, CAS are not only problem-solving devices. They are also exchange structures. When organizations and individuals contribute their own resources to the collective effort, they seek actual returns. Therefore, the third step in the analysis of CAS efficiency is distributive. Does the collaborative effort yield significant benefits for each participant? Are the products of the interaction distributed in a way that satisfies even the least favored partner? Are the costs of the interaction fairly distributed among participants? Is there no participant that would be better off without this collaboration? In formal econometric terms, is the system Pareto-efficient —that is to say, is it not possible to organize the exchange in a way that would produce greater benefits to at least some of the participants without damaging any of them? Again, although sophisticated tools may be used to analyze these matters, perhaps the best data come from evaluations made by participants themselves. The important question in this respect is whether participants perceive an acceptable proportion between, on the one hand, the efforts made and the resources invested and, on the other, the results obtained.

It must be added that—ideally—each of these steps should be comparative. For instance, the system's capacity for solving technical problems must be compared to the real or potential capacity of other organizational structures to address the same problems.

Associative Performance

As already said, decisions and instrumental actions are not the only results of CAS that merit attention when evaluating their performance. It is also important to observe whether, in making or undertaking

them, the system preserves, or undermines, the conditions for present and future collaboration and the extent to which the system acquires authority, and hence legitimacy. These issues are all the more important because CAS are not normally guided by conventional political rules. This is what we call associative performance.

This associative performance should be evaluated at three levels: the system's capacity to preserve and develop itself, its legitimacy and its capacity to improve associational life.

The first level comprehends the coordinating and integrating abilities of the system. It is important for at least two reasons. First, typically a CAS aspires not only to attain its explicit objectives but also to become a recognized forum for discussing public problems, proposing solutions and, in general, creating public opinion. Hence, for CAS, it is as important to build and preserve their own associative structure as to attain practical results. The second reason is that—in contrast to agencies that are created and actively backed by governments, or business firms that are kept alive by a shared economic interest or communities that are preserved by tradition and by tight and enduring social ties—CAS have to construct themselves almost continuously. Their existence and development are not underwritten by a well-recognized force, such as the power of the state, money or tradition, but by the participants' will to associate with each other.

In consequence, we consider that associative performance, at this level, comprehends four elements, which will be analyzed with more detail in chapters 4-6. The first element is the production and reproduction of interpersonal trust which is an essential condition for cooperation among members who are diverse and have very different interests. The second is the production of a "language" that is shared by these members. The importance of this element is obvious: since members often come from different fields and even from different countries and cultures, they naturally use different criteria to assess the results of the associative effort. CAS have to "translate" this cultural, social and even epistemological diversity into a language that can be understood by every participant. The third element is the production of internal procedures and institutions to negotiate, that is to say, to make the different interests of participants compatible, solve the actual and potential conflicts among members and find

solutions that are satisfactory to everyone. The fourth element is the production of the conditions necessary for deliberation. This entails generating the procedures, organizational spaces, rules and knowledge necessary to define, collectively, the common good of the system and identify the chief means to achieve it.

In other words, a CAS associative performance, at this level, would be me more efficacious to the extent that it produces interpersonal trust, a shared "language," and the conditions for negotiations and deliberation.

The second level of associative performance is the system's capacity to acquire authority—which we understand as a combination of power and legitimacy, that is to say, as legitimate power. In the specific case of CAS, to have authority means to be recognized as relevant actors by the public in the name of which they claim to speak and by the actors with which the systems interact. It also means to be able to make decisions that have decisive impacts on the area of the public sphere in which these systems are interested.

With respect to the first component of authority, we draw on Weber's classic definition, according to which power is the probability that an actor participating in a social relation will carry out its will even against the opposition of other participants (1978, vol. I, 212-214). As Lukes (2005) has argued, this probability has three dimensions: the capacity to influence collective decisions; the capacity to control the agenda, that is to say, to decide what is to be decided; and the capacity to influence the preference and interests of the others.

The third level of associative performance consists of the capacity of the system to enrich associative life in general—people's ability to associate with each other to discuss public problems and find solutions. The decisions and actions of CAS are transcendent to the extent that they become an example, inspiring not only their own participants but the public as whole to cooperate with each other in the solution of common problems. When CAS are successful in this sense, they contribute to the existence of an environment that is propitious to the flourishing of free, horizontal and active associations and, therefore, to the existence of a vibrant civil society.

Obviously at this level performance becomes very diffuse. But two of its components are, at the same time, precise and important: the

creation of new associations and collective learning. The former exists to the extent that a CAS promotes the development of associative networks, supports the creation of associations and associative systems and serves as a forum for the participation of other associations, institutions and people. The second component exists to the extent that, by participating in the system, people and organizations learn how to act in association—how to interact with different individuals and organizations, how to communicate with them and learn from them, how to distinguish those who are trustworthy from those who are not, how to earn the trust of the others, how to negotiate and deliberate with them and how to make collective decisions that are advantageous to everyone. As they acquire these abilities and knowledge, members of CAS can use them in other areas of their private, professional and, above all, public life. Obviously, this learning can also be indirect: even those who do not participate in the system may profit from its example and emulate it in other fields of public life.

But participation may also be a frustrating experience. It may persuade participants that it is hard to communicate with people from different entities, that it is impossible to negotiate with them and that it is futile even to try to exchange rational arguments. In short, the pedagogical effect of CAS is critical but indeterminate.

Of course, this associative evaluation requires many operational specifications that can only be made in practice, with reference to concrete cases of CAS. However, it is possible to make two general observations that can guide the search for those specifications. First, the relation between functional and associative performance is not always linear. For example, generally speaking it is obviously true that a CAS that produces more results will be more capable of attracting and retaining participants; but it is equally possible that, in order to achieve better practical results, the system would be tempted to sacrifice the interests of some members, ignore the opinions of some or make unilateral and exclusionary decisions; if this is the case, practical performance would be acquired at the expense of associative performance. Similarly, although we can expect a tight relationship between legitimacy and functional efficacy, legitimacy has its own distinctive properties. It depends not only on the legitimacy

of interests and particular causes that are at play in the system and on its accountability and transparency; but also, and to a large extent, on the principles that regulate CAS authority formation, and that in turn are reflected on their strategic decisions rules, their particular modes of public representation and the specific ways to exercise leadership (all of these three elements will be addressed in detail in Part III). In this context, the search for legitimacy may sometimes undermine the practical efficacy of the association, or vice versa.

Second, in assessing the associative performance of a given CAS, one must take into account the political design and the dynamics of the system. According to actor-network theory, such dynamics embrace three main phases: emergence, development and stabilization. New networks emerge out of already existing ones, by either subtle changes or revolutionary breakthroughs. A network can evolve into a more convergent or more divergent structure. When coordination is stronger and different elements are better aligned, the network becomes more stable and predictable. In other words, stabilization, or closure, means that interpretive flexibility diminishes. When its diverse elements are more tightly interrelated, the network becomes more complex and stable, because to disconnect an actor from a network, many other connections have to be undone (Stalder 1997).

CONCLUSION

Seeking to lay the groundwork for the rest of the book, this chapter necessarily has an abstract tone. The main function of the model put forward here is not to summarize the richness of associative life but to guide the analysis of one of its parts, wich seems so new and indeterminate that it has often been overlooked in many studies of collective action. Whether this model is appropriate or not is something that can be judged only by its fruits: the description, explanation and evaluation of actual associative efforts.

However, before proceeding to the study of real cases, the theoretical roots and ramifications of the model have to be briefly discussed.

Chapter 2

CAS and Associative Life

CAS are part of a much broader phenomenon: associative life. Therefore, to understand their peculiarity, it is important to observe how they relate to this larger social area. This topic is vast, and our treatment does not pretend to be exhaustive. Instead of trying to cover everything that is important, we will concentrate on four points that—as the rest of this chapter will hopefully make clear—are critical for understanding the nature of CAS and their potential contribution to associative life.

These points are as follows: the differences and similarities between CAS and other major associative entities, the insertion of CAS into the public space, the challenge of transnationalization and the opportunities created by the global public sphere, and the similarities and differences between CAS and so called dark networks.

Networks, Associations, Corporatist Arrangements and Associative Systems

Throughout this book, we speak of "complex associative systems," instead of "associations" or "networks." Why do we keep using the former, more encumbering term, instead of straightforward alternatives?

As suggested above, social networks share many characteristics with complex associative systems. Like CAS, networks are often autonomous structures, with autonomous and interdependent members;

they are usually flexible, have dispersed systems of authority and may be highly dynamic.

But there is a crucial difference between social networks and the associative systems under study. Networks are often underlying structures, of which participants themselves are not aware and which can be revealed only after careful research. Actors are usually aware of only their closest connections, but not of those indirect links that place them in an extended structure. And it may even happen that the actor is not aware of any of these links at all. Such is the case of social networks that facilitate the spread of diseases, or "issue networks" in which one becomes inadvertently involved just by showing interest in a certain theme and contacting at least one person who shares that interest.

In contrast, associative relations, which are the elementary particles of our complex associative systems, always entail a significant degree of consciousness. Rather than constituting a mechanical or automatic connection, an associative relation is a *social relation*, as defined by Max Weber (1978: 26): "the behavior of a plurality of actors insofar as, in its meaningful content, the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented in these terms." In other words, associative relations are actions consciously oriented to the actions of other people—even if participants cannot be aware of the full chains of significant actions into which they insert themselves.

An associative relation occurs when two or more people consciously and willingly decide to cooperate, to join their efforts for a shared purpose. This view is faithful to the etymological meaning of the verb "to associate"—to "unite with," "to become companions" or partners. "The art of associating together," in the words of Tocqueville (2003: 596), is "the art of pursuing in concert the aim of their common desires." Therefore, a minimum of consciousness, of willingness, of horizontality and reciprocity is indispensable for a given social relation to qualify as an associative relation.

This definition clearly shows the basic difference between associative relations and those that prevail in other forms of social cooperation, such as a business firm, a bureaucratic agency, an army, a market exchange, or a family. Family relations are often non-voluntary and non-horizontal. Relations between employer and employee

within a firm always entail a significant degree of economic compulsion and verticality. Bureaucracy and armies always entail hierarchies, commands, obedience, and discipline. And market exchanges are often defined by competition and self-interest, rather than purposeful cooperation.

But purposeful cooperation, as well as collective decision-making and heterogeneous membership, may also exist in corporatist arrangements and associations, for example, in many peak or specialized business associations, trade unions and tripartite agreements involving business, labour and government at different territorial levels. Yet, there is an important distinction between these organizations and the complex systems that we study: the role of obligation (as distinguished from trust and reciprocity), which is far more important in the former than in the latter. Thus, while low levels of institutionalization, egalitarian relations, horizontal structures, deliberative mechanisms and loosely connected memberships are prominent features of CAS, corporatist relations are better characterized by contractual bounds, bureaucratic rules, asymmetric power relations, hierarchies, a marked preference for negotiation, sanctions and strong control over members.

This does not mean that corporatist organizations cannot participate in complex associative systems. Indeed, some of the CAS that we analyze in this book have many such participants. But, as shall be explained in the following chapters, there is always a risk that those actors may become too influential within the CAS, imposing their own corporatist culture, severely limiting the individual autonomy of participants and even undermining the autonomy and dynamism of the entire system.

Moreover, CAS should also be distinguished from another associative phenomenon, associations. Modern societies have numerous organizations calling themselves "associations," like the International Association of Universities, or the International Sociological Association. Like CAS, these organizations are also mainly made up of associative relations. They usually have an official name, a list of members, a limit establishing who qualifies as a member and who does not, an organizational chart, an address (electronic or physical). Of course, some or even all of these components may be informal,

but they have to be real; otherwise, the organization would not have a real existence.

The associative systems that we study often comprise two or more such organizations. In this sense, these systems are "associations of associations." But they also comprise other kinds of participants, for example, individuals, corporate bodies (e.g., universities, government agencies, business firms, and labor unions), and informal or latent groups (e.g., the owners of rifles or classical music fans).

These associative systems may be relatively simple or complex. To qualify as complex, they must have the properties mentioned above: they should be autonomous; their members should be diverse and have incommensurable goals; these members should be simultaneously autonomous and interdependent; and the systems should be flexible and dynamic.

In sum, while sharing many characteristics with social networks, corporatist arrangements and associations, CAS occupy a distinct place in the associative world. The following sections shall further clarify the nature and characteristics of this place.

CAS and Public Spaces

By bringing together people and organizations from both the private and government sectors to address socially relevant problems, CAS can contribute to reinvigorating public life, facilitating citizen participation, infusing state-society relations with new dynamism and inspiring better focused and more creative public policies.

To understand these promises, as well as their potential pitfalls, a brief discussion of CAS' relation to public spaces is necessary. But to place this discussion in its proper place, it is important to recall a basic fact: "public space" is a social area, not necessarily a physical one.[1] Even from their home, people can act as members of the public. This possibility is enhanced by the development of means of communication: by reading newspapers, writing books and articles or using the internet, people can involve themselves in discussions

[1] According to Hannay (2005: 125), the public space means "Not streets, markets or pedestrian precincts, but an abstract space formed by a shared political landscape."

about, and even the solution of, public problems. The space thus created is certainly virtual, but its consequences can be very real.

The scope of the public space in which CAS operate can vary greatly. When talking about it, we usually mean the national public space, and for good reasons, given the overriding importance of nation-states among current forms of social organization. Moreover, as Habermas' classical study shows, the modern ideal of the public sphere developed in interaction with the construction of modern nation-states (Habermas: 1989). But public spaces may have narrower or wider limits. Thus, we can speak of the public space of a local community or any other subnational unit, or of a transnational public space or even of a global one. Additionally, the scope of public spaces varies not only geographically but also socially. Thus, we can speak of the public space that exists within a large university, among members of a profession or within a given social sector. Ultimately, the range of a public space depends upon the range of the community of which it forms part.[2]

Public spaces and public spheres combine three distinguishing properties that are relevant for CAS.[3] The first is visibility, or openness to public view. In this sense, publicity is the opposite of secrecy. It is this meaning that is implicit in Kant's famous "publicity test": "All actions affecting the rights of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is not compatible with their being made public," that is to say, if they cannot be publicly defended (1991: 126).

A second property is generality, or the concern with matters of general interest. This is in line with the history of the concept. As John Dewey points out, "etymologically, 'private' is defined in opposition to 'official,' a private person being one deprived of public position" (1954: 15). In positive terms, "public" refers to those matters

[2] But there are obvious limits to this variability. In the words of Dewey: "There are associations which are too narrow and restricted in scope to give rise to a public, just as there are associations too isolated from one another to fall within the same public" (1954: 39).

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, we would use "public space" and "public sphere" as synonyms (the former term, of course, has a more geographic connotation, while the latter is more abstract).

that concern a whole community (not only some of its members) and that the community decides to take into its own hands.[4]

The third property is free discussion, or the public use of reason. If there is no free discussion, if some people deny the others the right to participate, then the public ceases to exist: it becomes privatized. This denial may take the form of outright prohibition, but it can be more subtle: propaganda, lies, threats and similar forms of unilateral social influence may prevent some participants from effectively using their own reason, that is to say, from acting as autonomous and responsible members of the public. The public, according to this third property, is a forum in which any participant has the right to freely express himself or herself—and therefore, everyone has the obligation to allow the others to express themselves and the capacity to judge the reasonableness of those expressions.[5] In Kant's famous formulation, this contrasts with the private use of reason, "that which a person may make of it in a particular *civil* post or office with which he is entrusted." It also contrasts with purely passive behavior, when "by an artificial common agreement," a person "acts as part of the machine", as a member of, for example, a bureaucracy, a church or an army (Kant 1991: 55-56). It is precisely this need to address themselves, as members of the public, to the other members of the public that encourages individuals or corporate persons to transcend their narrow self-interests and to pay attention to the general consequences of their particular transactions.

In sum, the social relations that make up a public space are characterized by being visible to everyone, by dealing with issues of general interest and by involving free discussion.

By these standards, it is clear that CAS are rightful members of public spaces. As is explained throughout this book, at least to a significant degree, CAS's transactions are usually open to scrutiny, not only by direct participants but by any member of the public who

[4] "The public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for" (Dewey 1954: 15-16).

[5] "Our exercise of political power is proper only when we sincerely believe that the reasons we would offer for our political actions—were we to state them as government officials—are sufficient, and we also reasonably think that other citizens might also reasonably accept those reasons (Rawls 1999: 137).

may care to be informed. This may be so even unintentionally: numerous, autonomous and diverse participants would hardly be able to keep their transactions in secret. Similarly, the diversity of interests and goals that members bring to these associative systems encourages each of them to present his or her arguments in a general way and to look for generally acceptable solutions. Other properties and characteristics of CAS—for example, their hazy organizational borders and the imprecise and usually large numbers of people that they represent—push in the same direction. The very fact that participants decide to set up an associative system like CAS is evidence that the problem that concerns them cannot be solved through private contracts or bureaucratic fiat. Moreover, as will be discussed in chapter 5, because of their complexity CAS need to make their decisions collectively, through a combination of negotiation and deliberation. And the exchange of reasonable arguments is not usually restricted to direct participants of the CAS; normally, such arguments are also addressed to the public at large.

But publicity is not only an empirical phenomenon; it is also, and perhaps mainly, an ideal to which real societies may come closer or stay-farther away. The actual public space can be wider or narrower: it can include a larger or smaller part of the population. Its quality can also be variable: its transactions can be more or less open to public scrutiny, and the information about these transactions may be more or less accurate and reliable. The number of issues effectively subject to public deliberation may represent a greater or lesser proportion of the total number of issues that are important for the whole community. And the quality of public deliberation may also be variable: discussion may be freer or more restricted, reasonable arguments may have more or less weight (as compared to, for example, emotional appeals, egotistic interests, or sheer manipulation), and equal rights to participate may be more or less strictly respected.

Something similar can be said about CAS. They may be closer to or farther from the publicity ideal: their transactions may be more or less open to public scrutiny; the issues with which they deal may concern the whole community, only a part of it or, in extreme cases, just the direct participants of the associative system; and the quantity and quality of deliberation may be greater or lesser.

Hence, the degree to which really existing public spaces approach the ideal—and the role of CAS within such spaces—has to be analyzed historically. But for obvious reasons, here we can only glimpse at such history.

Specialists on the topic virtually agree that the modern ideal of public space emerged and was decisively shaped in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. It was in this period, for example, that Kant's influential texts on the public use of reason and the publicity test came to light. That ideal envisioned an intelligent citizenship, enthusiastically but reasonably engaged in deliberation about matters of common interest. The hope was, in Mills' terms, "that truth and justice will somehow come out of society as a great apparatus of free discussion" (Mills 2000: 299).

Such an ideal was always difficult to attain, but there were some successful approximations. "Salons littéraires," coffee houses and "table societies," helped by a vibrant free press, were highly celebrated points of reunion for some distinguished private people who epitomized the public in Europe. The protagonists of this public came from a "bourgeois stratum" made up of "merchants, bankers, entrepreneurs …manufacturers" and scholars—all of them educated and owners of propriety (Habermas 1989: 23, 85). Less brilliant but apparently more firmly rooted was the American case—the case that so impressed Tocqueville. The golden years of the American public were based, in the words of Dewey, "on a genuine community life, that is, association in local and small centers where industry was mainly agricultural and where production was carried on mainly with hand tools" (Dewey 1954: 111).

As the above suggests, the realization of the publicity ideal required a series of institutional and structural conditions. The relevant institutions included a free and plural press, widely recognized and readily accessible meeting points, mechanisms for formal and informal consultation between citizens and politicians, and civil rights guaranteeing the autonomy of citizens. A relatively large pool of reading and well educated people, a significant level of socioeconomic equality among them, a sense of solidarity and common purpose among the members of society, and relatively easy communication made

possible by large urban concentrations and well developed communication and transportation services stand out among the social and structural preconditions. Institutions had to guarantee the freedom of citizens to deliberate and provide an opportunity for translating the conclusions of their deliberations into practical policies. Structural conditions had to provide a sufficient number of people well qualified to effectively take advantage of those institutional guarantees.

As the nineteenth century advanced, these conditions deteriorated. Indeed, as Dewey wrote, "The rapidity with which the scheme fell into disuse is evidence of the transitoriness of the state of affairs that was predicated" (1954: 111). Inequality among members of the public increased dramatically, either because inequality grew in the entire society or because poor people formerly excluded from the public sphere entered into it in large numbers.[6] Conflicts among social classes and sectors intensified, becoming more difficult to solve through the exchange of reasonable arguments. The development of big bureaucratic organizations (political parties, government agencies, armies, business corporations) compared to which individuals seemed utterly powerless, undermined the autonomy and political efficacy of common citizens.[7] Because of the growing complexity of society and the corresponding increase of specialization, it became more difficult for citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for effective participation in public debates. The consolidation of newspapers and other sources of information into large for-profit organizations seriously restricted and biased the flows of information,

[6] Thus, a central assumption in the liberal formula was seemingly violated. According to Kant, to qualify for "active citizenship," a person "must have an independent position among the people. He must therefore be not just a part of the commonwealth, but a member of it, i.e. he must by his own free will actively participate in a community of other people." Apprentices, "servants who are not employed by the state," minors, "women in general and all those people who are obliged to depend for their living …on the offices of others (excluding the state)—all these people have no civil personality, and their existence is, so to speak, purely inherent" (Kant 1991: 139).

[7] "The invasion of the community by the new and relatively impersonal and mechanical modes of combined human behavior is the outstanding fact of modern life" (Dewey 1954: 98).

reducing many citizens to the role of receivers of standardized messages.[8]

Recognizing the import of these changes, authors have either decried "the transformation of the public into mass," the "eclipse of the public" or the transformation of the public into a "phantom" (Mills 2000, Dewey 1954, Lippmann 1925); or else adopted a diminished definition of the ideal, asserting for example that the only substantial criterion for membership into the public is "some entitlement to state protection" (Hannay 2005: 6).

A way out of this situation seemingly appeared with the development of post-bureaucratic models of public administration and the establishment of systems of public governance whose protagonists are "self-organizing, inter-organizational networks" bringing together state and not-state actors (Rhodes 1996: 660; see also Rhodes 2007 and Aguilar Villanueva 2006). It is in this context that complex associative systems emerged as a promise to help revitalize the public space.

According to Dewey, "the outstanding problem of the Public is discovery and identification of itself" (1954: 185). By setting up a CAS, individuals and organizations can gain awareness that they are able to handle public problems and to seek commonly acceptable solutions. CAS can give citizens a sense of public efficacy and help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for deliberation and cooperation. Moreover, as Dewey also wrote, "the actual problem is one of reconstruction of the ways and forms in which men unite in associated activity" (1954: 192). Because, as shall be explained below, CAS resist institutionalization, they can encourage citizens to continuously devise and try new forms of association and to search for new ways to overcome the obstacles to collective action.

CAS can also put citizens in a better position to deal with the large, impersonal organizations that often seem to suffocate individual initiative. As Habermas claims, "a no longer intact public of private

[8] "In the absence of institutions and education by which the environment is so successfully reported that the realities of public life stand out sharply against self-centered opinion, the common interests very largely elude public opinion entirely, and can be managed only by a specialized class whose personal interests reach beyond the locality. This class is irresponsible, for it acts upon information that is not common property, in situations that the public at large does not conceive, and it can be held to account only on the accomplished fact" (Lippmann 1991[1921]: 195).

people dealing with each other individually" should be "replaced by a public of organized people" (1989: 232).[9] Only through their own associations can citizens successfully face existing economic and political organizations and force them to enter into genuine public deliberation. Moreover, by doing this, citizen associations could also contribute to enlivening the internal structures of those organizations, thus extending publicity "to institutions that until now have lived off the publicity of other institutions rather than being themselves subject to the public's supervision" (Habermas 1989: 209).

Fulfilling this promise would be a too-heavy burden for a single CAS. But, as discussed in the next section, a network of associations of associations, a trans-local structure firmly rooted in specific contexts but extending its reach well beyond the boundaries of a single place or social group, would be better equipped for the task. Because of their flexibility and dynamism, CAS can constitute privileged participants in such networks.

In sum, CAS can make significant contributions to bringing current "public" institutions (political parties, bureaucracies, the media) into deliberation with citizens and their associations; creating a real public sphere within each of those institutions; and, in general, multiplying the opportunities for citizen participation in public life.

But there are also risks and weaknesses. Even if they are internally equitable and inclusionary, i.e., if they give all their members equal capacity to participate in deliberation and decisions and treat all their members with the same respect and consideration, CAS may still be externally exclusionary. CAS seem better endowed to deal with diversity than with inequality. Egalitarian, horizontal associative interactions are difficult to maintain among people who occupy very different positions in the social and economic hierarchy. Citizens from the lower social sectors may not have the leisure to participate in the associative system; the opportunity cost of doing so may be prohibitive, even in the absence of purposeful restrictions. Moreover,

[9] "Only such a public could, under today's conditions, participate effectively in a process of public communication via the channels of the public spheres internal to parties and special-interest associations and on the basis of an affirmation of publicity as regards the negotiations of organizations with the state and with one another" (Habermas 1989: 232).

because recruitment into CAS occur primarily through self-selection and invitation, the risk is great that most of the participants would come from relatively well-to-do sectors. For these and similar reasons, CAS, if left to their own inertia, are liable to end up being islands of civility and participation in an ocean of apathy and powerlessness.

Moreover, as shall be explained below, CAS often face a difficult choice between efficacy and efficiency, on the one hand, and inclusion, deliberation and horizontality, on the other. Unrestricted deliberation and unstructured participation may lead to endless discussions and eventually to disappointment and apathy. Conversely, the need to take urgent decisions may legitimate unwarranted infringements upon free deliberation and equal participation, thus placing CAS squarely under the "iron law of oligarchy." In either case, instead of setting positive examples for the rest of the population to emulate, CAS may have demoralizing effects on the public.

To fulfill their promises to public life, CAS need to take preventive measures against these risks. For example, they may need to restrict the influence of members who are too powerful and, conversely, facilitate the participation of people and organizations with less resources and skills. In some cases, they would even need to take active steps to reach out to disorganized citizens who may have a stake in the problems that the associative system is trying to solve. In other words, a combination of well-targeted restrictions and affirmative action may be necessary. Similarly, they would have to collectively decide upon and implement some structuring of internal interactions; for example, establishing some regulated sites for guaranteed and consequential but regulated deliberation or fixing some minimal and maximum amount of discussion time before coming to a decision. In other words, to prevent the opposite risks of infinite discussion and undue restrictions to deliberation, CAS need to place some limitations to their complexity to make the system manageable (without destroying it in the process).

The problem is that these preventive measures may be mutually contradictory. To make internal discussions more manageable, to forestall the emergence of polarizing issues, CAS may be tempted to restrict entry of people from either extreme of the social hierarchy. But failure to include people who control critical economic or politi-

cal resources may result in praiseworthy decisions that are impossible to implement. Failure to include relevant representatives of the lower sectors may result in efficacious but illegitimate decisions. And, conversely, the inclusion of people who are too diverse and too unequal may tempt the CAS leadership to substitute obedience and mobilization for free participation, and authority and discipline for deliberation.

In summary, to fulfill their promise CAS need to balance contradictory impulses. And this fulfillment also depends upon social conditions—some level of equality, social welfare, social solidarity, education, and the like—that CAS can contribute to create in the long run but that are outside their control in the short term.

Finally, the fact that CAS contribution to public life is variable suggests that publicity should be a fundamental criterion for evaluating their performance. Publicity should be assessed both internally and externally. Internally, one should observe the degree to which a given CAS lives up to the publicity ideal, that is to say, its internal equality, free discussion, transparency, etc. Externally, the question should be how much the system contributes to the extension, deepening and improvement of the public space within which it operates, that is to say, the degree to which it provides opportunities for citizen participation, its contribution to solving public problems, its capacity to stimulate the creation of new forms of social collaboration, etc.

Complexity and Territorial Configuration

The structures and actions of CAS often cut across national borders even if, at the same time, they appear to be firmly rooted in national and even local societies. To understand this situation and assess its significance, in this section we quickly review the literature on international relations, multi-level governance, and transnational collective action.

Realism, the most influential approach to the study of international relations, leaves little room for associative systems acting beyond national borders. Politics across nations is seen as the monopoly of

states. There is no world polity, world politics is fundamentally anarchical, and the international sphere is essentially made up of interactions among sovereign nation-states. Associations can only participate in decision-making in three main ways: by acting within their own national spheres, by interacting with authorities of foreign states, and by their contacts with international organizations, which could be either intergovernmental or non-governmental but regulated by national governments (see, for example, Waltz 1979).

Among the several schools that have questioned that approach, international regime theory and the theory of complex interdependence, both closely related, are particularly important for our study of associative systems (Keohane and Nye 1997 and Keohane 1984). According to these views, although it is true that states are the main actors of international relations, there also exist "international regimes" that regulate interactions across borders. "These arrangements… are designed not to implement centralized enforcement of agreements but rather to establish stable mutual expectations about others, patterns of behavior and to develop working relationships that will allow the parties to adapt their practices to new situations" (Keohane 1984: 89). "Contracts, conventions, and quasi-agreements" effectively create international structures by "elevating injunctions to the level of principles and rules". They also create stable linkages among issues, which in effect entangle governments into complex and continuous negotiations. Equally significant, rules and issues are managed by international organizations that have a vested interest in the persistence and expansion of international regimes. Thus, the proliferation of international regimes—dealing with economic, security, policy, environment, and other issues—gives rise to a transnational sphere from which states cannot break away easily. Competition among sovereign actors is thereby attenuated by complex interdependence.

While ultimately subordinated to nation-states, this transnational sphere provides a basis for internationally oriented non-state actors. Thus, for example, international treaties and agreements, like the European Union or NAFTA, create channels for cross-border interaction between government and social organizations but also forums for direct contact among these organizations. This often

implies an expansion of the issues: a predominantly commercial agreement may end up providing a forum for the discussion of environmental, labor, or educational matters. It also often leads to a disaggregation of state authority: as the interaction among states and social organizations intensifies, there emerge specialized areas where different government agencies and different levels of state authority (central, regional, or local) participate with relative autonomy from formal state hierarchies.

Therefore, international regimes, and the transnational spheres that they create, can be interpreted as very large complex associative systems. In any case, they provide opportunities for the existence of the more limited associative systems that we analyze in this book.

Another theoretical anchor for our analysis comes from the literature on transnational governance. In contrast to government, governance refers to "any collectivity, private or public, that employs informal as well as formal steering mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives, pursue policies, and generate compliance" (Rosenau 2004: 31). At the international level, these systems of rule interact in a variety of ways with the traditional structures established by nation-states. Relationships between the two systems may be overlapping, cooperative or conflictive—or all of this at the same time. The expansion and strengthening of transnational governance has been bolstered by the growing number of inter-state treaties, conventions, agreements, and other types of formal cooperation, but also by broader phenomena such as economic and cultural globalization. Especially important has been the growth of network organization, whose existence largely depends on the progress of information technology (Ronfeldt et al. 1998).

Rosenau (2004) identifies eight main kinds of actors that usually populate transnational governance structures: governments (both national and subnational), transnational business corporations (TNCs), international government organizations (IGOs), national or subnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international or transnational non-governmental organizations (INGOs), transnational markets, elite groups, and mass publics. In his view, the interactions among these actors may take six main forms, as detailed in table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1
SIX FORMS OF TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

	Unidirectional Processes (vertical or horizontal)	*Multidirectional Processes (vertical and horizontal)*
Formal Structures	Top-down governance (governments, TNCs, IGOs)	Network governance (governments, IGOs, NGOs, INGOs)
Informal Structures	Bottom-up governance (mass publics, NGOs, INGOs)	Side-by-side governance (NGOs, INGOs, governments)
Mixed (formal and informal) structures	Market governance (governments, IGOs, elites, markets, mass publics, TNCs)	Mobius-web governance (governments, elites, mass publics, TNCs, IGOs, NGOs, INGOs)

SOURCE: adapted from Rosenau 2004: 42.

The complex associative systems that we study obviously belong in the multidimensional processes category; they may be either formal or informal, but most often they have both types of structures—hence their complexity.

But Rosenau's scheme does not include (explicitly, at any rate) some types of actors that are crucial to our analysis, for example, universities and other institutions of higher education, social movements, trade unions and professional organizations, and a variety of civil organizations that can hardly be accommodated in the categories of domestic or international non-governmental organizations.

The case of social movements has received ample attention in academic texts. Two strains of this literature are particularly relevant to our work. One is the literature on transnational advocacy networks —forms of voluntary, horizontal, and reciprocal cooperation across borders that deal with "principled" issues (like human rights or the environment). Several usual participants in these networks are also included in Rosenau's list, with the exception of TNCs, and with the outstanding presence of social movements, foundations, intellectuals, and consumer organizations. Their actions normally consist of a combination of "information politics" (generate, share, and use relevant information), "symbolic politics" (appeal to symbols, values, and norms shared by a transnational community), "leverage politics"

(also called "boomerang patterns": putting pressure upon powerful external actors with the ultimate goal of exerting influence upon domestic actors), and "accountability" politics (attempts to make government actions congruent with their avowed motivations).[10]

One important function of transnational advocacy networks is to combine the power of well-placed and well-endowed actors (for example, powerful foundations in rich countries or highly visible transnational organizations) with the needs of less fortunate participants (for example, victims of human rights violations in poor countries). They seek to create a level field from which principled causes can be more effectively promoted. They bring together a variety of politically relevant resources, like organization and money, but are particularly apt at working with non-conventional tools (like ideas, values, and information).

A related literature is that dealing with global social movements. This category, according to their proponents, fundamentally differs from that of "new social movements" in various senses. Global social movements act in an international context characterized by the weakening of nation-states; they struggle for recognition, not only for material and political demands; they give a central place to culture. They have a peculiar relation to politics, seeking not so much to influence policies or accumulate power but to build political spaces from which they can defend their causes; and, strictly speaking, they are not political, social or cultural subjects; rather, they are "virtual" subjects.[11] Salient instances include the various movements for an alternative economic globalization; but there are also negative cases (anti-movements), such as global terrorism (Wieviorka 2008).

The way in which this literature defines "global" is highly interesting for our study. Social movements become global not because they act mainly in a global sphere. What distinguishes them is their capacity to act in both global and local politics. They combine a global and a local dimension. In other words, they are both general and

[10] See Keck and Sikkink 1998.

[11] They are seen, quite poetically, as virtual entities that "will possibly become action": "the subject, who has become an actor, will shape his or her trajectory, produce his or her experience, define choices, inventing and developing their own creativity at the same time as making a contribution to collective mobilization" (Wieviorka 2005: 11).

specific. They are, as one author puts it, hybrid entities, causes and consequences of an unprecedented phenomenon: "glocalization" (Robertson 1995).

From the previous analysis, one can draw the following insights. Complex associative systems are, at least potentially, local and global. They may respond to local needs, but they are also able to extend across borders, as much as they are able to encompass several issues. They may attach themselves to international regimes and transnational structures. In some extreme cases, they may provide for an alternative governance framework, different from that created by nation states. They move from different locations and different issues through relatively horizontal and cooperative networks. And they may use a variety of resources, which include power, money, values, and ethical principles.

Bright and Dark Networks

So far, we have contrasted CAS with some parts or aspects of modern associative life that share an obvious characteristic: they are all legal and legitimate. By doing that, we have apparently assumed that CAS necessarily share this characteristic. This assumption would seem entirely justified. The complex associative systems that we selected for in-depth study in this book are open or "bright" organizations. They act in public spaces, through legal means, and for legitimate purposes. Therefore, they may be seen as radically different from so called dark networks, like terrorist organizations and criminal groups, which often act secretly, usually through illegal means, and frequently for ends that cannot be publicly advocated.

But are CAS so clearly different from dark associative systems in reality? A brief comparison between these two should help us highlight what is really distinctive about CAS.[12]

[12] There is a growing literature on dark or "covert" networks. The following analysis is partially based on the review of some of those texts, especially Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001, Williams 2001, Raab and Milward 2003, Milward and Raab 2005, McCormick 2003, Manwaring 2009, Goehsing 2006, Papachristos 2006, Xu and Chen 2008, Zabyelina 2009, Zanini and Edwards 2001. The text by Simmel (1906) on secret societies is a classic on this subject.

Despite appearances, the difference between bright and dark networks is not as obvious as these labels suggest. To begin with, the border is often fuzzy: between the extremes of open and dark networks, there is a gray area, where legal and illegal entities interact, sometimes in open conflict but often with mutual toleration or even tacit cooperation. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, there are striking resemblances between legitimate political communities and criminal bands. As Saint Augustine said long ago:

> In the absence of justice, what is sovereignty but organized brigandage? For, what are bands of brigands but petty kingdoms? They also are groups of men, under the rule of a leader, bound together by a common agreement, dividing their booty according to a settled principle. If this band of criminals, by recruiting more criminals, acquires enough power to occupy regions, to capture cities, and to subdue whole populations, then it can with fuller right assume the title of kingdom, which in the public estimation is conferred upon it, not by the renunciation of greed, but by the increase of impunity (1958: 88).[13]

There are also obvious structural similarities between both kinds of associative systems. Like their open counterparts, dark networks can be very flexible. Their membership often expands and contracts, their leadership resists centralization, their goals are nearly always evolving, and their organizational chart is fluid. The dark world that they create and inhabit tends to be highly dynamic, characterized by shifting alliances, frequent mergers, high rates of organizational birth and death, and much creative (and not so creative) destruction. In other words, dark networks are highly dynamic organizations acting in very dynamic milieus.

Dark networks can be, and often are, autonomous. They usually create their own rules, define their goals, and freely plan and execute their actions. Obviously, this does not preclude the existence of hierarchical links between organizations, but these links tend to be fragile; in case of conflict, subordinated organizations easily recover their de facto autonomy. As will be elaborated upon below, within a single organization, cells and even individuals often manage to preserve their own autonomy.

[13] The work of Charles Tilly on modern nation-states has found similar commonalities. See, for instance, Tilly (1985).

If individuals, cells, and whole organizations remain autonomous, this is because participants in dark networks are usually interdependent. Naturally, there are stronger and weaker participants, but even the strongest cannot expropriate their weaker partners; the latter usually manage to keep control of resources that are necessary for the operation of the network. However much they want to, leaders are unable to consolidate the different forces into a single, hierarchical, and disciplined organization. This is true by definition: if a centralized organization directly controlling all or most of the relevant resources arose, then it would cease to be a network.[14]

In the end, what explains these and other similarities between bright and dark networks is the fundamental ambivalence of social relations. As Portes and Landolt (1996: 21) put it: "Sociability, in every sense, cuts both ways." Structurally similar social links can be put to different uses, by different people, in diverse circumstances. As Norbert Elias (1994: 397) argued, this "open or latent ambivalence … becomes greater as the network of interdependent relations in which individual and entire functional classes are enmeshed becomes wider and more complex."

Given these similarities, is it still possible to identify any fundamental difference between bright and dark associative systems? An obvious candidate for the list of differences would be the type of goods that they seek. Open networks may be seen as promoting public welfare, while dark networks would seem to be seeking private aggrandizement (in the form of political power, money, or prestige). This may be true, with no qualification, for networks engaged in drug trafficking, large-scale theft, human trafficking, and other criminal activities. It may also be true of many terrorist organizations. But covert networks may also have predominantly idealistic goals, as is the case of many political insurgencies; they may even promote other-worldly ends, as secret religious societies often do. Because of

[14] In the words of Pierre Bourdieu (1980: 3): "As long as there are no institutions that provide for the concentration of the whole social capital of a group (families, nations, but also associations and parties) into the hands of a single agent who is authorized to exercise—thanks to the capital collectively possessed—a power superior to his personal contribution to the collective capital, each agent shares in the collective capital … but in direct proportion to his contribution, that is to say, to the degree that his actions, his words, and his personality contribute to the group."

the ambivalence noted above, the dark network structure is compatible with both selfish and altruistic purposes.

Another possible difference would lie in the kind of social capital that participants mobilize. Dark networks, due to their covert nature, may be described as closely-knit organizations, relying on family links, ethnic identities, all-encompassing ideologies, or strict religious beliefs—in short, on "bonding social ties" (Field 2003: 87). This would contrast with the "bridging social capital" that is characteristic of open networks and that explains their capacity to bring together people from different social contexts, with diverse worldviews and varied ends.

It is true that covert networks often rely on strong, intimate links. Criminal organizations often capitalize on the strong ties that abound in closed communities, where "enforceable trust" serves as a guarantor of transactions and where language and other social barriers hamper police interference.[15] Banfield (1958) even spoke of "amoral familism" as the main factor behind the predatory networks that impeded the development of the Italian South.[16] But it is equally true that dark networks are particularly skillful at crossing national and social borders. Drug trafficking organizations, for instance, are notoriously able to corrupt law enforcement agents in different countries, use legitimate business structures for money laundering and other criminal activities, establish flexible relations with a variety of providers, intermediaries, and consumers, and in general take full advantage of the "strength of weak ties." As John Field (2003: 88) notes: "Bridging social capital can also have a dark side." To be sure, participation in dark networks can be a matter of identity—of the family and community to which a person belongs—but also of elective affinity.

The contrast between peaceful and violent means may be seen as another fundamental difference between open and dark networks. It is a sad fact of life that violence or the threat of violence is the

[15] On "enforceable trust," see Portes and Landolt (2000).

[16] Fukuyama (1999) makes a similar argument through the notion of "radius of trust" ("the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative"). In his view, traditional groups "have a narrow radius of trust. In-group solidarity reduces the ability of group members to cooperate with outsiders, and often imposes negative externalities on the latter." (pp. 2-3).

ultimate guarantor in any social interaction—and this includes complex associative systems. The main difference between open and dark networks lies in the fact that the former do not exercise physical coercion directly. If necessary, coercion is usually performed by a foreign entity—the state or states where the network operates; and the mere existence of this possibility has a strong dissuasive effect on violent behavior within the associative system. In contrast, even when they try to be peaceful, dark networks have to devise and use their own coercive mechanisms. Whether these networks also engage in external violence, against the state and other social groups, is not a necessary difference between them and their open counterparts. As said above, relationships between the dark and bright worlds may also be mutually tolerant or even cooperative.

The analysis of internal violence brings us near the central, categorical distinction between open and dark networks. In all the other points considered, the differences were matters of degree, not of kind: dark networks are more likely to promote negative ends, have closed social ties, and use external violence than are open networks. But a network may promote positive ends, have "bridging social capital", and not engage in violent activities against external people and organizations—and still be a dark network.

Where open and dark networks truly differ is in their relation to the established authorities, in particular to the state. Open complex associative systems like the ones we analyze in this book operate in accordance with the law. Sometimes they are prescribed by law or by the lawful authorities; this is the case of the UNAM Claustro and the Consulting Council. Or they are simply permitted by law, and therefore constitute legitimate exercises of legal liberty; this is the case of self-generated associations, like the Chapultepec Accord. But whether prescribed or self-generated, open networks have a lawful existence: they use legal means to pursue their goals, seek lawful ends, and do not directly resort to violent means in their internal and external relations. More decisively, their very existence depends on the presence of a legal framework that, among other things, establishes civil liberties and property rights, regulates associational life, and settles disputes. Their eminently peaceful life is possible thanks to the presence of an external entity that controls the legitimate

means of violence and ultimately guarantees the legality of transactions, both within each association and between them and their environment.

On the contrary, dark networks cannot rely on public institutions to protect their transactions, both internal and external. This does not mean, as commonly believed, that they live in an anarchical, stateless world. If they are "dark," it is precisely because there is a "bright" world to which they are opposed, by which they feel threatened, and from which they conceal themselves. Their "darkness" is a product of the "brightness" of the external world. Their whole structure and actions are decisively infused with an offensive and defensive orientation toward the legal order.[17]

The above has several implications. One is that the internal enforcement apparatus of dark networks has to be stronger than that of open networks. Obviously, this apparatus includes peaceful sanctions, derived from shared norms, values, and other social connections (like identity, language, and family links). But peaceful sanctions, while very important, are not sufficient: values and norms can be interpreted in diverging ways, and when they systematically clash with interests they are usually distorted or abandoned; common identity, shared language, or family ties can foster cooperation and loyalty but also protect traitors and defectors. Therefore, violent means can never be discarded. Thus, in dark networks one should expect greater emphasis on loyalty, discipline, shared creeds, and other norms and values, but also more threats and more direct violence.

A second implication has to do with network structure. There are three basic types of structures: the chain, where nodes form a single line; the hub, where all nodes are independently connected to a center; and the all-channel network, where every node is connected to every other node (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001: 7-10). Some dark

[17] This does not mean, of course, that they are necessarily opposed to justice, defined in a transcendental or universal sense, but only that they are at odds with what the existing order defines as legal. A network of conspirators against a tyrannical regime would have to adopt the characteristics of a dark network, even if struggling for ends that most people would recognize as just. Interestingly, the intelligence or espionage services of governments also share several characteristics with dark networks. This is understandable: they act on the border between legality and illegality, usually in secret.

networks, when emerging spontaneously (instead of being purposefully designed), may begin as chains. For example, a transnational network connecting producers and consumers of illegal drugs may take the form of a series of relays: each node is in charge of a section of the route and interacts only with its predecessor and its successor; some nodes may be more important than others, but there is no general leader and each node remains fully autonomous. However, dark networks are structures not only of collaboration but also of competition. And this competitive cooperation usually takes the form of what Norbert Elias (1994: 340) calls an "exclusion struggle," which eventually leads to the constitution of a center controlling a decisive part of the power, opportunities and information of the whole system. The needs of the tasks in hand and the very inertia of collaboration, both of which often require and permit the existence of a coordinating center, also push in the same direction. The result is that the basic structure of dark networks tends to follow the hub pattern.[18]

In contrast, the all-channel structure is only seen in open, collaborative networks. A dark network that adopted this structure would be too visible, too exposed to external scrutiny, and too vulnerable to internal betrayal and external attack: it would either disappear or become bright.[19]

A third implication of the basic difference between open and dark networks has to do with information. A great variety of objects, values, symbols, and services may circulate through dark and open networks. All of them, apart from their specific utility, acquire the functions of signs, of means of communication among participants. As Bourdieu (1986) puts it: "Exchange transforms the things ex-

[18] Left to itself, this "exclusion struggle" would most likely lead to its logical end: the constitution of a monopoly and the consolidation of power into a single unit. What prevents this result is precisely the "darkness" of the network: the legal authorities, even if unable to eliminate the dark network, are usually able to prevent its center from becoming too powerful. If, in spite of this, the dark center were able to effectively monopolize the power, then it would cease to be dark: it would become the holder of legal authority.

[19] All of the above refers to the basic structure of networks. Of course, it is possible that some cells arranged according to the all-channel pattern may exist within an overall hub network; conversely, some nodes of an open, all-channel network may be internally organized as hubs.

changed into signs of recognition and, by means of the mutual recognition that it implies, produces the group and determines at the same time the limits of the group, that is, the limits beyond which the exchange that constitutes the group—commerce, commensality, marriage—cannot take place" (p. 252).

To properly understand the difference between open and dark networks on this respect it is necessary to distinguish two kinds of information: public information, directly related to the functioning of the network (technical procedures, division of labor, resources, plans, and so forth); and personal information, related to the private lives of participants (their family and friends, their work outside the network, their leisure activities, and the like).

Information flows in dark networks tend to be asymmetrical. Subordinated partners should know only as much as is indispensable for their tasks, since any careless or disloyal use of information may be dangerous for the whole network. But they have to reveal as much of their personal information as possible; potentially, all that they do or do no—in fact, all that they are or are not—may be relevant for the safety of the network. The ideal subordinated partner is one who sees only a very small part of the network, but makes himself or herself fully visible to the leaders. In contrast, occupants of the central positions try to monopolize all the information about the network and its members; at the same time, they try to show as little of themselves as possible. The ideal leader is one who sees everything and everyone but is seen by only some chosen few.

Open networks permit a freer circulation of public information. The ideal is that each participant should have full access to all information regarding the network. At the same time, participants are not required to reveal their personal information—except what is strictly necessary for the operation of the network. Participants do not need to actively conceal their personal information, but there seems to be a tacit rule of discretion: nobody should try to investigate the private lives of their partners (Simmel 1906: 462). In other words, open networks seek to combine maximum publicity with maximum privacy.

A fourth implication is related to decision-making. As previously explained in this chapter, open complex associative systems show a

preference for collective decision-making, especially through deliberation (normally supplemented by negotiation), and rarely recur to voting. In dark networks, voting is also marginal, deliberation seems much more restricted than in open networks, negotiation appears to be central, and other decision-making methods are important: command, persuasion, and social influence.

It is possible to find instances of deliberation in dark networks, particularly when a decision has to be made by people of roughly equivalent power and centrality. More often, however, decisions among equal partners are made through negotiation. Obviously, between unequal partners one is likely to find less negotiation and more commands; deliberation would be extremely rare in this context. But as long as the weaker party remains autonomous, sheer commandment would not be enough; negotiation, persuasion, and social influence are ineludible.

Persuasion and social influence are especially important in networks based on identity or ideology. These two methods seek to influence people's attitudes, actions, and thoughts, fostering compliance, conformity, and even enthusiasm.[20] Like deliberation, they often act through arguments. But these arguments are not necessarily rational: affections, suggestions, examples, pressures, and even lies play decisive roles. Another important trait that distinguishes social influence and persuasion from deliberation is that they usually do not imply exchanges among equal partners: they often consist of unilateral flows from some social peers to others and from superiors to subordinates.

Finally, like their open counterparts, dark networks would seldom resort to effective voting: unless it is used for "ritual" purposes (to legitimize decisions made elsewhere, through different methods), voting would occur only where partners are roughly equal and the

[20] The distinction between persuasion and social influence can be expressed in the following terms: "In the persuasion paradigm, influence appeals typically include detailed argumentation that is presented to individual recipients in a context with only minimal social interaction. Social influence appeals, in contrast, usually consist solely of information about the source's position, but these are delivered in more complex social settings that may include interaction among participants" (Wood 2000: 540). On social influence, see also Cialdini and Goldstein (2004).

choices are simple and well-structured, which is rarely the case in the obscure world that these networks inhabit.

Therefore, one could say that negotiation, combined with commandment, persuasion, and social influence, is the central decision-making method in dark networks. Not only is negotiation more important in dark networks than in open networks; its content is different too. In dark networks, negotiation would not usually be limited to the exchange of benefits; it would also, and distinctively, include the frequent exchange of coercion and threats.

A further implication relates to membership criteria, especially entry and exit. Calls for members in open complex associative systems are usually broad and diffuse. To qualify for membership, individuals and organizations only need to fulfill certain general requirements: educational credentials, occupation, place of residence, and the like. As previously explained in this chapter, exit from open organizations is relatively easy and has low costs.

Obviously, calls for membership in dark networks are more restricted. Individuals and groups can make themselves noticeable, and thereby become potential recruits, but there is no self-selection. Entry has to be approved, in some cases by specialized gatekeepers. Moreover, potential members do not only have to fulfill certain general criteria: their personality and background have to be carefully vetted. Otherwise, the safety of the whole network may be endangered. Perhaps even more importantly, members of the network acquire critical information that should not leak to the external world. Therefore, exit has to be severely restricted; it is often seen as treason or defection—and punished accordingly.

A final implication of the basic distinction between open and dark networks concerns member autonomy. As mentioned above, in dark networks, cells and individuals often manage to remain autonomous. But dark networks are competitive structures, and the mechanics of this competition pushes them toward centralization and consolidation. Therefore, members (particularly if they are weak) have to fight to defend their autonomy; at the same time (particularly if they are strong), they usually try to impinge upon the autonomy of their partners. Often, the observable preference of each member is not so much to protect his autonomy as to become the

top authority, destroying all the other autonomous power centers. The coexistence of de facto autonomy with powerful centralizing currents is a permanent source of tension and potential conflict within the network. Moreover, as previously mentioned (and as Simmel's analysis of secret societies shows), networks like these usually require the total involvement of members, which is another limitation of personal autonomy. All of this contrasts with the almost universal validity that the ideal of autonomy enjoys in open networks.

Table 2.2 summarizes the analysis made in this section. It would be possible to pinpoint many other similarities and differences between dark networks and the associative systems that we study in this book. But those that have been examined here suffice to highlight some important characteristics of open CAS that would otherwise be scarcely noticeable. Two of these characteristics merit special attention: the importance of a legal institutional context, since only within this can the civilized interactions characteristic of CAS develop and flourish; and the centrality of communication flows, which results in the somewhat paradoxical relation between maximum publicity and maximum privacy.

Conclusion

By observing how CAS fit into the broader associative life of which it is but a part, this chapter has enriched our image of these systems. Although CAS are very similar to other associative phenomenon —social networks, corporatist arrangements and associations—they differ from all of them in one basic respect: their central constitutive elements—their elementary particle, so to speak—is the associative relation, a conscious, meaningful, essentially horizontal and reciprocal relation among individuals that often cross across different groups and social sectors.

By articulating these elementary particles into complex systems, CAS can enhance the public sphere, fomenting the free, inclusive and reasonable discussion of shared problems and the implementation of mutually advantageous and legitimate solutions. But they may do

TABLE 2.2
DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN OPEN AND DARK NETWORKS

	Similarities	*Contingent or Partial Differences*	*Categorical Differences*
Open vs. Dark Networks	Dynamism Network Autonomy	Good vs. bad ends Bridging vs. bounding social capital Peaceful external relations vs. external violence	*Legal backing vs. illegal existence* Weak vs. strong internal enforcement apparatus All-channel structure vs. hub structure Maximum publicity and maximum privacy vs. asymmetrical information flows Deliberation and negotiation vs. negotiation, command, persuasion, and social influence Open entry and free exit vs. restricted entry and exit De facto and de jure member autonomy vs. de facto autonomy coexisting with centralizing trends

SOURCE: own construction.

so only if they are able to satisfy a number of contradictory demands; for example, reaching a workable balance between open membership and equality, or between inclusion and consensus, or between free deliberation and effective decision-making. In other words, the ability to balance contradictory impulses is crucial not only for the internal functioning of CAS but also for their successful insertion into the public space.

This ability becomes all the more important because the promise of CAS is not only local but also, and often at the same time, global. Arranged in flexible and dynamic structures, the associative relations that constitute them may cross not only the social barriers that exist within countries but also the political barriers between them. Therefore, CAS can reinvigorate the transnational public sphere by bringing in new actors, issues, resources and views.

Finally, by comparing CAS to dark networks—a phenomenon with which they share several characteristics, some of them truly unexpected—one can emphasize the importance of two factors: the existence of a strong legal system which is an indispensable condition for the existence of CAS and the ability to reach the appropriate combination of maximum publicity and maximum privacy which these systems require.

Chapter 3

Cases

As explained in the introduction, the aim of this book is to identify and analyze a type of organization that has become so important in current societies that it merits being analyzed on its own terms. In other words, we seek to construct an ideal type that serves to advance our knowledge of actual associational life. In congruence with this aim, our analytical strategy emphasizes the dialogue between empirical evidence and theoretical arguments. We draw heavily on the existing literature and on our own theoretical reflections to select relevant cases and interpret them. But we also use the cases to assess the soundness of theoretical expectations, to decide among competing theoretical claims and refine our theory.

Following this strategy, chapter three has two goals. The first is to present the cases that will be analyzed in parts II and III of the book (according to the analytical themes that they best represent). Thus, we describe the origins, goals, membership, achievements and other relevant data about these cases. The second objective is to show that all these cases exhibit, though to varying degrees, the properties and characteristics that distinguish complex associative systems from other types of organizations.

In this respect, our strategy is somewhat similar to what Skocpol and Somers (1980) call a "parallel demonstration of theory": the application of theoretical arguments, to different cases with the double aim of illuminating the cases and evaluating the usefulness of the arguments. But it should be emphasized that we do not simply try to demonstrate a theory. Our aim is more ambitious with respect

to both cases and theory. We think that our cases are important both in themselves and as representatives of complex associative systems in general. They should be understood and explained on their own terms, and should not be seen just as opportunities for probing a theory. At the same time, we also think that the study of cases is a crucial step in the development (extension, correction, specification) of theory.

Moreover, our cases are not strictly parallel (though they are in several respects). They are also complementary. Each case allows us to focus on specific questions—questions that we believe to be theoretically and empirically important. And each case is especially relevant for the study of certain aspects of complex associative systems. All of this is possible because our cases are diverse enough: they are different species of the complex associative system genus.

To summarize, cases were selected according to a methodological strategy of maximum variation—in their origins, membership size and type, field of interest, objectives, level of formalization and degree of participation of instituted authorities. But we also took into account variations in the public spaces within which these cases operate; our cases rang from those (like the UNAM Claustro) that are confined to a specific locality or small cluster of institutions to those that pretend to cover most of the world (like the Trilateral Commission). But however variegated they may be, all our cases share, to a significant extent, a set of decisive characteristics: voluntary and free entry into the system, a heterogeneous membership, a preference for collective decision making, a problem-solving orientation, a low level of institutionalization and diffuse and flexible organizational boundaries. Moreover, all of the cases comprise moderately or highly complex associative interactions. Finally, each of the cases represents at least one of the problems and tensions that we analyze in parts II and III.

In the following pages we make a brief description of our cases. We also present the specific questions that guide the analysis of each case and the aspects of complex associative systems to which we will pay special attention when analyzing each of them. We also observe to what extent and in what sense our cases approach the CAS ideal-type; we do this by confronting each case with the list of characteris-

tics that we presented in chapter 1. Finally, we point out some important differences among our cases.

THE CHAPULTEPEC ACCORD

On the night of September 30, 2005, in a highly symbolic place, prominent members of the business, social, intellectual and political elite of Mexico solemnly announced the National Accord for Unity, the Rule of Law, Development, Investment, and Employment. Informally known as the Chapultepec Accord, the agreement had an ambitious goal: a far-reaching economic and political transformation of the country. Its promoters envisioned it as a turning point in Mexico's history, something similar to the Moncloa pacts, which in the late 1970s set the basis for the transformation of Spain.[1]

The document had five "central objectives": the rule of law and public security, economic growth and employment, development of human and social capital, development of physical capital, and public administration reform. To achieve these goals, it listed forty "conditions"—fourteen of them having to do with the second objective (economic growth and employment).

The Accord was announced when the campaigns for the July 2006 presidential election were about to begin.[2] Many observers predicted that this would be a tight race between a leftist and a rightist presidential candidate. The risk of a major political crisis seemed very serious. The promoters of the Accord drew on the experience that Mexico had accumulated for dealing with similar risks in the previous 12 years. Relevant predecessors included the "Twenty Commitments for Democracy," signed in January 1994; the San Angel Group, which was active in June and July 1994; the Seminar of the Chapultepec Castle, which met from March 1995 to January 1996; and the series of conferences known as the "Commitments for the Nation," held in March and April 1996.

[1] On this case, see Luna (2007) and Luna and Velasco (2009).

[2] As a person very close to Slim said about the accord: "Without a doubt, it could be a good counterbalance—to any of the three [presidential] candidates" (Smith and Arai 2006).

A common trait shared by the Chapultepec Accord and its predecessors was the kind of goal that they envisaged: a broad agreement among members of the Mexican elite that would serve as a template for the orderly transformation of the country. The established political institutions, like the presidency or congress, seemed obviously ill-suited for such a task. The agreement had to go beyond the traditional alliances and conflicts of professional politicians. The Chapultepec Accord was only more ambitious and more elitist than its predecessors: while the latter concerned themselves with strictly political matters (electoral rules, separation of powers and the like), the Accord also included broad social and economic matters; while the protagonists of the predecessors were drawn exclusively from political and intellectual circles, members of the business elite were obviously predominant in the Accord.

On the night it was formally announced, three hundred people signed the Chapultepec Accord. Members of the economic elite were particularly prominent, but there were also outstanding figures from intellectual, artistic, scientific and political fields. Some of them acted chiefly as individuals, powerful in their own right. Such was the case of Carlos Slim, the main promoter of the accord and the richest man in Latin America; or Nobel-prize winner Mario Molina; or the formerly famous pop singer Emmanuel. Others were recognized representatives of collective entities, such as Juan Ramón de la Fuente, the president of the National University, and a host of union leaders (including such well-known figures as Víctor Flores Morales, Joaquín Gamboa Pascoe, and Francisco Hernández Juárez). By design, there were no representatives of political parties or the government, since this was intended to be a civil society initiative. But there was a "qualified witness": the minister of the interior, acting as representative of Mexico's president.

The accord soon won the endorsement of the National Conference of State Governors (Conago) and two of the three main presidential candidates. However, the left-leaning presidential contender (who at that time was leading the race) expressed his sympathy for the Accord but argued that it excluded or underplayed three important themes: poverty alleviation, anti-corruption measures, and an explicit commitment not to privatize the electricity and oil indus-

tries. Finally, he declined to endorse it. Critics also pointed out a telling absence in the document: the strengthening of economic competition, a controversial topic given Carlos Slim's tight grip on telephone services in Mexico. All the same, by mid 2006, the document had been endorsed by about 5,000 individuals.

The organism charged with promoting the accord and searching for new endorsements was the Information and Follow-Up Commission. It had 19 members, including Carlos Slim, who was in fact its leading figure. Between October 2005 and May 2006, the Commission organized or participated in at least 18 important meetings. Eight of them were regional encounters forming part of the "Plan of National Diffusion and Citizenship Inclusion" announced in February.

The formal signing and subsequent promotion of the accord were widely publicized, but the document itself was drafted almost in secrecy. According to available evidence, the leading figure in the drafting process was Slim himself. As he would later recall, he made his first "political push" for the accord late in 2004, after a conversation with Leonardo Rodríguez Alcaine, then leader of the main labor union confederation (CTM, the historic pillar of authoritarian labor corporatism in Mexico). Then he contacted other leaders in labor, political, academic, business and agricultural fields. Especially important seems to have been the participation of Francisco Hernández Juárez, the long-time leader of Telmex workers' union.[3] This must have been a complicated process, but was surely facilitated by Slim's enormous influence. He described it in a short but eloquent sentence: "I sort of coordinated this process, and we slowly came to a consensus" (Smith and Arai 2006).

In spite of its auspicious beginnings, the Accord had lost much of its public visibility by the time the presidential election was held. In the following months, it quickly faded away, leaving no important traces in the form of policies, legislation or political programs. By the end of 2006, it had all but disappeared from the news.[4] No major group in the political sphere or civil society apparently tried to

[3] Telmex is Slim's main business firm.

[4] The latest note registered on the internet site of the influential *Reforma* newspaper was dated October 30, 2006.

implement its proposals, keep its promises alive or reclaim its organizational legacy (taking it as a model for new collective efforts).

While an infinite number of factors may have contributed to this result, we will focus on the potential associative causes: was there anything in the way the promoters of the Accord came together and made their decisions that explained its short-term success and its long-term failure? Was the design of this associative initiative appropriate for the complexity of its goals? To answer this and similar questions, we will pay special attention to the organ charged with promoting the accord: the Coordination and Follow-Up Commission.

The aspect of complex associative systems to which we will give particular attention when analyzing this case is the political dimension: authority, representation, leadership, and participation.

The Claustro

The Council for the Reform of the Academic Personnel Code of Mexico's National University (the Claustro, for short) began work in 2004 bringing together representatives of professors, researchers and authorities.[5]

The Claustro was created by the University Council, which is the highest collective authority within the university. Formally established in November 2004,[6] it had a total of 105 members and 5 invitees. The great majority of members (100) were representatives of different academic actors elected by general vote within the relevant sectors (full-time professors, researchers, part-time instructors, and academic technicians). The remaining 5 members were representatives for the president of the university.

The Claustro's stated aim was to propose a reform of the University's Academic Personnel Code (EPA). Among the main topics that this mission included were: redefining the different academic posi-

[5] Our previous works on this case are Luna (2008), on legitimacy and performance, and Velasco (2014), on leadership.

[6] The elections of academic representatives were held in the second half of 2004, with total turnout amounting to 36.7% of those entitled to vote.

tions, categories and levels, and the necessary qualifications for each of them; reforming the mechanisms of recruitment, permanence, promotion, training and evaluation of the academic personnel; and adjusting the rights, duties, incentives and sanctions of academics.

The main rules guiding the functioning of the Claustro were set up by the University Council and were quite simple. Discussions would take place in either general sessions or commissions. If possible, decisions would be taken by consensus; otherwise, by the vote of two-thirds of the members in general sessions or by simple majority in commissions. All substantive decisions had to be made in general sessions.

A Coordinating Board conducted the work of the Claustro and drafted the entire reform proposal. It also drafted the functioning rules of the Claustro, which were then approved in a general session. The board had 11 members, 10 of them representing explicitly defined sectors (e.g., full-time professors teaching the bachelor's degree, full-time professors working at the pre-graduate and graduate levels, science researchers, humanities and social science researchers, and so on). The board was presided by one of its members, elected or ratified by all of them every three months. If possible, board decisions had to be taken by consensus; otherwise, by a simple majority.

Compared to those of the Chapultepec Accord, the results of the Claustro and its Coordinating Board have been important but modest in quantity. After almost six years of existence, which implied numerous meetings and consultations, the Claustro finished drafting its proposal in early 2010. According to the official plan, it would end work when its proposal was voted upon by the University Council. Yet, this vote never took place and the Claustro simply vanished from the scene.

Another important difference between the Chapultepec Accord and the Claustro is that the former arose and evolved at the heart of Mexico's public space. Its actors were more powerful, its issues very controversial, and its goals far more ambitious than those of the Claustro. The latter took place in a smaller public space, located not at the heart of the country but within UNAM. This space is restricted not only in the sense of being small, but also in that it is highly regulated and protected by the authorities and institutions of the university.

We pose two main questions with respect to the Claustro. First, how was the functioning and performance of this associative system affected by the fact that it took place within a restricted public space? Second, what were the associative causes of the slow and painstaking progress of the Claustro, especially its apparent slowness in making decisions?

In the analysis of the Claustro, we will pay particular attention to the balance between two main decision making mechanisms (negotiation and deliberation) and to the meanings and problems of representation.

The Trilateral Commission

The Trilateral Commission was created in 1973, "to bring together experienced leaders within the private sector to discuss issues of global concern." It has three regional groups, comprising "the main industrialized democratic countries": Europe, North America and Asia Pacific (Trilateral Commission 2011). Its main founder was David Rockefeller, the prominent US businessman and, at that time, the chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the influential foreign policy think-tank.[7]

In contrast to the other cases that we analyze in this book, all of which are located in Mexico, the TC is an international body. It can be usefully conceptualized as a transnational governance structure. In contrast to government, governance refers to "any collectivity, private or public, that employs informal as well as formal steering mechanisms to make demands, frame goals, issue directives, pursue policies, and generate compliance" (Rosenau 2004: 31). At the international level, these systems of rule interact in a variety of ways with the traditional structures established by nation-states. Relationships between the two systems may be overlapping, cooperative or conflictive—or all at once. Global governance structures (GGS) are usually populated by a variety of actors: governments (both national and subnational), transnational business corporations (TNCs), inter-

[7] Our previous works on this case are Luna and Velasco (2012), on the Mexican Group, and Luna and Velasco (2013), on the North American Section.

national government organizations (IGOs), national or subnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international or transnational non-governmental organizations (INGOs), transnational markets, elite groups, and mass publics.

These structures, which claim to be interested in solving transnational problems and fostering the global common good, often aspire to set themselves up as representatives of global society. But this aspiration is always problematic. Transnational governance structures have to earn the right to speak for global public opinion.

A central component of the TC's ideology is the notion of global interdependence, which is seen both as a reality and as an ideal for which it strives. Thus, the TC has affirmed: "The most pervasive characteristic of the current [international] situation is the steady expansion and tightening of the web or interdependence". At the same time, it holds: "The requisite [international] cooperation for both the short and large term must be based on the shared conviction that it maximizes overall gain and increases the welfare of all those involved" (Cooper, Kaiser and Cosaca 1977: 287).

Closer to the US Democratic Party than to the Republicans, and highly critical of a more conservative "state-centered" view, the TC has promoted North American integration from a "multi-centric world" standpoint. It has been a key promoter of the so-called NAFTA Plus, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) launched in Texas in 2005. It has often seen NAFTA through the lens of international liberalism and complex interdependence, concepts developed by international relations scholars who are also TC's North American branch. According to these views, cooperation and persuasion—rather than force, threats and bargains—are the privileged means through which state and other actors should pursue their goals in the international arena.[8]

With regard to domestic politics, the TC has a lasting commitment to liberal, limited democracy. Its famous report on the "crisis of democracy" insisted that the main risk facing this regime was intrinsic: "the operations of the democratic process do indeed appear to have generated a breakdown of traditional means of social control,

[8] On the role of the TC in the process of North American integration and its position in the US political and ideological map, see Salas-Porras (2013).

a delegitimation of political and other forms of authority, and an overload of demands on government, exceeding its capacity to respond" (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975: 8). Therefore, democracy has to be saved from itself, by preventing the excessive extension of democratic practices.

Like the CFR, the TC has been strongly criticized from both the left and the right. Right-wing people have accused it of conspiring to take over the US government and to establish a world government.[9] Authors from the left have depicted it as an "opaque" organization, a "cenacle of the international political and economic elite …seeking at the same time to protect the interest of multinationals and to 'enlighten,' through its analysis, the decisions of political leaders" (Boiral 2003).

The Trilateral has almost 400 members: a maximum of 170 from Europe, a maximum of 120 from North America and "over 100" from the Asia Pacific region. Originally, Mexicans were not represented in the North American Group (NAG). The Mexican Group (MG) was established within the NAG in 2001, with the avowed goal of giving voice to different Mexican sectors (such as business, media and civil society organizations) and diverse political positions. The Mexican Group has 13 members, while its U.S. and Canadian counterparts have up to 87 and 20, respectively. The underrepresentation of Mexico within the North American branch, and therefore within the TC as a whole, is self-evident from these figures.

Apart from the rule that active government officials cannot be members of the group and that "membership is by invitation of the national and regional executive committees," selection criteria are far from clear. The U.S. group has a rotation system, according to which between 5 and 10 members are changed every year. No similar system is defined for the Canadian and Mexican groups. Moreover, each group makes its own decisions regarding the choice of members and the raising and expending of funds.

In this book, we focus mainly on the North American Section and the Mexican Group. The criteria through which members of this group are selected and appointed are unclear. But the group is un-

[9] One of its most consistent right-wing critics has been the John Birch Society. See, for example, Barry 2009.

mistakably elitist. Five of the thirteen members have been top public officials, including a former president of Mexico. Three are leaders of successful transnational corporations of Mexican origin. The remaining five can be considered opinion leaders and "experts": heads of ONGs, media, think tanks and the like. All thirteen members are part of a highly internationalized elite; they all ocupy commanding positions in Mexico's economy and society. In contrast to its U.S. and Canadian counterparts, the MG includes no labor leader and, until 2012, no woman.

Members of the Mexican Group are usually free to express their opinions, but are not accountable, at least in principle, to their "constituencies" or reference groups. This makes the system privilege particular interests, over and above more general concerns with development.

Moreover, the North American Group has convened several forums in which Mexican individuals who are critical of North American integration have been invited. But despite this relative openness to critical voices and to civil society organizations, as well as a remarkable inclination for consensus building through deliberative mechanisms, the NAG, and the Mexican Group in particular, has primarily favored the interests of a business and political elite.

As in the case of the Chapultepec Accord, in the analysis of the Mexican Group and the North American Section we will pay particular attention to the political dimension of the associative system, especially to representation and legitimacy. The main questions that will guide this analysis are the following: What does representation means within a governance structure like the Trilateral Commission? What principles should this structure follow in order to be perceived as legitimately representative? How has the elitist nature of the MG affected its performance?

THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONSULTING FORUM

Formally charged with advising the Mexican government on science, R&D and innovation matters, the Scientific and Technological Forum was established in 2002. It brings together representatives

from the scientific, technological, and business sectors. Its main functional purpose is to promote interaction and collaboration among members of the national innovation system. Two of its objectives are particularly important: to enhance business involvement in the design of scientific and technological policies, and to increase the participation of business firms in R&D activities, which is currently very limited.

The Forum has a rather ambiguous nature. It was created by legal mandate and has a very important official function to perform. But it is defined as a non-lucrative "civil association," which implies that it is formally autonomous from the government.

In contrast to the TC and Follow-Up Commission, the Forum is mostly made up of organizations, rather than individuals. Its board of directors has 17 positions, 14 of which are filled by different associations and academic institutions and 3 by individuals elected by the scientific community (e.g. by the 16,000 members of the National System of Researchers, SNI).

The board reasonably complies with the principles of diversity and proportionality, since it covers different academic and technological disciplines and includes representatives from the main higher-education institutions of the country. It also includes representatives from the main partners involved in scientific and technological innovation: science, industry and "bridging" organizations (such as the Mexican Association of Applied Research and Technological Development Directors, ADIAT). Besides, to some extent it tries to diversify its geographical reach through the incorporation of the science and technology institutes of the Mexican states, all of which are grouped in the National Network of Local S&T Councils. These institutes are official entities, created by state-level governments, but the network itself is a civil, non-government organization.

However, because associations act in a rather corporatist institutional environment, representatives tend to behave as delegates rather than as trustees: they simply carry the opinions of the institutions that they represent but have little freedom to express their own views. Furthermore, many representatives do not directly attend the periodic sessions organized by the Forum, but send "delegates" in-

stead. This strongly limits the deliberative character of the Forum and therefore the individual commitment that could derive from a deliberative process. This may be the reason why joint sessions are merely informative and agreements between the Forum's presidency and key actors are privately negotiated outside the Forum. This gives the Forum a hierarchical rather than a horizontal character.

In short, the Forum has become a bureaucratic structure with very poor deliberative capacities and scarce practical results. The main question that we ask with respect to the Forum has to do precisely with this problem: how does the rarity of deliberation affect the performance of the associative system? Is it possible to create a deliberative space within a bureaucratic or corporatist context?

The balance between decision-making mechanisms and particularly the conditions for effective deliberation will be the main topics in the analysis of this case.

KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

As complex associative systems, knowledge networks bring together diverse people interested in the creation, circulation and transformation of knowledge. Usual participants include scientists and technologists from higher education institutions and specialized research centers; people from business firms, especially from their research and development branches; representatives of government agencies interested in the promotion of science and technology; members of the "social economy" (cooperatives, associations of small-or middle-size producers, and the like).

In this, as in the other cases that we analyze, people associate because they want to solve a problem or achieve an objective that none of them, on their own, can solve or achieve. Even doing their best effort, universities and business firms can hardly generate, in mutual isolation, the innovative knowledge that they often need to develop. However smart academic researchers may be, much of their investigation would be incomplete without the knowledge generated by those who are immersed in practical economic life or in the solution of concrete problems. Conversely, however creative business technologists may be, they rarely can devote as much of their time and

energy to experimenting and imagining as academic researchers are expected to do. This is why, in many areas, creating innovative knowledge is a task that requires the associated effort of academic and business researchers.

But this interdependence is only one side of the question. Although participants in complex associative systems usually acknowledge their mutual dependence, all of them are normally very zealous about their autonomy—that is to say, their right to set their own goals, control their own resources, seek their own benefit and, generally, act according to their own criteria and values. Neither do business firms want to become appendages of universities, nor the latter want to become the agents of the former. Interdependence and autonomy are thus the two forces that both unify and threaten to dissolve complex associative systems. CAS cannot give up either of these forces without thereby losing their characteristic diversity and richness.

In an economic context that puts a very high premium on economic innovation, on the generation of new ideas, technologies, products, procedures, and services, university-business networks like these are very promising. By facilitating the interaction of people interested in the production and transformation of knowledge, they can create a fertile ground for the advancement of science, technology and the economy.

But this promise is difficult to materialize. The institutions and organizations concerned have diverging interests and cognitive orientations. What business firms may see as promising profit opportunities may appear too mundane to scientific researchers. Conversely, something that scientists may see as unique research opportunities may seem practically useless to economic agents. People coming from education, business, government and social sectors may find it impossible not only to cooperate but even to understand each other.

In this book, we will focus on several knowledge networks established between people from academic and business organizations.[10] Our main data comes from 38 structured interviews with participants

[10] Diverse aspects of these knowledge networks are more extensively analyzed in three of our previous texts: Luna and Velasco 2003 (translation), 2005 (trust) and 2010b (mechanisms of integration and performance).

in such networks.[11] The persons interviewed work in different economic sectors, technological fields and regions in Mexico. They have participated in joint research projects whose specific aims vary widely but all of which entail the generation and diffusion of knowledge. Most of the business firms involved were large and had research and development departments. Obviously, these projects are not representative in a statistical sense. But both the networks and their members are very diverse, which would allow us to observe both significant regularities and key differences among them.

The two main questions that we will seek to answer through the analysis of these networks are the following: How is communication and cooperation possible when participants come from fundamentally different social sectors and from institutions with diverging aims and resources? How do these networks manage to agree on common goals and to select the relevant means for achieving them? How should one measure the efficacy and efficiency of the results of these networks?

Our analysis of knowledge networks will focus specially on three topics: interpersonal trust, "translation" (the creation of a common language among participants with diverging motivations and cognitive orientations) and leadership.

CLOSENESS TO THE CAS IDEAL TYPE

As the previous description shows, our cases are very diverse. But they all exhibit, to a significant degree, the distinctive characteristics of complex associative systems. In particular, they all face the central challenge that distinguishes these systems from other forms of social organization: how to build consensus through the horizontal interaction of actors with conflicting interests, when each participant is independent enough to resist any attempts by the others to impose their preferred solution, and all are interdependent enough to lose if a collective solution cannot be found?

[11] The interview guide was collectively designed in the framework of a research project on knowledge networks (see Luna, ed., 2003). In the design of this guide and the conduction of interviews participated the following researchers: R. Casas, F. Castaños, R. Gortari, N. Gutiérrez, M. Luna, M. Meagher, and M.J. Santos.

It should be emphasized that the concept of complex associative system is an ideal type. No empirical case is expected to have all the properties and characteristics included in this concept. The usefulness of the concept lies not so much in its descriptive accuracy but in its capacity to serve as a yardstick against which real cases can be assessed.

Table 3.1 shows, in a summarized way, the degrees to which our five cases exhibit the main characteristics of the CAS ideal-type. For simplicity, only three degrees are established for each of the selected characteristics. Knowledge networks come closest to the idea. Their membership is highly heterogeneous, comprising people from different academic disciplines and different economic sectors. They are all centered on problems (related to the generation, transfer or use of knowledge), whose solution requires the participation of all their members and which cannot be solved through established institutional channels. Their members are mostly voluntary, either self-selected or invited. Their goals, which are constantly redefined in the course of interaction, are understood in different ways by different actors. Most of their decisions are collectively made, in complicated processes that usually require the participation of all members. And they are scarcely institutionalized: their internal rules are frequently redefined and the networks cease to exist as soon as the problem is solved (or as soon as their members decide that it cannot be solved).

In contrast, two cases stand farthest from the ideal. One of them is the Chapultepec Accord. Given its ambitious mission and its avowed commitment to pluralism and diversity, its membership should have been as diverse as possible. However, as pointed out above, the Accord (especially its coordinating body) fell quite short of this ideal. The goal of the Accord (a program for the peaceful transformation of the country) was very ambitious and indefinite in theory, but in practice the range of choice was considerably narrowed due to Slim's overwhelming influence. This influence also reduced the real extent of deliberation and collective decision-making, both in the drafting of the document and in its subsequent promotion.

The other case that lies farthest from the ideal is the UNAM's Claustro. It is true that its work was overwhelmingly centered on the solution of a collective problem for which established official

TABLE 3.1
DEGREES TO WHICH THE SELECTED CASES APPROACH THE CAS IDEAL TYPE

	Heterogeneous Membership	*Problem-Solving Orientation*	*Entry by Invitation or Self-Selection*	*Changing and Contradictory Goals*	*Collective Decision-Making Organisms*	*Low Institutionalization*
Chapultepec Accord	Middle	High	High	Low	Low	High
UNAM's Claustro	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Middle
Trilateral Commission (NAS)	Low	Middle	High	High	High	High
S&T Forum	High	High	Low	High	High	High
Knowledge Networks	High	High	High	High	High	High

SOURCE: own construction.

channels were clearly ill suited, and that its decision-making processes were marked by an almost obsessive search for consensus. But its membership was rather homogeneous: diversity was limited by the fact that all participants were members of UNAM's academic personnel. Similarly, its very existence was the consequence of a mandate by the University Council, which (as previously explained) also fixed its main operating rules and defined its mission. But the most important departure from the ideal concerned the form of recruitment. Members were neither self-selected nor invited; they were elected by universal suffrage within the respective communities.

The Trilateral Commission, in particular its Mexican Group, is an intermediate case. It ranks high in form of entry, in goal ambiguity, in collective decision-making and in low institutionalization. But it departs from the ideal in membership heterogeneity and, less acutely, in orientation to problem solving (the problems which it seeks to solve are obviously too diffuse).

The other intermediate case is the Science and Technology Forum. Its membership is heterogeneous, coming from different academic, official and business institutions. Its actions are guided by concrete problems that cannot be solved through conventional institutions. Its decisions are collectively made, even if not through deliberation but rather through corporatist negotiations. And, by design, the organism is scarcely institutionalized.

Of the five characteristics, the one that shows the highest marks is low institutionalization: all but one of the five cases rank high in this respect. In contrast, the two characteristics with the lowest marks are heterogeneous membership and voluntary entry. In these two respects, our cases are, generally speaking, farthest from the CAS ideal. The remaining three characteristics (collective decision-making, problem solving orientation and ambiguous goals) occupy intermediate positions.

VARIATIONS

As said above, our cases are quite variegated, even though they all share, to some extent, the distinctive characteristics of complex

TABLE 3.2
DIFFERENCES AMONG CASES

	Territorial Reach	*Size of Membership*	*Duration*	*Participation of Official Authorities*	*Spontaneous or Mandated Origin*
Chapultepec Accord (Coordinating Body)	National	Small (19 members)	Short (less than a year)	Null	Spontaneous
UNAM's Claustro	Local	Middle (about 100)	Long (2004-2011)	Limited	Mandated
Trilateral Commision (Mexican Group)	International	Small (12)	Long (since 2001)	Null	Spontaneous
S&T Forum (Board of Directors)	National	Small (17); but many associations, universities and researchers are represented	Long (since 2002)	Ample (especially through the authorities of public universities)	Mandated
Knowledge Networks	Local	Small	Short (usually, 1-3 years)	None	Spontaneous

SOURCE: own construction.

associative systems. Table 3.2 shows some of the most visible variations. According to their territorial reach, cases go from those that are very local (like the Claustro or some knowledge networks) to one that is transnational (the TC's Mexican Group). By their membership size, they vary from the very short, like some knowledge networks, to those relatively large, like the UNAM's Claustro; in some instances (e.g., the Chapultepec Accord and the S&T Forum), the number of people that the leading bodies represented or claimed to represent were very large.

In terms of duration, cases vary from those very short-lived (the Chapultepec Accord) to those that have existed for about ten years. Open participation of the authorities is null or low in all cases, with the exception of the S&T Forum where they are obviously more influential. Finally, three of our five cases were self-generated while the remaining two were established by official mandate (federal legislation or university authorities).

Part II

The Social Dimension: Trust and Translation

Chapter 4

Trust and Cohesion

After relating the main properties and characteristics of CAS and briefly describing the cases selected for in-depth study, we will now endeavor to explain how these systems function and how their performance can be evaluated. Such is, in general terms, the task of chapters 4 through 8. Contributing to that task, the present chapter addresses one main question: how do the diverse and autonomous members of CAS manage to create a relatively cohesive and durable form of organization? Specifically, the chapter will focus on the role that trust plays in this process.

All durable forms of social interaction—excepting perhaps those that are openly hostile—need some degree of interpersonal trust. Otherwise, people participating in them would have to be permanently on their guard, and no social order would be possible. But in the case of CAS, in which traditional social glues are deficient or totally absent, this need is particularly acute. People participating in these systems are not held together by a shared ideology, religious creed, ethnical background or social identity; similarly, at least at the critical initial stages, they are not united by a system of authority or by a clearly defined common interest and there are no institutions that motivate and monitor cooperation. If cooperation is to be at all possible, people need to cultivate a mutual belief that everyone else is reasonably reliable, that all of them will do their part and that nobody will take undue advantage of the others. In the absence of this shared belief, CAS would not be able to process the interactive inconsistencies that distinguish them from other forms of association.

The analysis that follows begins by defining interpersonal trust and briefly reviewing how it has been studied. We then identify the main dimensions or types of interpersonal trust involved and analyze how they interact in complex associative systems. Finally, we discuss how interpersonal trust relates to other elements of these systems. We illustrate our empirical findings with references to knowledge networks. As discussed previously, these projects are complex problem-solving structures devoted to the generation and diffusion of knowledge through the establishment of collaborative links between science and economy. Occasionally, the analysis will be illustrated with examples taken from the other cases considered in this book.

Our main argument is that, when functioning as an integrating factor among diverse and autonomous actors, mutual trust takes on a complex character. Trust, basically defined as a set of positive expectations regarding the actions of other people, may involve *calculations*, *solidarity* and a perception of the technical *prestige* of the participants. Thus, as opposed to simple social interactions based on a single type of trust, complex relations involve an unstable balance among these three modes of trust. The relations among these dimensions or components of complex trust may be mutually supportive, overlapping or conflicting. And the way they combine influences the origin, development, stabilization and dissolution of CAS.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST

Trust can exist in a variety of social relations: there is trust in institutions, as when people believe that tribunals would adjudicate conflicts fairly or abstract trust like the one that underpins the circulation of money (Simmel 1978), or collective trust when a social body (for example a nation) "feels" that another collective body will support it in critical circumstances. But for the purposes of this discussion, we focus on interpersonal trust, the kind of trust that can motivate a person to cooperate with another when such cooperation is not guaranteed by other social glues.[1] Trust in this sense basically

[1] For a wider discussion of this topic and for empirical data on it, see Luna and Velasco (2005).

means a set of positive expectations regarding the actions of other people. Such expectations become important when someone has to choose a course of action knowing that its success depends, to some extent, on the actions of others and yet such a decision must be made before it is possible to evaluate the action of the others (Dasgupta 1988).

Trust, hence, has three basic features: interdependence, uncertainty and a positive expectation. There is a trust relation when the success of a person's action depends on the cooperation of someone else; therefore, trust entails at least partial ignorance about the behavior of the others, and assumes that partners will not abuse the person who is willing to cooperate (Lane 1998: 3 and Sable 1993).

The study of trust has given rise to a wide and important scholarly corpus, spanning different disciplines and theoretical approaches. In this literature, trust has been distinguished from proximate concepts, such as familiarity, cooperation, confidence and distrust. Authors have also distinguished different ambits in which trust occurs—e.g., interpersonal, institutional, systemic—and different kinds of trust—for example, rational or normative. But there have also been controversies. One of the most important is whether trust plays a positive or disruptive role in social relations or whether it should be seen as a resource or as a process. Finally, placing it under the concept of social capital, trust has often been associated with dense networks, that is to say, networks that have a high degree of connectivity. In the following paragraphs we will briefly review these distinctions and claims.

In the first place, trust is different from familiarity. The latter exists between people who have long known each other and are united by close and intimate ties. What is decisive for familiarity is a shared past. In contrast, trust is oriented toward the future: it entails an expectation about the consequences of future interaction. It is true that some influential authors (for example, Luhmann 1996: 32) hold that trust cannot develop in the absence of familiarity, which is a precondition for both trust and distrust. Yet, as we shall discuss below, familiarity does not cover all the dimensions of trust. And, even more importantly, trust does not always need the previous existence of familiarity. Indeed, of the three forms of trust that we will

present in the following pages, normative, technical and strategic, only the first requires familiarity.

In the second place, trust has also been distinguished from confidence. The latter exists when someone simply assumes that certain expectations will be fulfilled and acts accordingly. The main difference between both concepts lies in the existence of options: in a situation of confidence, the actor takes a course of action without considering other available courses; in contrast, in a trust relation, the actor chooses a course of action from several possible alternatives (Luhmann 1988: 97).

Trust is also different from cooperation, even if both are tightly linked. Trust exists in a context of cooperation.[2] Yet, there might be cooperation even in the absence of trust; for example, when cooperation is casual or when it is fully guaranteed by other social glues. Similarly, the absence of cooperation does not necessarily entail lack of trust.

Finally, it is important to consider the difference between trust and distrust. Distrust is not simply the absence of trust (Luhmann 1996). The main difference between them lies in the kind of expectations involved, which are positive in the case of trust and negative in the case of distrust. A person distrusts another when he or she supposes that the actions of the latter will have negative consequences. Generally, distrust entails the belief that an individual will try to take undue advantage of the cooperative actions of the other, or that he or she would be unable to carry out the expected actions.

Trust can exist at different social levels. The most elementary of these is the interpersonal one: when an individual trusts another individual. At a different level, we find inter-organizational trust: when "corporate actors," different "from the sum of individuals constituting" them, trust each other (Lane 1998: 14). At a still more general and abstract level, one finds institutional trust, which does not depend on interpersonal familiarity or on a shared interper-

[2] "Two agents cooperate when they engage in a joint venture for the outcome of which the actions of each are necessary, and where a necessary action by at least one of them is not under the immediate control of the other" (Williams 1988: 7).

sonal past but on formal structures, socially produced and legitimated. Such is, for example, the trust generated by regulatory institutions charged with sanctioning people and organizations that do not cooperate or behave irresponsibly. Finally, at the most abstract level, we find systemic trust which is directed not to individual or concrete organizations, but to "social systems or abstract principles, characteristic of modern institutions;" this kind of trust is based on "generalized means of communication," like money, truth and legitimate power (Luhmann 1996: 100-101).[3] At the same level one can find what some authors have called "social trust," which entails a "generalized notion of value/norm-based trust, seeing a society as a solidary cultural community" (Lane 1998: 17),[4] or the one that has been defined as "cognitive trust."

Even though the present analysis refers to trust that occurs at the interpersonal level, what happens at this level may affect the others. In particular, capacity-based trust may refer to a personal reputation, to the capacities of a given organization or to the characteristics of an institution. In the last two cases, the affiliation of an individual to a given organization or institution may make him or her more or less trustworthy. Another important case is that of normative trust, which—referred to certain abstract principles, or "generalized means of communication"—may entail trust not in a common individual but within a whole system. Finally, although the distinction between personal and institutional trust is crucial, both for its implications and for its operationalization, the latter should not be confused, as Lane (1998: 15) seems to imply, with the trust that arises in the following circumstances: "(a) exchange across group boundaries and hence significant social distance between groups; (b) exchange across geographical distance; and (c) exchange involving a large number of interdependent, non-separable transactions." As will be elaborated

[3] See also Giddens (1990: 21).

[4] For example, according to Fukuyama (1995), trust is possible only if there are communities that share norms and moral values that limit individual interest. This notion of trust can be applied to entire societies. Thus, in low-trust societies, individuals are unable to establish fluid cooperative relations with people outside their family. In contrast, in high-trust societies, there is a "spontaneous sociability," which prevents conflicts between families and society.

upon below, in complex interactions like the ones analyzed in this book, interpersonal trust can span many social and geographical boundaries.

Another central aspect of the debate is whether trust is conceived as a resource or as a process. For example, Dasgupta (1988: 53) holds that trust is a commodity, similar to knowledge and information. Although a commodity like this seems intangible and therefore incommensurable, "in any given context, you can measure its value, its worthwhileness." Other authors, however, strongly reject this commodification. Thus, Hirschman (1984) affirms that trust (like other "moral resources") is not exhausted by use; on the contrary, the lack of use can exhaust or atrophy it. In this sense, trust can be seen as a process that is difficult to start but once started acquires its own momentum, feeding back upon itself. Thus, in organizations where trust is absent or scarce, cooperation is difficult and this difficulty confirms everyone's despondency. But where trust prevails, cooperation is easy and its beneficial consequences reinforce the positive expectations that individuals have with regard to one another.

Similarly, authors have discussed whether trust has positive or disruptive social effects. Thus, in his macrosocial study on the topic, Fukuyama (1995) argues that trust is the key to economic and social development; whether its effect is positive or negative depends on its radius—whether it is confined to narrow groups or extends to most members of society. In his view, "high-trust societies" (like Japan, Germany and the United States) smoothly combine the efforts of their members; in contrast, in "low-trust" or "familistic" societies (like China, France, Italy and South Korea), competition among individuals, groups and families is so strong that it hinders societal economic development. More specifically, other authors have pointed out that trust facilitates collaboration among firms, speeds up the flow of information, knowledge and innovation among diverse economic actors, makes the relation between employers and workers more harmonious, facilitates communication within organizations and widens the temporary horizon of economic transactions. In these and similar ways, it is argued, trust fosters economic

development (Casson 1995, Zucker et al. 1995, Lorenz 1988 and Ouchi 1981).[5]

The causal mechanism implicit in these optimistic views is obvious: like social capital, trust encourages people to undertake joint ventures, thereby facilitating cooperation.

From our perspective, these and similar assessments of trust are too general. As discussed in the following sections, whether results are good, bad or indifferent depends, in the first place, on how different dimensions relate to each other—whether they reinforce or weaken each other.

TYPES AND DIMENSIONS

Current scholarly debates provide some hints on the different dimensions of trust. In particular, in economic sociology there has been a fruitful debate about the nature and bases of trust. Thus, proponents of a rational approach see trust as a way to reduce transaction costs: although rational individuals would like to take undue advantages of the actions of the others, if the exchange is recurrent they would soon find that it is in their own interest to trust each other. That expectation, emerging from the recurrence of exchanges, constitutes, according to that approach, the main basis of trust.

Yet, other authors have emphasized the normative or moral character of trust. In their view, trust is "an orientation toward society and toward others that has social meaning beyond rational calculations." Individuals cooperate and trust each other because they feel that it is "morally appropriate" to do so (Kramer and Tyler 1996: 5).

This discussion has led to the identification of three basic types of trust. The first of these is calculated or strategic trust: when people trust each other because they expect the ensuing cooperation to be profitable for everyone. The second type is normative trust, which exists when people trust each other not so much for the benefits

[5] The negative consequences of distrust have also been emphasized: a milieu in which distrust prevails may be highly stable; yet, it prevents cooperation and fosters harmful competition (see Gambetta 1988).

that they expect from collaboration but because of the norms and values that they share. Finally, there is cognitive trust, based on a view of the world (for example, about reality and the ways to interpret it) that is shared by all the people concerned.[6] This trust is based, in other words, on the expectation of the continuity of the natural and social order.

But, according to Bachman (1998), in reality these types of trust tend to appear in combination. In the same sense, Giauque (2002: 465) argues that "it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of norms, codes and calculations in the creation of a trust relation … The three forms of trust …are in fact totally inseparable. None of them can be understood in isolation from the others."

Similarly, summarizing the literature, Nahapiet y Ghoshal (2000) argue that the will to put oneself in a position that is vulnerable to the action of others stems from trust in four aspects: the mutual belief in the good will and interest of the others, the belief in their competence and capacity, the belief in their reliability or degree of commitment and the belief in their openness. Likewise, Burt and Knez (1996) identify four ways in which trust can be produced: ties of place and family, belonging to the same professional community, shared experiences showing the advantages of collaboration and mutual dependence.

Based on the preceding discussion and on the observation of our cases, we identify three main types of trust that are at play in complex associative interactions: normative, strategic and technical. To the extent that each of them is crucial for the functioning of CAS, it is more appropriate to treat them not as separated types but as dimensions of trust. In what follows, we propose operative definitions, point out some problems peculiar to each and explore their relation to other factors that also influence the functioning of CAS.

In the first place, technical trust is based on perceptions about the capabilities and competences of participants (individuals, groups, organizations or institutions), such as their economic assets, information, knowledge, legal strengths, infrastructure, organizational

[6] It should be noticed that, as shall be elaborated upon below, cognitive trust may be related to interpersonal trust, but it is located at a different level of abstraction and its implications are therefore different.

capacity or social capital. These perceptions may also be founded on previous interactions that have nurtured the belief that the agents in question are capable and committed. This technical prestige (often described with such words as "seriousness," "experience," "resourceful," etc.) can be attributed to organizations, to specific groups within organizations or to individuals. Not surprisingly, this technical trust has also been called "organizational" (see, for example, Hage and Alter 1997).

In the case of CAS, which among other things are complex problem-solving structures, the reputation of being capable to identify problems, understand and explain them, know how to solve them or know whom should be called upon to solve them is central. This reputation may also involve the alleged capacity to organize and mobilize relevant participants, the capacity to veto undesirable decisions and the ability to lead the participants.

Although in the formation of leadership, technical prestige is usually important and the participation of knowledge-holders is generally welcomed, an excessive emphasis on technical trust may degenerate in technocracy—when the opinions of experts are not only taken into account but are given too much weight in political and organizational decisions, thereby nurturing the discontent and ultimately distrust of non-experts.[7]

In the second place, strategic or calculated trust arises from calculations of costs and benefits and is based on the expectation of mutual benefits from the relationship. It is primarily guided by the principle of reciprocity, and it is especially well suited for cooperation based both on exchange and resource interdependence. Its main subject matter is individual interest.[8]

[7] Distrust of experts can be observed in the Claustro, where "local" (vs. general) knowledge was emphasized. A positive function was that of Mexican Nobel laureate Mario Molina in the Chapultepec Accord.

[8] This is the kind of trust that Haggard, Maxfield and Schneider (1997) attribute to "strategic networks," which are considered artificial forms of cooperation to achieve specific goals. This form of trust is understood as a certain subjective probability that, according to a given actor, another agent (or group of agents) will perform an expected action.

In complex associative systems, this form of trust generates a peculiar problem. Since the resources that participants can exchange are obviously heterogeneous, it is hard to arrive at a common definition of gains and losses, which increases the costs of negotiation.

Finally, normative trust depends on shared norms, beliefs, and values. It is based on social solidarity, rather than on the expected benefits of the interaction or the technical reputation of participants. This trust may develop out of different types of social ties. Among these are, for example, the intensely emotive interpersonal ties characteristic of friendship and family. There are also those relations built upon shared cultural, professional or geographic identities, which do not necessarily require personal relations to develop. And there are the ties based on generalized principles or means of communication (money, law, ideology, legitimate power) that operate at the level of entire social systems.

In the complex associative relations that we analyze, this normative trust, especially its variant based on emotive interpersonal ties, plays a central role. It may appear either as the origin or result of interactions based on strategic or technical trust. But, important as this form of trust is, it has a widely acknowledged drawback: the powerful social ties (norms, values, identities and the like) on which it is based take long a time to establish and are often easy to betray (Alberoni 1984). Moreover, and this is particularly important for CAS, since this trust flourishes among individuals with similar backgrounds, its capacity to span different social settings is limited.

Relations among Dimensions

How do the three dimensions of trust identified above relate to each other? Do they support or undermine each other?

In the first place, it is important to mention that most participants in the knowledge networks that we analyzed could clearly distinguish the three forms of trust. Thus, participants interviewed distinctly referred to "mutual respect," "acknowledging abilities and capacities," "technical trust," "professional trust," "honesty," "friendship," "good chemistry," "speaking the same language," "familiarity," "mutual ben-

efits," or "calculated risk"[9] as factors that, in different combinations, are decisive for the functioning of their networks. This entails that, according to them, each of the three forms of trust is important by itself and, at the same time, tends to combine with the other two —which confirms the need to see them as dimensions rather than as separate types of trust.

Second, every dimension may be independently evaluated. In our cases, the three of them were highly valued by participants. Participants in knowledge networks were asked to rate an indicator of each kind of trust on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 10 meant "very important for the development of the project." As shown in table 4.1, ratings for each dimension of trust averaged between 8.8 and 9.2.

TABLE 4.1
RATINGS FOR EACH DIMENSION OF TRUST
On a scale from 0 to 10 (where 10 is highest), how would you mark the importance of the following factors for the development of the collaborative project?

Dimensions of trust	*Average marks*
1. Good personal relationships with the academics/industrial researchers [Personal/normative trust]	8.8
2. Technical capabilities of the university/firm [Technical trust]	9.0
3.Obtaining mutual benefits [Calculated trust]	9.2

SOURCE: own construction.

Third, we found different combinations of relations among the three components of trust: mutually supporting, overlapping and conflicting relations.

Mutually supporting relations mean that the existence of one type of trust may increase the opportunities for the development of the other types, sometimes giving rise to an entirely new network. As an academic researcher said about his counterparts in a business firm:

> The most important result (of the joint project) was the creation of a network of researchers. People who had not met each other before the

[9] Thus, a person interviewed said: "at the beginning I did not know him [the person who started the project]. The first [project] was a gamble: let us see how it works."

> project… I would not say that they go to the cinema together, but they recognize each other as friends, and that is very important in a relationship, in any relationship, and it is very important, we have seen it, in the relationship between academia and industry. *It has become a network that functions by itself.*

Overlapping is commonly associated to the transitivity of trust. Each form of trust can be either a cause or an effect of the other two forms, resulting in transitive chains (A trusts B, B trusts C, and therefore A trusts C). An example is the following:

> X (a member of a network) was not my student, I was a member of his degree exam board. That was my closest relation with him. But he was a student of a very close friend of mine.

Then, a relation initially based on normative trust may give rise to technical trust. When this is the case, trust may operate as a factor for stabilizing or integrating the network, or even as a multiplying factor creating new relationships out of an original system of ties.

Conflicting relations commonly mean that the predominance of one type may undermine the others. For instance, when trust is based on purely technical or strategic expectations, communication among participants may become problematic. The predominance of those two forms of trust may even hinder the development of normative or personal trust. On the other hand, networks based solely or predominantly on normative trust may have better interpersonal communication but this may endanger their capacity to produce technically correct or strategically efficient solutions.

Finally, trust dimensions may be parallel, existing simultaneously but independently from each other. This seems to have happened in the UNAM Claustro. Overcoming an initially pervasive distrust, participants discovered strong reasons for trusting each other in normative and technical matters. In part, trust developed because, by design, many decisions required supermajorities. But, perhaps more importantly, the interaction itself led participants to realize the importance of something that they usually tended to neglect: the perception that all of them had a common goal, based on a shared value ("a common interest, which obviously benefited the university," "defending the interests of academics"), that all of them were

sincerely committed to achieving this goal, that all of them had the necessary technical qualifications (knowledge of the problems of his or her sector), and that all of them had the appropriate requisite personal traits (tolerance, patience and openness). In contrast to this very positive view about the normative and technical basis of trust, there seemed to be a somewhat negative perception about the strategic or instrumental benefits of the interaction. This is probably related to the original distrust referred to above. This was one of the reasons why participants in the Coordinating Board of the Claustro tended to deny that they had obtained or expected to obtain any personal benefit from their participation. The only benefits they explicitly mentioned were: a better knowledge of the university, greater familiarity with processes of collective decision-making, more openness and tolerance and the like. As will be analyzed in subsequent chapters, this imbalanced trust was a serious obstacle for the practical success of the Claustro.

It seems clear, therefore, that an important amount of trust in each of its three types is indispensable in complex associative systems. This confirms that normative, strategic, and technical "trusts" are not separate kinds of trust but rather its dimensions. Thus, in CAS, the total amount of trust is a combination (the "algebraic sum") of the three dimensions. If one neglects this fact, it becomes difficult to explain how trust can be generalized among people with inconsistent identities, different interests and resources or divergent organizational cultures.

All of the above refers to trust, but what about its obverse—distrust? When observed in complex associative systems, distrust takes on an equally complex character. In the first place, distrust may mean a negative expectation, as when participants believe that their partners have the opposite of the characteristics defining each trust dimension: that they are egotistic, inefficient amateurs, or immoral, or all of these at the same time.

In the second place, distrust may take the form of a conflictive relation along trust dimensions. For example, as discussed above, intense collaboration can foster the development of normative trust, as participants come to share beliefs, goals, worldviews, etc. But this

may endanger the perceived usefulness of the relationship: participants may feel that there is little economic profit or scientific knowledge to obtain from interacting with people who are very similar to themselves.

Finally, distrust may be a reaction against the perceived risk of "colonization," when participants fear that the interaction may endanger their personal or institutional autonomy. Seen in this sense, distrust has its roots in the tension between autonomy and interdependence, a tension that is essential to CAS: interdependence tends to blur the borders between the autonomous groups, institutions or social subsystems that participate in the interaction. This tension may express itself as distrust of the legally instituted authorities (as happens in the UNAM's Claustro) or as distrust of the intentions of the "others" (for example, the economic actors participating in the Chapultepec Accord).[10]

In our analysis of university-industry networks we found multiple statements illustrating this fear of "colonization." For example, an academic researcher said:

> …If you get married to the firm X, you get married for life, this is what is happening: …your system is becoming too small for me to grow in …

From the side of business, it is considered that:

> …Within academia, there are no clear criteria about the meaning of technological development: there are still lots of people who consider the university should not be at the service (*sic*) of the firm…as if, by the very fact of collaborating for technological development, the role of the university would be corrupted … I do personally consider that this is a big mistake because they want to maintain the university as a very pure entity.

[10] An extreme case is, to be sure, that of corrupt individuals. In their analysis on corruption in developed nations, Della Porta and Mény (1997) place the careers of corrupt functionaries on a middle ground between state and market. They emphasize that those careers are often characterized by a tight interrelation between public offices and business (and financial) activities.

Properly speaking, those careers belong neither in the state nor in the market, violating the governance rules of both.

This problem, according to one participant, could be eliminated with interaction. But too much interaction would reinforce the concern—voiced by another of our subjects—that

> The chemistry between them and us has developed to such a degree, that sometimes we think that (the academic department) is just another department of our company.

In sum, it could be said that as a necessary condition for the functioning of complex associative systems—as an integrating factor among actors with different codes and languages—mutual trust takes on a complex character. That is to say, it involves *calculations*, *solidarity*, and a perception of the technical *prestige* of participants. Thus, as opposed to less complex social interactions based on a single type of trust, CAS involve an unstable balance among these three dimensions of trust. Among other advantages, this view of complex trust allows one to observe the complexity of distrust.

Therefore, when evaluating CAS performance, one has to consider not only the total level of mutual trust produced or wasted during the interaction but also the way in which its different dimensions are combined. This leads us to question an assumption shared by many theories of trust: the belief that there is a necessarily positive relationship between trust and socially productive cooperation. For instance, that trust always reduces transaction costs or risks.

HOW TO OBSERVE TRUST

As said above, complex associative systems require an equally complex form of trust (or may give rise to complex distrust). Hence, as pointed out, normative, strategic and technical "trusts" are not separate kinds but rather interrelated dimensions of trust. Therefore, in complex networks, the total amount of trust is a combination (the "algebraic sum") of the three dimensions.

One of the most important surveys used for analysing trust, the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al. 1998), formulates the question about trust as follows:

> Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be careful in dealing with people?
> 1. Most people can be trusted
> 2. You cant't be too careful

The problem with this and other widely used indicators of trust is that they seek simply to measure the degree to which individuals trust other people, without considering the dimensions of trust and the level of complexity of the interactions among the members of social groups.

Given that, within certain limits, different trust dimensions may vary independently from each other, it is evident that this question ignores the conceptual frameworks within which trust is perceived or the parameters that define it. The problem becomes more confusing because, when asking about distrust, that survey uses a question that focuses on strategic trust only, ignoring the other two basic trust dimensions:

> Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?
> 1. Would take advantage;
> 2. Would try to be fair.

To avoid these problems and to assess the level of trust among participants in a complex associative system, we propose the question presented in table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2
QUESTION ABOUT TRUST
On a scale ranging from 0 to 10 (where 10 is highest), how would you rate the importance of the following factors when deciding whether to cooperate with other people?

Dimensions of trust	*Average marks*
1. Good personal relationships with those people [Personal/normative trust]	
2. Technical capabilities of the person or institution where she or he works [Technical trust]	
3. Obtaining mutual benefits [Calculated trust]	

SOURCE: own construction.

Besides inquiring about the existence of trust, it is also necessary to investigate the internal consistency of the three dimensions of trust. To do this, we propose using a matrix like the one presented in table 4.3 for each pair of dimensions:

TABLE 4.3
LEVEL OF CONSISTENCY BETWEEN CALCULATED TRUST AND PERSONAL TRUST

	Value of normative trust higher than the average	*Value of normative trust lower than or equal to the average*
Value of strategic trust higher than the average		
Value of strategic trust lower than or equal to the average		

SOURCE: own construction.

The preceding indicators would give evidence about two of the three variants of distrust as well: a negative expectation in any of the three dimensions (or in all three) and conflicts among trust dimensions. But one should also keep in mind that distrust is not only the absence of trust, and therefore it should be observed in its own terms and dimensions. For example, to inquire about strategic distrust, one can ask (taking as a model the question used by the World Values Survey 1981):

> Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?
> 1. Would take advantage.
> 2. Would try to be fair.

TRUST AND OTHER COMPONENTS OF CAS

As Luhmann claims, "Differentiated and mobile social systems set a particularly high standard which can only be met if learning how to trust, and not just trust by itself, can be learned" (1996: 47). From

this perspective, we can say that diverse components of the political design of CAS may not only help preserve or generate trust among differentiated actors, but also provide opportunities for learning how to trust and how to become trustworthy. For example, by promoting regular and periodic interactions among a relatively stable set of participants, the political design of CAS may create conditions for the development of familiarity e.g., for recognition of the "others": their perceptions, worries and preferences.

Transparency in the rules of the game, equitable participation opportunities, a fair distribution of positions in decision-making structures and representation of the different interests in play have all proved to be important mechanisms for generating trust and countering the distrust that derives from the tension between the interdependency and autonomy of participants.

Equally importantly, a good political design may help overcome distrust by giving participants a feeling that they can control the situation, that the people whom they distrust would have little opportunity to betray them. A case in point is the UNAM Claustro. As one of our informants from that associative system stated:

> Distrust is everywhere in the university. This is a misfortune in our institution… Unfortunately, the university legislation is a legislation based on distrust… We all have a lack of trust.

The Claustro seems explicitly designed to counteract this distrust. Sectors not directly interested in the reform were excluded, sectors traditionally excluded from structures like this (part-time instructors and academic technicians) were included roughly in proportion to their weight in the university workforce, and the number of representatives of the authorities was small. Thus, the political design of the Claustro appeared to be guided by the following criterion: exclude those not directly interested in the issue, include traditionally excluded and distrustful sectors, and minimize participation of the traditionally distrusted authorities.

Conversely, an exemplary case of distrust due to an unbalanced representation structure was the case of the Chapultepec Accord. As will be analyzed in the following chapters, the political design of the

Accord overrepresented the economic elite, and this was one of the major causes of failure.

As discussed in subsequent chapters, trust (or distrust) affects other elements of complex associative systems. Trust is an important basis for leadership and authority; it is a key element for decision-making, facilitating "fine grain" information exchange (Adler and Kwon 2000) and providing conditions for successful negotiation and deliberation; and, in the absence of highly institutionalized rules, it functions as a collective means of compliance (Hollingsworth and Boyer 1997). But it is the relationship between trust and translation which makes trust a crucial element in communication in complex associative systems.

Chapter 5

Translation and Communication

Talking about communication within a knowledge network, a participant wearily complained: *"We speak different languages, the eternal discussion."* In this, he was not alone. Many other participants in these and other complex associative systems affirmed that differences in "language"—that is to say, inconsistencies or divergences regarding purposes, norms, organizational patterns, and so on—were one of the main obstacles to communication, interaction and decision-making. But the problem is still more general. Communication within systems that have different codes, such as money, power or solidarity, has always being difficult.

How do CAS participants manage to understand each other within this Tower of Babel? The main argument of this chapter is that CAS deal with this problem by turning themselves into structures of "translation," by creating specialized translation spaces and by assigning the task of translation to some of their members. Thanks to this extensive use of translation, their members are able to understand each other without forsaking their diversity and autonomy.

The following questions are addressed in this chapter: In what sense can it be affirmed that CAS are translation structures? What does translating means in the context of these systems? What are the distinctive characteristics of individuals who perform the role of translators? Can this role be institutionalized? How should translation be taken into account when evaluating the performance of CAS?

To answer these questions, the chapter explores the extent to which arguments about the "strengthens of weak ties" and "structural holes", or concepts such as institutional and functional differentiation, provide insights for understanding the role of translators in the integration and operation of complex systems. It also explores the extent to which actor-network theory, from the standpoint of networks as communication systems, contributes to understand the evolution and dynamics of CAS.

As in the previous chapter, knowledge networks are used as the main examples; yet, it can be said that the function of translation is inherent to any CAS even when the importance of the role of translators may vary, as it will be seen in the last section of this chapter.[1]

TRANSLATION IN ASSOCIATIVE SYSTEMS: A FIRST APPROXIMATION

To define translation and translators, we draw on diverse approaches to networks as complex entities. These approaches have stressed the centrality of the interfaces in networks of networks, as well as the importance of border activities and border personnel: gatekeepers, symbolic analysts, negotiators, brokers or translators. From this perspective, translators may be initially defined as individuals who facilitate communication among people from different institutions, organizations or groups—people who, like Steward and Conway (1996) would say, have incongruent cognitive and language orientations. Those individuals usually play a significant role in knowledge networks and other complex associative systems.

From a more structural standpoint, a classic view is that of "the strength of weak ties." According to it, informational strength (and weakness) is related to the intensity of interpersonal ties, understood as "a lineal combination of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and mutual services" (Granoveter 1973: 1361). A weak tie may be strong if it is also a "bridge," the only link between otherwise unconnected groups, each of which is made up of individuals with

[1] Previous discussion of this theme can be found in Luna and Velasco 2003 and 2006.

strong (intense) links. Developments of this argument include Burt's (1992) analysis of "structural holes" and Valente's (1995) work on radial structures.

For Burt (2000), particularly interested in business networks, the highest economic returns accrue between, not within, zones of dense relations. This results from the autonomy generated by network complexity and the conflicting affiliations of members. It means that the most fruitful exchanges of information occur between people and organizations located at opposing sides of spare zones or structural holes. In his view, *brokers* have advantageous access to information and a privileged position in the management of collaboration or alliances that bring together individuals from different sides of the hole. But Valente (1995) found that those who play the role of "bridges" or "weak ties" occupy marginal positions in their networks and that, therefore, their relevance is not congruent with their authority and their main function is to coordinate rather than to direct.

Seeing the problem from a systemic standpoint, Leydesdorff (1997) holds that translation systems may be conceptualized as a response to an evolutionary paradox, where integration is seen as form of de-differentiation through second-order communication that combines the logics that it connects.

In sum, translation concerns the function of creating a common language out of the different cognitive orientations and organizational logics of participants; it also seeks to give a new meaning to the search for different purposes, preferences, needs, interests and causes. Given the properties of CAS, all of that has to be done without undermining the autonomy of participants and that of the system as a whole.

Thus, from our view translation may be approached at both the structural and individual levels. By bringing together different people and entities, CAS function as translation structures. They connect actors from different institutional, organizational and social contexts. But, at the same time, within CAS certain individuals perform the role of translators, facilitating communication and understanding among participants.

CAS as Translation Structures

The most obvious indication that associative systems may function as translation structures comes from the literature on the evolution of social systems. This is especially the case of Leydesdorff (1997). Following Latour's idea of a helix of translations, which can be carried out at local interfaces, Leydesdorff claims that "translations systems" integrate two or more "functionally codified" systems. In the case of triple-helix relations—which bring together people from the government, academia and industry—those systems are science and the economy. Systems of translation do no longer have a single "episteme"; they rather combine logics from the systems they connect. They are, therefore, "trans-episteme" systems, carrying out a "second-order" communication. According to him, in these systems, "scientific communications are not only selected in terms of their 'true value' as their intrinsic codification, but also in terms of their utility as another (no longer extrinsic) codification. Analogously, a productive system can be changed against (short-term) market pressures when innovations are selected from a perspective of technological potentials" (1997: 110).

Leydesdorff recognizes the importance of individual translators. However, he insists that translations systems have to do not with individuals but with logics and codes. Strictly speaking, these systems do not connect "real people" but their communications and the logic underlying those communications. A serious methodological consequence of this is that, according to him, such systems are virtually invisible: they are integrated over time; therefore, at each specific moment, "only a distribution of communications can be observed" (1997: 112).

However, in our analysis of knowledge networks this problematic methodological consequence did not materialize. On the contrary, it was plainly visible that these networks have "translational" objectives and function as translation structures. This can be corroborated by observing the stated objectives of the networks. As even a cursory review would show, these objectives fall into three categories: those with a predominantly business or productive orientation, those with a predominantly academic orientation, and those with a

mixed orientation. Twenty of the 38 participants who were interviewed affirmed or implied that the projects had mixed objectives, combining business and academic expectations. Clearly, participants seem to expect that the associative system establish a mixed ground, entraining economic, scientific, and technological types of logic. Some respondents made this patent:

> The first objective we can identify is to develop academic contents within upper-level educative institutions; and a second objective is to expand these services beyond the classrooms, precisely towards the productive sectors.
>
> The objective is to generate quality standards for the new products that the firm is generating, so that each of these standards can give us information about the product, about its basic characteristics…and with these characteristics we would be able to do some mathematics modeling to produce feedback for the productive entity.
>
> There were two approaches. One was the academic approach through which the university requires you to meet certain minimal requirements, a certain amount of knowledge that allows you to affirm that this is a Master's Degree program. On the other hand, a requirement of [the firm] was that theses made an economic contribution, that was not just scientific.

Seventeen respondents described the objective of the project as predominantly economic. Those who did so, however, often implied that the objective was to make technologic or scientific knowledge accessible and profitable for the business firms, which clearly implies a translation process. A case in point is that of *Firm X*, whose main stated goal—according to participants in the project—was to "*design an information system, in accord with the current and future needs of the [firm], that comply with today's technological standards*."

Interestingly, no interviewee declared that the objective of the joint project was primarily academic.

Another important clue for understanding how CAS can function as translation structures comes from network analysis, which sees social networks as patterns of interpersonal communication. Within this approach, the argument of the strength of weak ties formulated by Granovetter (1973) provides important insights for understanding translators and translation structures. Granovetter postulated

that weak ties—individuals loosely connected in a network—are bridges that serve to join unconnected groups, thus acting as decisive links in the diffusion of information. However, Granovetter himself notices that, unlike most models of interpersonal networks, this principle is not meant primarily for application "to small, face-to-face groups or to groups in confined institutional or organizational settings" (p. 1376).

Valente (1995) tries to overcome this methodological constraint. Working in the area of innovation diffusion theories, he makes the weak-tie relation operational by defining it as the presence of individuals who are likely to connect otherwise unconnected groups —that is, radial individuals, "who have more network partners who nominate others outside their personal network" (p. 51). Although "radiality" is a poor measure of the "weak tie" concept, it underlines the fact that such individuals are marginal to the network, in the sense that their relevance is not equivalent to their authority, and that their function has primarily to do with coordination rather than with direction.[2]

Based on the strength of weak ties and other theories, Burt (1980, 1992) put forward the argument of the "structural hole", which results from the autonomy generated by the complexity of the network and conflicting affiliations.[3] According to his theory, the highest potential for economic return lies between, not within dense regions of relationships. These sparse regions, or structural holes, represent opportunities for brokering information flows among individuals or firms located on the opposite sides of the structural hole (Burt 2000). From his point of view, *brokers* have the advantage

[2] To avoid methodological problems like these, our analysis compares the positions of the individuals within the network (leaders, coordinators, initiators, and so on).

[3] As Burt (2000) acknowledges, "The structural hole argument draws on several lines of network theorising that emerged in sociology during the 1970s, most notably, Granovetter (1973) on the strength of weak ties, Freeman (1977) on betweenness centrality, Cook and Emerson (1978) on the power of having exclusive exchange partners and Burt (1980) on the structural autonomy created by network complexity. More generally, sociological ideas elaborated by Simmel (1955) and Merton (1968), on the autonomy generated by conflicting affiliations, are mixed in the structural hole argument with traditional economic ideas of monopoly power and oligopoly to produce network models of competitive advantage" (p. 257).

of the information that flows and the direction of interactions that join individuals on either side of the holes.

Following the argument of the strength of weak ties, in their study of external sources of innovation, Steward and Conway (1996) proposed that while the exchange of potential information is more important among socially distant groups, the mismatch of language and cognitive orientation is also important. Under these circumstances, the only way to overcome this paradox is through *gatekeepers*.

In their study of university-industry relations, Bonaccorsi and Piccaluga (1994: 240) found that the interface notion involves not only the performance of specific tasks, but also an intense interaction, particularly in the areas of decision-making and problem solving. It is because of this that the function of the interface is critical and so is the activity of *boundary personnel* and *gatekeepers* for business firms and for academic organizations.

Analysis of the interviews to participants in knowledge networks strongly confirms the validity of the weak-tie view. Many relationships analyzed here started as weak links, with limited objectives, between two entities. Twenty interviewees declared that the original objectives of the network were subsequently modified. Sixteen of them affirmed that this modification broadened—instead of shrinking—the original goals of the project. Only four respondents affirmed that the original objectives were downgraded.

Also in congruence with the weak-tie view, the projects started with limited numbers of participants, but, according to 26 respondents, new people joined as the projects progressed. To bring experts from other institutions, include people from other professions, bring people with more experience, cover previously unattended aspects, include students working on their dissertation, reinforce the objectives of the project, extend the original network, bring experts working on parallel projects, enhance the formation of human resources, foster a cross-disciplinary view, and obtain more human resources are among the reasons cited for the inclusion of new members into the association.

With these additions, the collaborative projects became veritable "networks of innovators." According to Steward and Conway (1996), such networks are sets of "personal boundary-spanning relationships" that transfer ideas and information across socially distant

organizations. These networks are "heterophilous" and function as bridges between otherwise unconnected networks or organizations. Following Granovetter (1973), they conceive them as "weak," usually informal ties. It is through these networks that "ideas, know-how, information and technology" enter the innovation process.

In congruence with this idea, some interviewees stressed the fact that all members of the collaborative projects acted as translators. For example, one of them said:

> It was one of my roles as facilitator to be always ready to heed the requirements of all the institutions… Who else? Well, every one.

Less directly, another respondent supported this view. Although she identified one individual translator, she clarified that this person *"did not make much effort to promote communication, all he was willing to do was to present results."*

How do translation structures like these evolve? The available literature also provides some clues for answering this question. Thus, Steward and Conway also affirmed that "networks of innovators" usually started from relationships between a "nodal innovator" and "sociometrically distant" *attribute networks*. They identified five such networks: recreation networks, profession networks, scientific networks, user networks, and friendship networks. The analysis of the interviews upholds this affirmation. One question included in the questionnaire asked what kind of contact existed among the institutions or organizations before the beginning of the project. The three main answers were: professional contacts (20 respondents), personal relations (17 respondents), and previous services (10).

Similarly, respondents were also asked whether they had met any person affiliated with the other institution before the beginning of the project. Twenty-eight people responded affirmatively. While these previous links were variegated, the most frequent instances included previous projects (8), professional or scientific associations (5), predominantly personal relationships and friendship (4) and fellow university students (4).

The above clearly confirms that, while they usually start as weak-tie structures linking people from socially distant entities, "translation systems" tend to broaden their objectives, increase their number

of participants, and, probably, become formalized. This entails a potential paradox. As virtually any student of "border personnel or "boundary-spanning activities" recognizes, the communicative "strength" of weak ties depends precisely on the social distance between the entities they join. As those ties become stronger, more formal, and more numerous, the information that flows through them might become progressively redundant.

This paradox is also foreseen by a very different scholarly literature, actor-network theory. This theory defines translation as "all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred to itself, authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force" (Callon and Latour 1981: 279). Therefore, by analyzing translation we can observe whether interactions are evolving toward convergence or toward divergence. Such evolution embraces three main phases: emergence, development, and stabilization. During the first phase translation becomes critical for the creation of a common language. New forms of interaction emerge out of already existing ones. Sometimes this happens through subtle changes, sometimes as the result of revolutionary developments. The second phase, related to the development of the system, depends on the logic of translation; it is here that the interaction can evolve toward convergence or divergence. The third phase, stabilization, happens when coordination is stronger and different elements are better aligned. The system becomes more stable and predictable. The stability of the relationship depends on its capacity to make a return to a previous situation impossible, that is to say, to a situation where the current state of the system was only one possibility among others. In other words, stabilization, or closure, means that interpretative flexibility diminishes. When its diverse elements are more tightly interrelated, the system becomes more complex and stable, because in order to disconnect an actor from it, many other connections have to be untied now (a description of these phases can be seen in Stalder 1997).[4]

[4] This notion of stabilization differs from the one that usually prevails in assessments of the organization's performance, where it normally refers to the organization's capacity to remain alive over a relatively long period. We will come back to this issue when we present our proposal to evaluate the performance of CAS.

In conclusion, the above analysis suggests that, in knowledge networks like those observed here, one must always keep in mind that there are three kinds of structures: academic networks, business networks, and the knowledge networks themselves. Functioning as translation structures, these networks acquire their own logic and momentum. More generally, this conclusion suggests that, by erecting themselves into translation structures, CAS become essentially different from the organizations and institutions to which their members originally belong.

Translating

What does the metaphor of translation mean when used in the context of CAS? In other words, what actions and functions does the task of translating include?

Our analysis of knowledge networks suggests that translating involves five main types of tasks: mediating between different cognitive orientations, reconciling different organizational logics, creating a trans-disciplinary approach, de-codifying and re-codifying knowledge and, finally, creating shared interests out of the disparate goals and aims of their members.

First, at the level of cognitive orientations, translation deals with what can be called the language mismatch: the diverging, even contradictory, worldviews that participants bring from their original affiliations. It is obvious that scholars and entrepreneurs, the protagonists of knowledge networks, have many divergences of this sort. In evolutionary terms, it could be said that whereas scientific communications are selected in terms of their "true" value, market communications are selected in terms of their "utility" or profit (Leydesdorff 1997).

Particularly relevant to the cases analyzed here are differences on the concept of knowledge and knowledge creation, which are summarized in table 5.1.

But we also found differences regarding the very notion of innovation: on the one hand are those who define innovation only in terms of new ideas or rupture of paradigms; in fact, most diffusion of innovation theories define innovation as the generation of new ideas,

TABLE 5.1
DIFFERENCES IN KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Industry	*Academy*
Realization of Economic Value	Creation of Intellectual Value
Industrial Applicability	Scientific Credibility
Market Oriented	Mission Oriented
Inductive or Synthetic	Deductive or Analytic
Problem Oriented (Trans-Disciplinary)	Disciplinary
Telesis (goal-oriented)	Serendipitous/curiosity driven
Commitment to Schedules	No time constraints
Private Good (Proprietary)	Public Good

SOURCE: Schuetze (2000: 167).

opinions or products (e.g., Valente 1995). On the other hand are those who believe that innovation can only be understood in the context of markets. In this case, innovation is identified with technological change leading to the generation of new products and processes. A clear definition of the latter approach can be found in international and national organisms such as the OECD or the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT):

> Product and process technological innovations have been introduced into the market (product innovation), or have been used in a production process (process innovation)…They both involve a series of scientific, technological, organizational, financial and trade activities (SEP-CONACYT 1999: 190-191).

Differences regarding the notion of innovation are not necessarily congruent with the distinction between scientists or academics and technologists or entrepreneurs. Sometimes, scholars seem to have a market-oriented idea of innovation, while people from business firms emphasize innovation for its own sake. This was evident in the interviews with participants in knowledge networks. For example, a member coming from a firm affirmed: "*Innovation means creating something different…something new,"* whereas a scientist equated innovation with *"The development of a process or a product that satisfies a need with a competitive cost."* This curious reversal of roles vividly

illustrates the extent to which knowledge networks can, indeed, become systems of translation.

Even more, some individuals, either from the academia or from business firms, explicitly or implicitly recognize that innovation may have different meanings for different participants. This tolerant attitude obviously facilitates the harmonious integration of views. For example, while talking about the meaning of innovation, subjects often began with phrases like "for us," "from a technological point of view," "from the point of view of science," etc. Thus, one participant said:

> Generally speaking innovation…is something new, scientifically speaking it is something new, and for the business firm it is something new and less expensive.

From a more normative viewpoint, a technologist said:

> For me, innovation is the conjunction of certain elements, not all of them necessarily new, but that are put together in a new manner, and that result in a practical application. But even without the economic element we can talk of innovation…However, it is very difficult to do something just for the sake of doing it… (that is, the quest of knowledge for its own sake).

In a more sophisticated way, a physicist said:

> I do think that innovation and technological development are different…Innovation has a personal and individual effect: an intelligent person, or a group of people, can make an innovation. Technological development… requires a person who has the basic knowledge of industry, and it requires linkages (between academia and industry) and social support. (Only in this sense), is it possible for innovation to have an economic impact.

It must be noticed that people expressing these views were often recognized as translators by other members of their network.

Frequently, participants themselves referred to these differences in cognitive orientations as differences in language, often affirming that they were the major impediment to interaction between academy and industry or, at least, that they were the main obstacle to communication within knowledge networks.

Sometimes, however, this difference was not perceived as the opposition between truth and utility, but simply as a contrast between personal prestige and profit. Curiously enough, not only participants from firms, but often also those from academic institutions affirmed that the latter were guided by the desire to obtain personal prestige, rather than by the search for truth. In the words of a scientist:

> Explicitly stated or not, the aim of industry is profit, that is what they want, and stated or not, the aim of academics is personal prestige… Any attempt to reconcile these two presuppositions is difficult…

Another interesting fact is that participants often assumed that university researchers are the ones who should try to come close to their counterparts, rather than the other way around. Thus, after complaining that communication with people from business firms is difficult *"…because when we approach them and talk…we do not understand each other*," a scholar envisioned the following solution:

> …we have to speak as they do, use their same words…understand what they want, try to be a part of them, speak their own language, that is, be with them, understand them, talk…

In a similar way, another university researcher affirmed:

> Mutual knowledge and a common language are lacking: it is necessary for the researcher to know that the aim of businessmen is earning money…We need to acquire more market knowledge and receive financial gains from research activities.

Finally, it should be noted that participants often mentioned differences in culture, approaches and, particularly, time spans which are shorter for business and larger for academic institutions as the main obstacles to communication within the network.

In the second place, translating entails mediating between different, often mutually opposing, organizational logics. This is particularly evident in the case of universities and business firms—both of which seem designed to prevent, rather than facilitate, communication with each other.

However, the problem is not only one of organizational structures and procedures. According to participants interviewed, it is also a

problem of understanding. Both academic institutions and large, innovative business firms are usually worried about confidentiality, intellectual property, patents, evaluation criteria[5] and administrative procedures; in contrast, smaller firms are often more concerned with government and institutional policies, particularly with the incentives that these policies create for cooperation and information sharing. And the organizational structures of each of them seem to respond to these concerns. As a scientist quoted in the previous chapter argued, people from universities often fear that cooperation with business may endanger the "purity" of academic work.

Recognizing this problem, universities have created specialized units —liaison offices, industrial research chairs, incubators, technological parks, and so on—whose main task is precisely to bridge the gap between themselves and economic firms.[6] Despite the success of many of these units, the mutual isolation, even hostility, between universities and firms has persisted. One reason for this persistence is evident enough: both universities and markets are highly segmented, the former into disciplines and their corresponding departments, the latter into sectors and strata. This segmentation compounds the challenge: it is not enough to reconcile the big differences between universities and economic enterprises but also those between different scholarly and market segments. Obviously, this challenge cannot be met by specialized units within either universities or firms, however well intentioned they might be. Other structures, more open, more decentralized and less bureaucratic, are clearly necessary.

Knowledge networks belong in this category. Although they are formally promoted by universities, by firms or by both, they are not under the formal jurisdiction of either. Their members stay at arm's length, so to speak, from their original organizations. In this

[5] For example, a technologist said that: *"…whereas researchers are measured by publications, technologists are measured by their results* (*sic*)*"* or, in the same sense, it was considered that success measured by the firms is very different from that of academic institutions: *"…whereas for an academic institution the success of a project means to graduate students, for us graduation is something secondary; the only thing we (firms) want, are the results of the project, there is where we have differences*."

[6] For these organisational units in several government funding Mexican universities, see Casas and Luna (1997), and Luna (2001) for regional universities.

way, universities and firms interact not through their own organizational structures, but through networks of individuals coming from either side. Not surprisingly, these intermediate structures—where no member has absolute authority and all of them have a certain autonomy (Hage and Alter 1997)—are especially attractive to "frontier" people: university researchers with former careers in business firms, technologists who have previously worked in universities and students with a high rate of mobility between different kinds of organizations—people who have learned or are learning the know-how of different organizational settings.

Participating in these networks, people often forget their initial affiliations. As noted in the previous chapter, the "chemistry" between scholars and business technologists may be excessive.

This, as shall be mentioned below, creates a new risk—that individuals from one of the two sectors become alienated from their primary affiliation and fully integrate themselves into the opposite sector, thereby endangering the diversity that is peculiar to complex associative systems.

In the third place, translating means developing a trans-disciplinary approach. Quite surprisingly, although participants in these networks claimed that their projects involved various disciplines, they apparently failed to see a problem in this respect. This may have several explanations. In some cases, the reason may be that disciplinary divergences had already been smoothed out before these projects began. That may be particularly the situation of projects in the fields of polymers or ceramics, which have always been eminently trans-disciplinary. Alternatively, it may be the case that disciplinary divergences are expressed in other terms, for example, as power or interest conflicts. Thus, in one of the networks studied, most participants had a favorable opinion of the projects on several issues (results, learning, generation of new relations, contribution to human resources formation, etc.), but a few others had a totally opposite perception of precisely the same issues. Interestingly enough, all those satisfied individuals affirmed that communication within the network was easy because *"all the participants, the great majority"* came from the same discipline (*"if not, we would never have understood each other"*). In contrast, the few dissatisfied members came from a different discipline.

However, even when participants did not explicitly acknowledge the existence of disciplinary divergences, several of these were evident; for example, between basic and applied research, between theoretical and applied physics and between physics and engineering. A participant affiliated to a business firm—a young student working for a Ph.D. degree in engineering—expressed this situation as follows:

> Dr. X (a physicist from an academic institution) and I had not had very much interaction, but little by little we were integrated. I began to understand very well what he tried to express. But for this I had to study a little bit more, because I am not a physicist. It was hard for me to understand physics questions, but I began to study, and we began to have stronger contacts, we began to understand each other, and now, in this new research project I asked (the firm) to appoint him consultant of the project.

Apart from illustrating the problem, the previous quotation also shows how knowledge networks solve it: by facilitating intense interpersonal interaction that gradually forces members to create a common ground among different disciplines.

In the fourth place, translating involves dealing with different codes and different types of knowledge. In this sense, translation means a simultaneous process of de-codification and re-codification. A university researcher explained how this rather complicated process takes place:

> …I have got that ability, that sensibility to see an industrial problem, and see the basic science behind… Industrials always think they know what the problem is from the extra-technical point of view…but if you get inside the problem and there you realize what there is behind, it is another thing… Sometimes they (industrialists) think it is a problem of processes and it is a problem of materials, or they think it is a problem of materials and it is a problem of characterization, then an important thing is to get inside the problem…to do some anthropology on technological research, that is, to get inside with them. We like to do very much that because you not only get the flavor of a problem but you can also see other problems…

In doing this, knowledge networks grapple with a deeper problem, one that Lundvall (2000a: 133) explains in these terms: "The increasing emergence of knowledge-based networks of firms, research groups and experts may be regarded as an expression of the growing importance of knowledge that is codified in local rather than in universal terms."

Finally, translating entails reconciling the diverging interests of participants. In fact, many of the problems discussed above may also contain, to a certain extent, conflicts of interests and power. The reason is quite obvious: participants offer and expect goods that may be mutually incommensurable and they come to the network with disparate arrays of power-conferring resources. Some of the interests that CAS have to harmonize are similar but in mutual competition, like the search for personal prestige mentioned above. Other interests, while not necessarily competitive, are numerous and divergent *("…there were too many participants in the project with diverse interests…").* In these and similar situations, the challenge for CAS is basically the same: *"…we have to make a good effort to have common interests."* In sum, the interests that CAS have to harmonize are competitive, diverse and common. For Messner (1999), coordinating these three kinds of interests is a problem inherent to networks as complex systems.

Many of these conflicts are solved by a complicated negotiation process, as the next chapter shall analyze. But some of them are not solved through such processes. For example, in the particular case of the move from implicit toward codified knowledge, a university researcher would explain that conflicts regarding confidentiality and publications, can be avoided when

> …you own the concept…when you generate the concept, the fundamental principle and its application: industry is not only uninterested in the fundamental principle, it really does not understand it.

However, although not all conflicts imply negotiations, the latter are an intrinsic element of networks. The efficacy of networks is measured by their capacity to manage conflicts (Messner 1999).

Translators

What position do individual translators occupy in CAS? What are the distinctive characteristics of these individuals? These are the main questions that the present section will seek to answer.

To do this, the section draws on a set of open and closed questions that participants in knowledge networks were asked about the quality of communication within the system and the possible presence of people who facilitated that communication. In analyzing the identity of these communication facilitators, we sought to avoid the methodological problems that arise when this topic is approached from the perspective of formal network analysis (Granovetter 1973 and Valente 1995). With this end, we compared the identity of those individuals identified as communication facilitators with the identity of individuals who may occupy other outstanding positions within the associative systems: leaders, formal coordinators, initiators, decision makers, persons who convoke the meetings, and so on.

The main questions analyzed were the following:

- Communication with participants from the enterprise/ academic institution has been:
  a) Very difficult
  b) Difficult
  c) Easy
  d) Very easy
- Could you describe the factors that have made communication difficult/easy?
- Was there or was there not a person who facilitated communication? Could you please identify and describe that person?

To begin this analysis, it is worthwhile to recall that, with several qualifications, most authors who analyze boundary-spanning activity accept the weak-tie argument. Granovetter's original formulation of this argument suggests that individuals connected by a bridge tend to occupy marginal places in their primary networks. Burt (1992) seems to question this view. According to him what matters is not the weakness or strength of the tie, but the fact that some ties are the only link between otherwise unconnected networks. Such

ties are crucial because they span "structural holes"[7] and therefore are privileged channels for the circulation of non-redundant information. While recognizing the virtues of the weak-tie argument, Burt asserts that "information benefits are expected to travel over all bridges, strong or weak" (p. 30). Indeed, Burt's analysis often refers to bridges between managers, that is to say, individuals who occupy central positions in their primary networks. Moreover, he explicitly affirms that the links between those individuals can be strong.[8] Seen in this way, such bridges would be "weak" ties only from a structural standpoint but not for the individuals involved.[9]

Therefore, a theoretically relevant empirical question is the following: What position does the translator occupy in the system? The analysis of the interviews with participants in knowledge networks shows that translators tend to be central rather than marginal individuals. Of the 38 people interviewed, 20 affirmed that there was one person who facilitated communication among participants.[10] Nineteen of them were able to identify and name that person. In total, 11 communication "facilitators" of this kind were identified.[11] Six of them clearly occupied central positions in the network: as coordinators or co-coordinators of the projects, representatives of the business firm, or promoters or leaders of the project. Two seemed to occupy intermediate positions. Finally, three occupied marginal positions. Interestingly, this last category includes one student who combines work for his doctoral dissertation with work for the project.[12]

[7] A structural hole is "the separation between non redundant contacts. Non-redundant contacts are connected by a structural hole. A structural hole is a relationship of non-redundancy between two contacts" (Burt 1992: 18).

[8] "A manager who spans the structural hole, by having strong relations with contacts on both sides of the hole, has access to both information flows" (Burt 2000: 258).

[9] According to Burt (2000: 258), a structural hole only exists when members of one network "are so focused on their own activities that they have little time to attend to the activities of people in the other" network.

[10] Fourteen people denied that such a person existed; three affirmed that more than one person performed that function, and one did not answer.

[11] In most cases, different interviewees who participate in the same project identified the same person as the "communication facilitator."

[12] He is working under the direction of the coordinator of the project.

One respondent described him in a way that closely resembles the weak-tie argument:

> X is the person who, when there is a communication gap, would call us and join us together. He would say, "let us meet at the University campus, to work together." He is a person practically external to the group; he has something to do with the group but he is very far away. He is a person with whom we all have a good relationship… He is a person who is in contact with all of us and who can convene us to talk about the project.

The analysis of the interviews suggests that the importance of translators clearly depends on the gravity of the communication problems within the network. Whether respondents affirmed that there was a person who facilitated communication was clearly related to whether they saw communication with their counterparts as easy or difficult.

In total, 20 respondents said that there was a "communication facilitator." Most of them (75%) also said that communication with their counterpart was "easy." Fifteen percent of them said that communication with their counterpart was "difficult" or "very difficult." Only 10% of them said that communication in the network was "very easy."

Seen from the opposite side, the connection is even clearer. Of the 21 people who said that communication with their counterpart was "easy," 15 (71%) also affirmed that there was one person who facilitated communication. In contrast, only two (17%) of the 12 people who said that communication with their counterparts was difficult affirmed that there was a communication facilitator.

In summary, only those who thought that communication among members of the network was "very difficult," "difficult" or "easy" believed that there was one person facilitating communication. People who thought that communication was "very easy" denied that such a facilitator existed. It seems clear, therefore, that the need for a translator decreases as communication becomes easier.

But what characteristics distinguish these translators from other network participants? The available literature provides some clues in this respect. For example, Tobbias et al. (1995) put forward the idea of *gold collar workers,* by which he meant people with expertise

in three or more fields, intellectual agility (quick-wit) and versatility. Similarly, Steward and Conway proposed the category of *gatekeepers* —persons able "to understand and translate different codes," and to develop numerous boundary-spanning activities. Compared to conventional researchers, these *gatekeepers* have a better knowledge of scientific publications and entertain stable relationships with experts in a wider and more diverse social range outside their work environment (pp. 206-207). Similarly, Reich (1993) introduced the idea of *symbolic analysts*, people in charge of strategic intermediation within new entrepreneurial networks. According to this author, s*ymbolic analysts* trade with symbols (data, words, and visual and oral representations) and play an important role in the identification and solution of problems that are not defined beforehand. They have four basic abilities: abstraction, systemic thinking, experimentation and collaboration.

Some clues can also be derived from Lundvall (2000b). In that work, the author distinguished four kinds of knowledge: know-what, know-why, know-how and know-who. The last category is closely related to the function of translation; it involves knowing not only how to identify capable and reliable experts, but also how to obtain "translations." Moreover, know-who requires managing knowledge from different disciplines, since it requires access to diverse sources of knowledge and information about who knows what and who knows how to do what, as well as the ability to cooperate with different sorts of persons and experts. With a high component of tacit knowledge, know-who combines information and social relations. People who command this sort of knowledge should be able to manage information and ideas that cannot be found in the public domain and, in principle, are not accessible to anyone.

The analysis of interviews with participants in knowledge networks confirms and extends these expectations. To begin with, half of the translators identified by interviewees work in business firms and the other half work in the academia.[13] This seems to uphold the view that translators tend to be people located midway between the academic and business worlds. Additional evidence con-

[13] It was impossible to identify the main ascription of three individuals.

firms this view. For instance, those translators who come from the business sector work primarily in research activities. Moreover, whether affiliated with business or academic entities, all the translators for whom information in this respect is available hold advanced academic degrees (master's or doctorate). The analysis of the interviews also makes it evident that most people identified as translators had previous experience in collaborative projects between business and the academia or had worked in the two sectors in the past. Respondents seemed to consider this a very important feature of translators. One academic informant put it clearly:

> X [the translator] was the person who acted as a 'catalyzer'… At that time, she was both at [the business firm] and at the Chemistry Faculty.

Speaking of another translator, several respondents agreed that he had a "global vision," encompassing both the academic and the business worlds:

> I think it was X. For he had a global vision at that time …
>
> The one who had global vision was Dr. X. I believe he invited us all because he thought we could do polymer microelectronics.

Translators are also recognized for their cross-disciplinary skills, which allow them not only to shift from one "language" to another, but also to establish a middle ground "language," accessible to most members of the network. Consider these three examples:

> In this case, communication was easier because the person in charge of the laboratory was also a technician; we spoke the same language. And that person had a very good relationship with the main stockholder —who is an accountant but he knew that there was trust among us.
>
> We were all chemists, the great majority of us. If, instead of communicating with X and Y [two "translators," both chemists working in the business firm] from Resistol, we had to communicate with the accountant and the manager, then I believe we would have never understood each other.
>
> I am very happy with this firm, because both the Director of the Centre and X are physicists. Therefore, they understand; I do not have to

> explain anything; they understand exactly what the work is and this has made our communication very fluid.

The analysis of interviews also confirms that translation entails codification and managing tacit knowledge. Thus, according to one subject, translation is an ability, a sort of sensibility to recognize *"basic science behind industrial problems…I know it is an ability, and lots of people do not have it."*

Respondents also insisted that translators know how to move from one kind of organization to another and to understand different organizational logics. Indeed, 11 out of 19 interviewees who were able to identify one translator emphasized these capacities. One self-identified translator put this neatly: *"It was one of my roles to be always ready to heed the requirements of all the institutions involved —not just one of them."* Another translator was described as "*a very participative person… who is always dealing with* [the academic institution), *with* [the business entity] a*nd with the university; he is the person who integrates both teams…the person who facilitates communication between the two sides."* As mentioned above, this capacity to operate between or among organizations, helping participants to communicate with each other, often results from the fact that translators have held jobs in both business and the academia.

Finally, translators are also valued for their capacity to facilitate interpersonal communication. Personal descriptions of translators are full of phrases or words such as "very participative," "intelligent person," "willingness," "self-motivated individual," "empathy," "trust," "reliable person," etc. Strictly speaking, the capacity to facilitate interpersonal communication is not a translation function. It seems to be, however, a necessary condition for the success of translation. As such, it is a central characteristic of people who act as translators. Obviously, no translator was defined with negative personal features such as antipathetic, indifferent, or egotistic.

In sum, translators are individuals who have worked in several types of institutions and understand their different cultures, norms and procedures. Their links to the other members of the system are variegated and often informal. They are endowed with personal traits that make them appear likeable and accessible to other people; this

allows them to act as interpersonal communication facilitators. Finally, they may occupy central or marginal positions in the network, but they always participate actively in interactions related to mutual understanding, problem solving and conflict-resolution.

The Institutionalization of Translation

Given the importance of translation, one question poses itself: would it be possible to institutionalize the role of translator, for example, by creating a job position such as "manager of relations"? One interviewee had no doubts about this possibility, although he added that the person occupying that position should fulfill several requirements:[14]

> The person must be a high-profile one, because the main mission is to align a vision, a work conviction. It must be somebody who knows how to sell a conviction about the way you have to work, about the philosophy (of working together), and about the rules… somebody who knows how to sell ideas. It must be somebody who really captures the interests of all, really guides and opens the information flows, talks to everyone, at all the pyramidal levels…and has to know about different fields of knowledge. It must be somebody who opens all the communication channels, maintains that vision, and that cohesion…Obviously it is somebody who is open minded…It is somebody who recognizes different voices; if not, he or she would lose credibility.

For this participant and several others, although translation requires specific types of personality and attitudes, it is something that can be learned and collectively "cultivated". As Tobbias et al. (1995) suggest, university-industry relations may not only produce knowledge, but also may incubate people with different abilities. One subject explains how it is possible to train people to see basic science behind industrial problems:

[14] On this regard, it is interesting that one of the persons identified as a translator holds the formal position of "liaison" within the network. He did not identify himself as a translator; indeed, he denied that such a translator existed. However, two of the participants interviewed identified him as such.

> We have realized that it is possible to learn this. I say this because a traditional physicist began to interact with us (applied physicists) and began to show his enthusiasm with seeing this. I remember very well our first visits to the firms together. His first reaction was: 'I know nothing about it, I cannot know anything about it', or he had impractical ideas, very nice on the blackboard but useless in practice. In four or five years he has developed a sensitivity to see basic science behind, and we are now training other people.

However, against the idea of creating a formal job position (manager of relations) to perform translation functions, this interviewee implied that, ultimately, translation depends on (social) trust and therefore on face-to-face, often informal, interactions.

> If you have a job position (for translation), you have another difficulty to sort out…because everybody protects his or her status…Not only from the universities but also from the firms you there find the same: envy, status, red tape, and so on, and what there is behind it, at the very end there are personal relationships. The important thing is to sit down together, and talk for a while, say that you also have children, that the car broke down, this is the important thing for them and you to gain confidence. When there is an intermediary person, you do not have that personal part. I think both universities and firms have made mistakes; we have bureaucratized the position as an unintended consequence (of looking for relations).

This is a topic that surely deserves more attention in the study of translators.

Conclusions and Implications

From the analysis of our cases, we are able to conclude that translation is a key factor in the integration of complex associative systems. By creating a lingua franca within the associative system, translation enables participants to understand each other, without having to forsake their diversity and autonomy.

Important as translation is, it becomes less urgent when trust abounds. According to the participants interviewed, the main factors that facilitate or obstruct communication are the following: trust,

personal relationships and face-to-face interactions, mutual respect, mutual knowledge, commitment, and an open attitude. The importance attributed to trust suggests that within certain limits, there seems to be an inversely proportional relation between trust and translation. Translators are obviously less important when communication among members is easier; and, as seen earlier, trust may precisely have the effect of facilitating communication.

Another interesting fact resulting from the relation of trust and translation is that trustworthiness is an essential characteristic of individuals who act as translators. As said before, personal descriptions of translators are full of phrases or words such as "very participative," "intelligent person," "willingness," "self-motivated individual," "empathy," "trust," "reliable person," etc. In sum, translators must be trustworthy people—trustworthy in a complex way, with features corresponding to each of the three dimensions of trust analyzed in the previous chapter.

Thus, it could be said that a well-functioning CAS should exhibit a strong and well-balanced trust that facilitates communication among participants, and a moderate need for translation.

Yet, although translation (especially when combined with appropriate amounts of trust) may facilitate communication within the associative system, it may also create problems of its own. The fact that participants use a peculiar language, born from the interactions of the system and therefore different from any of their original languages, may hinder communication between them and their reference groups or primary networks, thus making the system less representative (see chapter 7). For the same reason, it may also make the associative system less transparent to outside observers. As discussed in subsequent chapter, this problem seems to have been especially strong for the UNAM Claustro: as communication among members of the Claustro became more fluid and abundant, it also became more self-referential. Consequently, contacts between Claustro members and their constituencies became more problematic, which surely reduced the viability of the accords that the Claustro had so painfully reached.

Another risk is that translators may degenerate into opportunists. Indeed, the two figures share important features, notably the fact

that both of them tend to position themselves in frontier posts, traversed by innovative information and critical social relations. Where frontiers are diffuse and personal interests prevail over public ones, opportunism and even corruption emerge almost naturally.[15] In such situation, the use of personal relations and privileged information for individual ends may become widespread. As analyzed in chapters 7 and 8, some members of the Trilateral Commission's Mexican Group, many of whom move very easily between the market and the state, are precisely in that kind of situation. Even though they superficially look like trustworthy people, they seem to use their privileged situation not so much to promote the public interest as to extract particular benefits.

More generally speaking, too much integration might hinder the individual autonomy of members and the collective autonomy of the associative system. When weak ties are excessively strengthened, formalized and multiplied, the system may become too standardized and bureaucratic, thereby losing much of its capacity to solve public problems and reinvigorate social institutions.

The above has important implications for the evaluation of CAS. Obviously, it is not enough to observe the short-term performance of the system, but also its long-term evolution and its contribution to the associational life of the community or communities within which it acts. This entails taking into account at least two criteria: stabilization and learning (table 5.2).

With respect to stabilization, it should be remembered that CAS are dynamic by definition, and therefore unstable. As said before, a system like this can develop in either a converging or a diverging direction. When coordination is stronger and different elements are better aligned, the system becomes more stable and predictable. This

[15] In their study on corruption in Europe, Della Porta and Mény (1997: 166-180) found that diffuse frontiers between the state and the market facilitate the emergence of corrupt behavior. Following their argument, we could say that low levels of institutional autonomy facilitate the emergence of individuals that do not properly belong to the spheres of the state, market or civil society, and therefore they violate the integration principles that regulate each of these subsystems: the law in the case of the state, competence, in the case of the market, and solidarity in the case of civil society.

means that—contrary to what authors who focus on the scarcity of organizational resources would suggest—the mere survival or persistence of the system is not very significant. What matters most is stabilization—conceptualized as convergence—and the potential for creating new associations. Therefore, the central empirical question to ask in this respect is not how long the system persisted but whether it moved in a converging direction, becoming more complex and stable.

With respect to learning, it is clear that by participating in a structure of translation, people may familiarize themselves with new cognitive orientations, learn how to conduct themselves within different organizational structures, understand new approaches to problems, manage different kinds of knowledge and master new techniques for reconciling opposed or divergent interests. In other words, by participating in CAS people may develop their abilities for complex associative translation. Hence, the main empirical question to ask in this respect is whether participants—individuals or organizations— acquired skills and knowledge necessary for future collaboration.

TABLE 5.2
ASSOCIATIVE DYNAMICS

Evaluation criteria	*Standards*
Stabilization	Creation of a common language Growing interdependence among the units of the system
Learning	Development of the ability to reconcile cognitive orientations, organizational logics, approaches, types of knowledge and interests.

SOURCE: own construction.

In short, a CAS will perform better to the extent that it is more able to deal with the peculiar challenge that associations of this kind face: how to coordinate and integrate—in a self-regulated milieu—an array of diverse, autonomous and interdependent actors.

Part III

The Political Dimension: Decision, Representation and Leadership

Chapter 6

Decisions and Decision-making Mechanisms: Negotiation and Deliberation

CAS owe their existence to trust and translation, since it is mainly through these factors that the systems acquire cohesion and their members are able to understand each other. But cohesion and communication are not enough. CAS are goal-oriented systems; they exist because they are able to solve problems that cannot be solved by other organizational structures. And in order to solve such problems, they must be able to make decisions.

It is true that in some organizations this involves no major problem: the issues to be decided upon, the list of participants and the rules according to which those decisions must be taken are fixed and known beforehand. Such is, for example, the case of many bureaucratic and other well established and tightly regulated entities. But such, obviously, is not the case of the associative systems that we study. How can these systems, where not even the identity of participants and the goals to be achieved—let alone the rules of decision—are previously agreed upon, manage to make decisions? And how are they able to do so without at the same time destroying the autonomy of their members and their own distinctive complexity?

In analyzing this matter, one should keep in mind that CAS' decisions have to be collectively made. The reason is straightforward: however interdependent they may be, members are autonomous, which means that none of them can be asked to sacrifice their interests for the sake of those of the others or even those of the entire associative system. Moreover, this collective decision-making must cover a wide range, including three main kinds of issues: practical matters,

for example, the best means to achieve a given end or the most appropriate distribution of tasks; the nature of the system, particularly the kind of problems that it will address and the objectives it will pursue; and basic constitutional issues, among them, the rules according to which subsequent decisions will be made. Therefore, it could be said not only that CAS are a series of mechanisms for collective decision-making but also that they are consensus-building arenas.

But consensus building among heterogeneous and differentiated actors is problematic. Interactions among participants may be inconsistent and potentially conflictive; leaders from different communities may compete for authority; joint decisions may create uncertainty and confusion, thus making it difficult to determine who should be held responsible for the decisions and actions made in the name of the system.

Therefore, to explain how CAS manage to make their decisions, we have to answer three interrelated general questions: What are the main challenges that CAS face when they engage in consensus building? What are the more suitable institutional conditions (e.g. regulating principles and mechanisms) for consensus building among their heterogeneous and differentiated actors? What risks and opportunities do these conditions imply for the development dynamics of CAS?

Our main argument is that CAS make their decisions by combining two main consensus-building mechanisms: deliberation and negotiation. Both are indispensable. Yet, where deliberation is successful, negotiation is both easier and less important. Therefore, it can be affirmed that a mix of extensive deliberation and moderate negotiation is what distinguishes CAS from other forms of coordinating actions and making collective decisions. This is especially true of decisions concerning the aims of the associative system, the nature of the problems to be addressed, and the best ways to solve them —all of which decisively shape the origins, dynamics and evolution of the associative system.[1]

[1] A previous conceptual discussion of decision-making mechanisms can be found in Luna and Velasco (2010a).

Decisions and Non-Decisions

As the following review shall show, in mainstream organization theory decision tends to be seen as the most important, even dramatic, accomplishment of collective action—the raison d'être, as it were, of associations and organizations. And this dramatic feat is usually held to be achieved by means of rational calculations. But while this view may be valid for many organizations, especially those that are arranged according to well-established patterns and have clearly defined goals, it is inaccurate when applied to CAS.

Decision making has been a central theme in the study of organizations, often seen as the key to understanding their functioning and evaluating their performance. Perhaps the most radical view on this respect is that of Luhmann, for whom organizations are "social systems that allow themselves to deal with human behavior as a form of decision-making… Organizational systems are social systems made of decisions; they bind decisions together" (1997: 14, 45).

But the view has a long, and quite variegated, pedigree. Thus, according to Weber's famous definition (1978: 48), "A social relationship which is either closed or limits the admission of outsiders will be called an organization (*Verband*) when its regulations are enforced by specific individuals: a chief and, possibly, an administrative staff, which normally also has representative powers." Organizations, Weber further says, can be either communal (based on a shared "subjective feeling" of a common identity) or associative (grounded on a rational agreement). Thus, an organization may or may not be based on a rational agreement. In the former case, rationality may be either instrumental or value-oriented. In other words, Weber's analysis, at least in principle, leaves enough room for considering the complexity of relationships within the organization and between the organization and its environment. Yet, his most enduring legacy in this respect is the idea that what distinguishes an organization is its capacity to coordinate the actions of its members to achieve organizational goals. This places instrumental action in a prominent position.

For Weber, the instrumental orientation of an organization is possible because leaders are autonomous: independent from the other members. Indeed, "Whether or not an organization exists is entirely

a matter of the presence of a person in authority, with or without an administrative staff." Thus, he specifies, "organized action" has only two meanings: "(a) either the staff's action, which is legitimated by its executive or representative powers and oriented to realizing the organization's order, or (b) the members' action as directed by the staff" (Weber 1978: 48-49).

In sum, leadership is the essential component of an organization, and the main function of leadership is to make rational decisions in the name of the entire organization (Weber 1978: 52).

Robert Michels (1983: 241) extended and radicalized these ideas. According to his famous "iron law": "It is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy." The need to give continuity to the activities of the organization in an efficient way leads to the development of a bureaucracy; the need to coordinate the activities of the members leads to specialization. Together, bureaucracy and specialization explain why organizations are inevitably hierarchical. And the autonomy of leaders is indispensable if an organization is to be able to define clear goals, to choose the best ways to achieve them, and to coordinate the efforts of members for attaining those goals.

This idea that decision-making, guided by instrumental rationality, is the main function of organizations has found its purest expression in the rational choice literature. Instrumentally rational decisions stand at the core of the logic of collective action (Olson 1965) and therefore explain why organizations are created and how they function. Individuals decide whether or not to join an organization (and whether to remain or quit) by calculating the costs and benefits that the organization can produce, comparing them to those that would result from purely individual action. The organization makes its decisions guided by a similar calculation of costs and benefits. Thus, a central criterion for evaluating the performance of organizations is the degree to which their decisions satisfy the expectations of their members and achieve their collective goals.

To be sure, the rational choice approach has analyzed several important problems that all organizations and association share, at the same time proposing interesting solutions (Geddes 2003: Chap. 5).

Thus, it has insisted that in normal circumstances, rational individuals (concerned with maximizing their own welfare) prefer not to cooperate even when organized action would be beneficial to all. Hence the importance of "selective incentives": the organization should produce not only collective benefits (public goods) but also private rewards and penalties that encourage or compel individuals to cooperate. This entails that the performance of an organization may look very differently depending on whether it is observed from a collective or individual standpoint. Another important problem arises from the hierarchy of the organization. Obviously, leaders seek to maximize their own individual welfare, which may interfere with the achievement of collective goals. The asymmetries of information, interests and resources among leaders and common members have been conceptualized as a series of principal-agent relationships. Therefore, the performance of an organization will depend also on how this chain of decisions is arranged.

A further problem is the existence of unstable or uncertain majorities: under some circumstances, analyzed by Arrow (1961), the aggregation of individual preferences according to majority rule may bring about inconsistent or unstable outcomes. As a result, the order in which different alternatives are considered may be decisive, which gives special power to the person or group who controls the agenda of the organization. This is an additional factor that must be taken into account when analyzing the performance of the organization. Finally, authors following the rational choice approach have also studied how actors with veto power affect the performance of organizations (Tsebelis 2002). An organization with many actors endowed with veto power will be able to maintain its decisions for longer periods, but will be less capable of adapting itself to a changing environment. Its public decisions will have to be complemented by many private benefits for the different members with veto power, at the risk of becoming collectively inefficient (Haggard and McCubbins 2001).

As this brief discussion suggests, classical sociologists and rational choice theorists have made fundamental contributions to the study of decision-making in organizations and associations. But, as the following discussion shall show, they have also overlooked several

points that are particularly important for understanding how association works when it is not closely regulated and its goals are not established beforehand.

In the first place, as the organizational theory proposed by James G. March (1997) emphasizes, rational considerations (particularly of an instrumental nature) are only one of several elements that intervene in decision-making. Actors often choose a course of action not because of its probable consequences but because of its congruence with the traditions and habits of the organization. It is common as well that decisions are made not because of their instrumental value—their practical consequences—but because of their symbolic importance. Moreover, organizations cannot simultaneously pursue all their goals; hence, often what really matters is not how they choose the best means to attain their objectives but which goals they decide to pursue. The information that the organization takes into account is always problematic, since members distort it, adjusting it to their particular interests. In these circumstances, the best that the organization can do is to make appropriate decisions, even if these are not optimal according to the standards of instrumental rationality. Moreover, it is common that organizations reverse the sequence that the classic approaches depict: instead of searching for solutions to their problems, they seek problems that can be solved with the resources they have. In this way, the means become more important that the ends to which they serve.

In the second place, many elements that define the performance of organizations have no direct relationship with decisions and decision-making. As Brunsson (2001: 258) says, "the main problem for organizations is not choice but taking organized actions". Brunsson emphasizes the role of ideology, but there are several other factors that are not directly related to decision-making: among others, the norms that the members of the organization consider valid, the routines that are commonly followed within the organization and in the interaction with other actors, the level and kind of specialization and division of labor, the institutions, power, and resources (material, human, technical) that the organization possesses. Several of these factors are the intentional products of past decisions. But others are outcomes that nobody sought: for instance, routines that were uncon-

sciously established and are followed in the same way, accidents with enduring consequences, influences from the environment in which the organization exists.

Decisions rest on these non-decisional elements. It can be said, therefore, that these elements make decisions possible. But, at the same time, they restrict the room for decision-making and limit the number of issues that are really subject to decision and choice. For instance, if an organization is to make a decision through majority rule, it has to take the validity of this rule for granted. Similarly, decisions about the best way to use the resources of the organization assume that the organization has certain types and quantities of resources. Similarly, whoever proposes submitting an issue to all members of the organization is making the obvious assumption that it has a certain number of members with explicitly recognized rights and duties.

Reactions to the centrality of instrumental rationality in the analysis of organizations and decision-making have given rise to diverse criticisms and alternative theories. These range from the theory of bounded rationality—which somewhat underplays such centrality—up to the theory of environmental determinism and the theory of decisions based on the logic of power. In our view, the "ecologic vision" of organization and decision is an appropriate starting point for the study of complex associative systems.

The ecologic vision highlights the systemic properties of interactions and the importance of the environment, seen as the set of relationships between one organization and the others. This approach has been applied to organizations in general (e.g., March 1997 and Brunsson and Olsen 1998), to associations in particular, and to the relation between associations and the state and market structures (Warren 2001).

According to March (1997: 24), theories of decision-making in organizations "seem to underestimate the systemic properties of decision-making organizations. They tend to ignore the significance of the interactive conflict, confusion and complexity surrounding actual decision-making. The observations are common. Many things happen at once, and they affect each other. Actions in one part of the organization are not coherently coupled to actions in other parts,

but they shape each other. Many of the features of decision making are due less to the intentions or identities of individual actors than to the systemic properties of their interactions." Decision-making is characterized by what March calls "interactive inconsistencies," which a theory of autonomous individual decision-making, or even a theory of decision-making as "rule following," can hardly describe, given that individual preferences and identities are mutually inconsistent and generate conflict and confusion.

Two elements of this approach should be underscored. One is the acknowledgment that rationality, and therefore choice, is an additional element of decision-making rather than the only element that defines it. According to March, the study of the connections and their effects requires "a vision that considers how the structure of relationships among individual units interacts with the behavior of these units to produce systemic properties not easily attributable to the individual behavior alone" (1997: 24). The other element is the problematic distinction between organization and environment, since decisions are embedded in a social context that consists of decisions made in other organizations. In his own terms, "Premises and actions in one organization co-evolve with those in other organizations". In his view, "Since different parts of the system are connected developmentally… their evolutionary path is more difficult to anticipate than in a world in which the environment can be taken as given and the primary issue is the extent and form of organizational adaptation to it" (*Ibid.*).

Regarding decision and decision-making, we therefore agree that decisions consist not only of choices.[2] The election between two courses of action, two or more objectives, and two or more ways to use the available resources is only the final part of a longer and more complex process. Before reaching this point, the organization has to go through a process of reflection, deliberation, negotiation and definition. Alternatives are not just taken: they have to be constructed in ways that obviously affect future results, and therefore the performance of the organization.

[2] For instance, March (1997) claims that decisions are rational elections, actions based on rule following and actions that make sense in a confused world.

Besides its obvious importance for the life of the organization, decisions have several advantages from a methodological standpoint. Because they are especially visible and conscious, they give the researcher a unique opportunity to observe how the other factors are explicitly activated (as resources, obstacles, opportunities or risks), how members deliberate about the possible courses of action and how conflicts are solved through negotiation. But to focus exclusively on decisions may lead one to ignore the importance of non-decisional factors.

Based on the above, we can say that even though decision-making is a very important element in the life of organizations and associations, it is by no means the only one that matters. If decisions seem all important, it is largely because they are discrete events, sometimes taking place at dramatic moments in the life of organizations and associations. These are moments when the existence of organizations becomes problematic; when new courses of action are defined or the old ones are ratified. But many other actions persist, evolve and impact on the performance of the organization even though it is impossible to directly attribute them to any previous decision.

To grasp this situation, we propose the concept of associational action, which may be seen as a particular instance of that broader, and crucial, sociological concept, social action. Associational action includes both the decisional and non-decisional actions, that is to say, both those that are consciously undertaken and those that are performed as a matter of course, almost by inertia. This action is continuous and therefore rather boring and often almost invisible, except when actors doubt, deliberate, negotiate, define and choose. But it is the indispensable background for the rational calculations and other kinds of reflections from which decisions arise.

In some contexts, analysts may safely take this background for granted. This is especially the case, when organizations or associations have reasonably unambiguous objectives and well established rules for achieving them. But when association is complex, this background is uncertain. Therefore, associational action is often self-referential: participants devote a lot of effort to building the bases over which their decisions may be made.

Therefore, it is not enough to see CAS as decision-making entities: properly seen, they are consensus building structures. And, as we shall argue in the next section, these structures have to be consensually built. In doing this, we will go beyond an ecologic (or even a political) view of organizations and decision-making, even though we retain many of the assumptions of this perspective.

Deliberation, Negotiation and Consensus-Building Structures

How do CAS manage to make their decisions and, more importantly, build the consensual structures of which these decisions are but a part? In considering this question, it is important to keep in mind that, given the complex nature of these systems, those decisions always imply risks and uncertainty, especially when they concern the origins, dynamics and evolution or dissolution of the systems.

According to Elster (1999), there are three basic methods for collective decision-making: voting, bargaining or negotiation, and deliberation. Although these methods are not mutually exclusive, they have fundamental differences in their theoretical and normative assumptions, as well as in their practical possibilities and constraints (see table 6.1). Voting has been considered very effective and efficient, as it generally produces clear and quick decisions (Jachtenfuchs 2006). However, this method requires a precise definition of mutually exclusive alternatives, which is rarely the case in complex associative systems. Even more significantly, the method is usually governed by majority rule, and therefore it systematically produces winners and losers. But, as previously argued, members of CAS are normally very concerned about their autonomy and are rarely ready to sacrifice their preferences, even when they are not shared by the majority. Therefore, voting is scarcely practicable in CAS, which must search for consensus—agreements about which there is no expressed opposition by any participant—through a mixture of deliberation and negotiation. Therefore, we will concentrate on the features, possibilities, and constraints of these two methods.

Table 6.1
Collective Decision-Making Mechanisms:
Requirements and Limitations

NEGOTIATION	Preferences are external to the political process. It is vulnerable to unilateral action and reinforces particular interests.
DELIBERATION	It requires high levels of individual and organizational autonomy, as well as professionalization. It has a structural deficit of efficiency.
VOTING	It has a structural problem of acceptance: how to compel the minority to submit to decisions taken by the majority

SOURCE: own construction.

The central distinction between negotiation and deliberation can be approached from the standpoint of interests. As explained below, in negotiation interests are defined beforehand: from the beginning, actors know what they want from the interaction, even if they are ready to sacrifice and partially redefine their interests in the course of the negotiation. In contrast, deliberation, at its core, involves the collective definition of preferences. In other words, deliberation presupposes that interests are not external to the political process: the debate and exchange of arguments transform preferences, making them more compatible.[3]

In an interdependent situation, negotiation seeks either "to create something new that neither party could do on his or her own, or … to resolve a problem or dispute between the parties." It may be an informal haggling, in which case it is normally known as bargaining or it may take the appearance of a "formal, civilized process" through which parties try to "find a mutually acceptable solution to a complex conflict" (Lewicki et al. 2004).

A negotiation situation has several distinctive characteristics: there are two or more parties (individual or collective); there are conflicting interests between them that have to be settled because they are interdependent (they need each other); the parties are willing to seek

[3] On this discussion see for example Magnette (2003a, 2003b), Eberlein and Kerwer (2002), and Smismans (2000).

an agreement instead of fighting openly or abandoning the relationship; there is no set of rules to resolve the conflicts among these interests (Lewicki et al. 2004).

The key words in these definitions are *interest*, *strategy*, *conflict*, and *compromise*. They all allude to forms of social interaction whose participants are simultaneously interdependent and in competition with each other. This competition has to do with how to distribute the costs incurred in the interaction and the benefits that it generates.

Negotiation is rooted in several structural features of networks, but particularly in the mutual independence of their members (e.g., individual autonomy). As long as participants remain diverse and autonomous from each other, each of them independently controlling important resources and sharing in the distribution of power, negotiation will always be necessary. This makes it an essential, permanent feature of decision-making in complex systems.

But other structural features of CAS point in a different direction. Negotiation is possible only if participants have clear interests that can be specified as well-defined objectives and goals, which in turn can be pursued through coherent strategies to obtain precise gains and avoid reasonably precise losses. Participants in CAS do show these features, but this is not the whole story.

First, interests—and therefore objectives, goals, strategies, gains, and losses—are defined and redefined in the interaction itself. They are internal to the associative system itself, transformed and even generated by it. The problems that associations usually address are necessarily complex. If participants (individuals or organizations) were able to define them in a way that is both technically correct and practically useful, then they would scarcely need to join a CAS. This interactive redefinition of interests and problems fundamentally transforms the interaction that takes place within the system, making it different from market bargaining or political negotiation. Before being negotiated, those interests have to be defined through other communication and decision-making mechanisms.

But, in the second place, CAS are more than mere exchange mechanisms. They are autonomous organizations: collective actors in their own right, with their own interests, goals, strategies, gains,

losses and problems to solve. As seen above, trust and translation play critical roles in creating a common ground and solidifying the collective structure of the whole system, even if individual participants remain autonomous and independent.

Negotiation is embedded in this collective structure and therefore occupies a narrower place than it does in market bargaining and conventional political negotiations. But, given that many decisions taken in CAS concern not the best way to accommodate diverse individual interests but the best solution to common problems, they have to be argumentatively agreed upon rather than negotiated.

In contrast to negotiation, deliberation refers, at its core, to the rational exchange of arguments aiming at reasonable decisions and solutions. Its main goal is to identify a common good, which implies a redefinition of private interests. As Elster (1999: 12-3) puts it, "When the private and idiosyncratic wants have been shaped and purged in public discussion about the public good, uniquely determined rational agreement would emerge. Not optimal compromise but unanimous agreement" would be the result of such a process.[4] As suggested above, this is especially true for CAS, whose main usual purpose is to solve problems that are not precisely defined before the interaction.

But even when it fails to identify a common good, the deliberative evaluation of different arguments may at least result in a "collective evaluation of divergences" (Oléron 1983: 108). This evaluation may facilitate mutual understanding among participants. But equally importantly, it almost inevitably leads them to redefine their interests, objectives, and goals. For, as several authors have noted, the deliberative process compels participants to present their arguments in terms of the common interests of the organization. Individual interests are legitimate and publicly defensible only insofar as they may be presented as compatible with or at least not contrary to the common interests of members. This, again, is especially important in CAS, because the problem that the interaction must solve has to be collectively defined or at least significantly redefined by the system itself.

[4] In the words of another author: "Deliberation takes place when several decisions are possible (in some cases, the alternatives may simply be to act or not to act): arguments in favour of each of them are developed" (Oléron 1983: 107-108).

In contrast to compromise solutions (as well as to coercion, manipulation, acquiescence, unthinking obedience, or market decisions), deliberation implies justification (Warren 1996). Deliberation is related to the capacities and conditions (such as autonomy in its double sense) necessary for making collective judgments of discretional character. Judgments are discretional in the sense of being freely and prudently made through debates, driven by reason and good sense, and therefore are not partial or inappropriate.

Certain norms are indispensable for the rational exchange of arguments aimed at making reasonable decisions. Among them are "openness, respect, reciprocity, and equality" (Dryzek 2000: 134-5). These norms may be enshrined in explicit rules, but even if they are not they must be respected in practice if deliberation is to function properly. Openness means that several decisions are possible in principle. A measure of respect for partners is indispensable for serious discussion. As Gutmann and Thompson (1996: 52-3) point out, reciprocity refers to "the capacity to seek fair terms of cooperation." And "equality of opportunity to participate in… decision making" has been considered "the most fundamental condition" of deliberation (Bohman and Rehg, 1999: xxiii).

Several structural features of CAS facilitate deliberation: the autonomy and interdependence of their members, their decentralized power structures, and so on. But even within this favorable structure, deliberation needs optimal conditions. Among the institutional conditions that may facilitate it, we should stress the regular and periodical interaction among relatively stable participants that fosters the recognition of the "others," each with their distinctive perceptions, concerns and preferences; generates trust among them; favors political learning; and nurtures a generalized commitment to the deliberative process itself.

Deliberation has several distinctive advantages over other forms of collective decision-making. In contrast to voting, where the acceptance of majority decisions by the minority is almost always problematic, negotiation and deliberation do not necessarily create losers. But whereas negotiation ideally requires the consent of all strategic actors and thus a readiness to compromise by sacrificing something in order to reach an agreement, deliberation is the process of arriving at cognitive and normative agreements among partici-

pants by mutual conviction alone (Jachtenfuchs 2006). In other words, whereas the main goal of negotiation is to reach a compromise among conflicting interests, the main goal of deliberation is to convince all participants that they are partners in a truly collective enterprise. Thus, collective agreements reached through deliberation are self-enforcing and therefore less vulnerable to unilateral action, which is a weakness of negotiated agreements.

Deliberation may reinforce the efficacy of CAS. According to Weale (2000: 170), under certain conditions, transparent processes based on deliberative rationality must lead to solutions that are functionally efficacious in most cases. This would happen if the solution to a given problem complies with the following conditions: it must arguably belong to the set of those decisions that may be reasonably chosen, even if there were other options that could have been reasonably chosen; it must be open to scrutiny by those affected or benefited by it. If this is the case, then negotiation or the pressure for unanimity is irrelevant to the extent that their potential results belong to the set of decisions that may be made through deliberation.

However, deliberation also has important drawbacks. Agreements often exact a heavy price, as they are usually achieved through long and complicated processes of discussion. This is even more significant because there is always the risk that deliberation may lead to non-decisions (Jachtenfuchs 2006). Deliberation is not only a time-consuming activity; it also requires energy, attention, information and knowledge, which have been considered scarce deliberative resources (Warren 1996). This has obvious consequences for the efficiency of CAS.

Another danger of deliberation is that, by stimulating public discussion, it may intensify disagreement and increase "the risk that things could go drastically wrong" (Bell 1999: 73). It may even create disagreement where there was none. It can impede or at least complicate the adoption of rules guiding collective discussion and decision-making, which form the basis for subsequent deliberations. That is why it can be said that the apparent deficit of efficiency is a structural problem of complex interaction systems. Table 6.2 summarizes the relation between decision-making mechanisms and performance criteria.

TABLE 6.2
COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING AND PERFORMANCE

	Negotiation	*Deliberation*	*Voting*
EFFICACY (Pertinent and accurate decisions)	Moderate or low, due to compromise solutions	High, driven by reason and good sense	Efficacy is not guaranteed
EFFICIENCY (Clear and opportune decisions)	Moderate or low, due to transaction costs	Low, takes time, energy, attention and information	High. It produces clear decisions quickly
LEGITIMACY (Acceptable and appropriate decisions)	High if resources invested are proportional to results obtained	High, if equal right to participate. Self-enforcing mechanism	High, if there is general right to vote

SOURCE: own construction.

In sum, while voting is of very limited use in CAS, negotiation and deliberation are indispensable. But negotiation requires conditions that are often absent in these systems, such as a clear, a priori, definition of the interests that participants will seek to advance in the interaction and the willingness to comply with their commitments even in the absence of institutional overseers and guarantors. In contrast, deliberation may thrive amidst the complexity of these systems, especially when it is guaranteed by favorable internal institutions: it is able to define collective objectives, to identify appropriate means to achieve them and to do all of this in legitimate, self-enforcing ways. But precisely because it finds such a favorable environment, deliberation also poses great risks, especially that of losing control, transforming the system into an inefficient forum for endless discussions.

If these inferences are right, then real CAS will have significant amounts of both negotiation and deliberation. In the best of these systems, however, the use of negotiation will be limited, while deliberation will have freer reign. In other words, though the balance will be tilted toward one of these mechanisms, both deliberation and negotiation will be in mutual tension, each correcting for the excesses of the other. And this balance will be visible not only in how decisions are made but also in the rules and procedures for decision-making, collective discussion and, more generally, associative interaction.

Deliberation and Negotiation in Practice

How well do these hypotheses fit our cases? No great effort is needed to show that all the associative systems studied use negotiation and deliberation to make their decisions and establish themselves as consensus-building arenas. Therefore, rather than focusing on those obvious commonalities, we will concentrate on the differences that they show in their use of negotiation and deliberation and in how this use is rooted in their institutional design.

In what follows we will refer to five cases in total. In two of them, knowledge networks and the UNAM Claustro, negotiation and deliberation were intensely used. Thus, knowledge network participants

often described how they made joint decisions as follows: proposals are elaborated and analyzed; arguments are presented and discussed; then, technical support is provided, some tests are conducted and results are compared.

Similarly, available evidence shows that negotiation was intensely used in the creation of these networks and in the solution of administrative problems. In contrast, it was apparently far less prevalent in substantive —that is, technological and scientific— issues. This was so, even when the substantive matters in question were important enough to generate open controversies. Thus, asked how they solved these differences, participants emphasized the role of deliberation:

> Seeking more information and studying it more carefully to iron out differences. That is, everybody has to learn how to understand the others… We must understand how to measure and evaluate things… But this is achieved through studying, and afterward, in a meeting, talking more deeply about mistakes, definitions, and so on.
>
> You have to back up your proposals with indicators… You have to show the viability of the numbers.

Something similar happened in the Coordinating Board of the UNAM Claustro. According to the interviewees, voting was never used, even though the rules explicitly allowed it. Here is a typical description of their decision-making processes:

> Most of the agreements have been reached through consensus. I think this has been very enriching because we have not had to resort to voting and have also prevented issues from going to the extremes and arriving at dead ends… Here we have worked by successive approximations. That is to say, you draft a document but if you see that it does not satisfy all that you believed it would satisfy, then you can reconsider it. This does not mean creating a vicious circle but rather that you can make all pertinent modifications.

Moreover, in these two cases deliberation and negotiation were not only present at the decision-making level; they were also embedded in their institutional structures. In both cases, this required confronting one obvious obstacle: the tendency to arrange discussion along corporatist, sector or identity lines. Where these lines prevail, discussion is segmented: at best, deliberation takes place only within

each of the segments of the system (for example, in the case of knowledge networks, university scholars and firm's technologists; or, in the case of the Claustro, full-time professors, researchers, technicians and so forth); between these segments, discussion tends to take, almost exclusively, the form of negotiation. Thus, rather than free and open discussion, supplemented by the public search for compromise among legitimate interests, what one finds are secretive arrangements within the segments and a series of tug of war among them.

The experience of the Claustro clearly illustrates both the importance of this problem and one way to deal with it. Participation and representation within this system were arranged along carefully defined functional lines, with quotas reserved for every major category of academic personnel. Participants emphatically affirmed that this structure was equitable and inclusive. Even so, Claustro members seemed almost painfully aware of the risk of "corporatization," which, they feared, would lead to an excessive use of negotiation. Therefore, they set up diverse operative norms and practices—such as the rotation of functions and the formation of mixed commissions—with the explicit aim, not always attained, of avoiding the development of corporatist veto power.

In any case, participants interviewed for this investigation all agreed that the Claustro, especially its Coordinating Board, had a very horizontal structure ("a wholly horizontal thing where we adapt to each other"), where discussion was reasonably open. Of course, there was a president who performed important functions: convening the meetings, leading the discussion, presenting the agreements of the Board in the plenum of the Claustro and so on. But this role resembled that of a coordinator, far more than that of a boss or chief. The president was someone who facilitated communication, followed up the agreements, and stimulated participation. According to one participant, "there is a presidency that, while requiring political skills and an infinite patience in the general sessions, in the Coordinating Board performs basically coordination functions." And there was a truly dynamic distribution of power and influence: "Leaderships are not always permanent. Suddenly, certain people acquire temporary importance and afterward they take on a lower

profile." Or, as another member expressed it: "there is no global leadership." Members affirmed that there were several leaders and that most of them had similar characteristics. However, several interviewees said that there was one leader who showed more "authoritarian" attitudes; because of that, and even though he was described as an "intelligent" and "experienced person," he encountered strong resistance from the rest.

In congruence with this, most subjects valued their participation in the Board dearly, affirming that it gave them new political abilities (how to deliberate, how to express their views more efficaciously, how to understand other people) and a better knowledge of the university. And several also believed that the experience of the Claustro should be adopted in other settings, both within and outside the university. In fact, they seemed confident that if the Claustro successfully accomplished its task, this organizational model would certainly be replicated. In the words of one of the most audacious members: "It seems to me that this framework that advance by successive approximations could be very useful in parliamentary discussions… There should be two aspects: parliamentary aspects and deliberative aspects… But these are very long term processes."

In the case of knowledge networks, their more decentralized and informal structure, the appointment of formal coordinators who took care of administrative matters (thereby allowing the bulk of participants to concentrate on substantive matters) and the often intense personal contacts among participants all facilitated the establishment of an institutional and organizational basis for the practice of deliberation.

In three other cases of CAS, the use of negotiation and deliberation was more restricted and less balanced. We will present these additional cases in decreasing order—from more to less proximate to the CAS ideal of free and open discussion. The first is the Trilateral Commission (TC), specifically its Mexican Group (MG). Properly speaking, this system seems to be more inclined to persuasion than to deliberation: as will be shown in the following chapters, the annual meetings that this group organizes serves less to promote the free and reasonable confrontation of diverse viewpoints than to promote a specific viewpoint among the public. Even so, within the limits of

an elitist and poorly representative structure, the TC has shown its preference for consensus. This has been evident, for example, in the organization of periodic forums to debate economic and political issues related to the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). From this perspective, it seems clear that information, knowledge, experience and expertise are resources highly valued for the MG and TC in general.

This preference for consensus and, above all, persuasion may explain various features of the MG. One of them is the importance of those members who, thanks to their political experience and tight relations with the business world, have created or led private agencies, specialized in information and analysis in Mexico[5] or occupied advisory positions in similar international organizations. Thanks to such experience and relations, these members are especially well prepared for public debate. Similarly, several members of the MG have strong relations with centers for applied research, both in Mexico and the U.S.[6] Finally, there are strong links between the MG, COMEXI (a council officially devoted to the plural and multi-disciplinary analysis of Mexico's role in the world) and IMCO (Mexican Institute for Competitiveness), a formally "non-party and non-profit" independent center for applied research.[7]

[5] Two important examples are Herminio Blanco (founder and CEO of Soluciones Estratégicas, 2002, and chairman of IQOM Inteligencia Comercial, 2005) and Jaime Serra (founder and CEO of SAI Consultores (2001).

[6] For example Ernesto Zedillo heads the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. Antonio Madero is a founder and the honorary chairman of the Mexico in Harvard Foundation, member of the Executive Committee on University Resources, and founder of the advisory council of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at the same university. In Mexico, Madero is also a member of the Governing Board of Universidad Panamericana and the Instituto Panamericano de Alta Dirección de Empresas (IPADE). Garza Medina is chairman of the board of the University of Monterrey. Several members of the MG are also members of the Advisory Council of the Center for Dialogue and Analysis about North America (CEDAN), at the Higher Education and Technological Institute of Monterrey (ITESM); this is the case of Blanco Heredia (who is also linked to ITAM and CIDE, two outstanding higher education and research institutions), Madero and two high-level CEMEX executives (Javier and Jesús Treviño).

[7] Among the values that IMCO officially proclaims are: [We] "defend principles not interests" and "we use facts and analysis not opinions" (IMCO 2011).

The TC's inclination for public debate and persuasion also explains why the capacity to diffuse information, ideas and approaches seems to be an important criterion for selecting MG members. The most obvious case is that of Alejandro Junco de la Vega (president and director of Grupo Reforma, which publishes the *Reforma*, *Mural* and *Metro* newspapers). In some way or another, several other members of the MG maintain a visible presence in the media.[8]

The next case is the Chapultepec Agreement, in which the use of deliberation was even more restricted, often replaced by bilateral and private, almost secretive, agreements achieved through bargaining and negotiation. Thus, although the formal signing and subsequent promotion of the Accord were widely publicized, the process leading to its drafting was rather opaque. What is well known about this process is that its protagonist was Carlos Slim.

As explained in chapter 3, the undisputed protagonist of this process was Slim, who did not only make the first "political push" but also conducted the negotiations with the leaders of some of the largest political, business and labor organizations of the country.

The fifth case, the one that is farthest from the CAS ideal of free and open discussion, is the Scientific and Technological Consulting Forum. The Forum exhibits several of the key features of complex associative systems: it spans functional, institutional, identity and territorial borders; it is relatively autonomous from instituted authorities; its units (individuals or groups) are relatively autonomous but interdependent from each other; its decisions, according to its statute, must be jointly made by the board of directors. Access to this board is mainly by invitation although the respective communities elect some of the members.

Yet, discussion within the Forum is highly segmented: its members tend to use the forum mainly as a place where they voice the interests and views of the organizations and sectors that they represent. General discussion is, therefore, very limited, and its functions are more declarative than deliberative. Important agreements are not reached in this discussion; they are negotiated in closed circles and afterward presented to the public.

[8] Carlos Heredia, Enrique Krauze, Federico Reyes Heroles and Luis Rubio.

How do these differences in decision-making and institutional design affect the performance of these five cases? As expected, both the Claustro and knowledge networks show the benefits of using negotiation and deliberation. These benefits were particularly evident in something that is crucial for associative systems like these: the collective definition of the aims of collaboration and of the nature of the problem addressed.

Thus, the interviews with knowledge network participants showed a generalized perception that a clear definition of aims was decisive for the consolidation of these systems. Such a definition was seen as even more important than the amount of financial support for the network, the existence of previous relations among participants, the specific capacities of institutions and actors for solving the problem in question and the incentives provided through public policy instruments.

But, given the diversity of participants, such common definition may be hard to achieve. The following quotation (from an academic participant) illustrates both how serious the conflicts and differences in this respect may be and how knowledge networks managed to overcome them:

> People from industry always claim to know what the problem is from a non-technical standpoint. But if you get into it, you realize that what lies behind it is very different… Sometimes, they think they have a problem of processes, and perhaps it is in fact a problem of materials; or they see it as a problem of materials and indeed is a problem of characterization… To break down [the problem] also allows us to identify other problems, of which they were probably unaware even though the problems were about to explode.

Moreover, apart from facilitating the adoption of basic collective definitions, free discussion often allowed participants to break down major problems and work them out in small, manageable chunks. This was especially manifest in the case of the UNAM Claustro, where, as previously noted, negotiation and deliberation worked by successive approximations. This method allowed the Coordinating Board to avoid, postpone or redefine what at first sight looked like intractable issues, giving participants time to devise new solutions, mutually adjust their own positions and develop good will. Partici-

pants believed that this method allowed the Board to reach agreements that can be metaphorically described as "Pareto optimal," since they benefited the sectors that are least favored by the current legislation, without hurting the interests of the most benefited sectors (full-time professors and researchers). Even a representative of these least-advantaged sectors affirmed:

> I believe that we all have benefited. But, all things considered, I would say that perhaps academic technicians and we part-time instructors are the ones that have benefited the most because full-time professors and researchers already have many things.

Or, in the words of another participant:

> We have managed to create an environment for discussion and deliberation… The Claustro has shown that it is possible for academics to achieve things without having a group of enlightened leaders to tell them how to proceed.

Thus, the harmonization of the particular interests of different academic sectors was achieved both through compromise and the collective definition of common interests.

But the Claustro also illustrates the risks of unchecked, excessive deliberation: slowness and, ultimately, inefficiency. Practically all participants agreed that the institutional design of the Coordinating Board had many virtues: its inclusiveness (where all academic figures were represented), the equality of members, the search for consensus, the capacity of the organism to create its own internal rules, the largely horizontal structure, the freedom to express different views, the respect for different opinions, and the like. But they also insisted on its drawbacks, as the following statements clearly illustrate: "So democratic a group as this is has the virtue of representation but the vice of inefficiency." Or "we took the long road." In part this is due to the difficulty of the task:

> The difficulty of making agreements, which is provoked by the membership diversity. That is, the meeting of diversities brings different interests, different methods of work… And there are issues that people from one side see as natural, but other people see them as totally

> wrong… It is difficult to conciliate, to arrive at models that satisfy the different parties.

This problem was heightened by the institutional design of the Claustro, particularly by the rule that required a two-third majority (of all 105 members, not only of those attending a given general session) for all substantive decisions. Indeed, several participants agreed that such a rule should be relaxed, demanding a simple majority for minor substantive issues and reserving the supermajority requirement for truly transcendental decisions.

Not surprisingly, in the case of the Claustro, progress was secure but slow: after more than four years of existence and intense activity, it had only approved the "conceptual" work on the general scope and orientation of the reform and on the meaning of academic career and evaluation. Its main task, to redefine specific regulations between academic authorities and academic personnel of the university, was only dealt with in its fifth year. All participants recognized the slowness of the process.

The performance of TC and Chapultepec Accord will be analyzed in the next two chapters. As will be shown there, the Chapultepec Accord was initially successful, but afterward insignificant. The excessive use of secretive negotiation, often along corporatist lines, surely contributed to this result.

As for the TC, it will be shown that although its discussions may be impressive, it is, ultimately, a quite closed space, tightly controlled by powerful interests, rather than a free and open forum for the discussion of global problems. The characteristic that has been analyzed here—its strong preference for persuasion rather than deliberation—obviously contributes to this situation.

Finally, the Scientific and Technological Consulting Forum, caught in a web of corporatist and institutional relations, is scarcely able to engage in anything more open than a series of segmented bargains. Not surprisingly, in spite of its ambitious goals it remains a bureaucratic structure with few deliberative capacities and scarce practical results.

Conclusion

According to the preceding analysis, successful CAS are those that use deliberation profusely and negotiation moderately. Moreover, those systems use such methods not only to make consensual decisions but, more basically, to create their basic institutional arrangements. In other words, the associative action of these systems is largely recursive: it consists not only in finding solutions to the problems that they themselves define but also in building and maintaining their consensus-building structures.

But, as the previous analysis also shows, the appropriate balance between negotiation and deliberation is not easy to achieve and maintain. The exact characteristics of that balance cannot be established beforehand; it depends on the peculiarities of each case. Therefore, it would not be exaggerated to say that, whatever else they might be, CAS can be defined as a tension between negotiation and deliberation.

A further conclusion, closely related to the foregoing, is that since these methods are not mutually exclusive and are frequently difficult to distinguish in practice, it is not easy to determine how each of them affects the performance of the associative system. But the preceding analysis provides some clues in this respect, which are summarized in table 6.3.

To assess the extent to which a given CAS functions according to these standards, it is necessary to investigate, through the review of appropriate documents but also through extensive field-work, at least the following points: the quality of the information that is generated and shared before making an important decision; the freedom of discussion among members and their demonstrated willingness to modify their views and interests in the course of the discussion; the extent to which, according to participants, the main decisions made by the system are justified and reasonable; the quality of the arguments exchanged; the extent to which the rules and procedures for decision-making and other basic institutional arrangements are, themselves, adopted by consensus; and, finally, the extent to which decisions are made according to the particular interests of participants or according to the collective interests of the system, as defined through deliberation.

TABLE 6.3
DECISION-MAKING MECHANISMS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Negotiation	Reciprocity: respect for the legitimate particular interests of participants. Production of rules for future negotiations Creation of mechanisms and sites for conflict negotiation
Deliberation	Equal opportunity to participate in decision-making Definition of collective interests, objectives and problems Creation of institutions for deliberation
Negotiation & Deliberation	Inverse relationship: the successful practice of deliberation makes negotiation easier and less salient

SOURCE: own construction.

Chapter 7

Complex Associative Representation

Introduction: Failures of Political Representation

In the last decades, there seems to be a growing consensus among scholars, political actors and citizens that political representation is in crisis. Across democratic systems that are otherwise very different, observers have found similar "evidence of a creeping malaise": "signs that the core institutions of representation are either being trumped by increasing concentration of power in the executive branch of government; or sidelined by unaccountable bodies; or suspected or rejected outright by citizens and unelected representatives who cannot identify with these core institutions" (Alonso, Keane and Merkel 2011: 8). Professional representatives and representative institutions fail to elicit much enthusiasm among the general population. Not surprisingly, as one expert notes, "the gap between government and society, between representatives and represented, appears to be widening" (Manin 1997: 193).

This dissatisfaction seems justified. Political parties have lost much of their capacity to articulate and express the diverging views of citizens, becoming instead simple electoral machines (Kirchheimer 1966). Moreover, these "catch-all" parties have transformed themselves into "cartels," monopolizing access to representative positions (Katz and Mair 1995). As a result, non-party political organizations have been crowded out from representative institutions. Not only have representative institutions fallen under the control of

party machines: they have also lost much of their earlier relevance. The chains connecting common citizens, political representatives and government agencies have lost their monopoly on the formulation of public policies. Side by side with representative institutions and government agencies, there is now a variety of actors—from the business sector, civil society and even the transnational sphere—that decisively shape many important public decisions.

Underneath these changes, there is a fundamental social transformation. Modern representative institutions were designed to articulate a diversity of social groupings that are losing relevance. Neighborhoods, labor unions and professional associations seem less and less able to integrate individuals and structure social relations; their place is being taken by more fluid and diverse affiliations that can hardly be fit into the traditional mechanisms of political representation. This transformation in the nature of political identity and political affiliations has been associated to changes in the nature of public problems. It has become evident that the issues and conflicts that contemporary societies face require the cooperation of a variety of actors, public and private, national and transnational. The policy world has become too large and complex for conventional representative institutions to express, organize and oversee.

Because of this crisis, the search for new forms of political representation is an urgent task for both scholars and political actors. One way to advance that search is to explore the forms of representation that occur in other sociopolitical fields, outside the direct control of formal political institutions.

Complex associative systems constitute one of such fields. As this chapter shall argue, by their very nature CAS require the establishment of representative relations that are far more fluid, plural and diverse than those taking place within conventional representative institutions. This complex associative representation can breathe new life into political representation, helping it to escape from its current limitations. By combining the representation that occurs within conventional political institutions and the more fluid representative relations that are proper of complex associative systems, societies can achieve something superior to either of them: a truly public model of representation, better adapted to the needs and aspirations of today's citizens.

The chapter begins by presenting the ideal-type of complex associative representation, as can be inferred from the properties of CAS. It then analyzes three empirical cases, which can be understood as so many ways to approximate that ideal in practice. Then, it observes the implications that each of these ways had for the performance of the associative system. Finally, it discusses the contributions that complex associative representation can make to the establishment of a truly public model of representation—and the risks that such a contribution entails.[1]

The Structure of Complex Associative Representation

Representation is a slippery notion. The general idea is quite simple. Thus, according to Max Weber (1978: 44), representation takes place when "in a social relation …the action of some members (the 'representative') can be attributed to others (the 'represented')". But there is something mysterious even in this general idea, as the classical study by Hanna Pitkin suggests since its very first pages: "representation, taken generally, means the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (1967: 8-9, emphasis in the original). Indeed, she depicts the concept of representation, almost poetically, "as a rather complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure" (1967: 10).

Many other authors have recognized this enigmatic nature. For example, Bruno Latour argues that the meaning of representation has always been provisional, imperfect, opaque and even treacherous (2005: 26). And as the famous Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (2001: 23) perceptively suggests in his short story "The Congress," representation implies an intricate philosophical problem, as arduous as "fixing the exact number of platonic archetypes, an enigma that has engaged the perplexity of philosophers for centuries."

This confusion is understandable. If human beings are incommensurable entities, unique and unrepeatable, how could one person or group of persons speak or act in the name of someone else? To

[1] Our previous conceptual discussion of public representation can be found in Luna Velasco (2015).

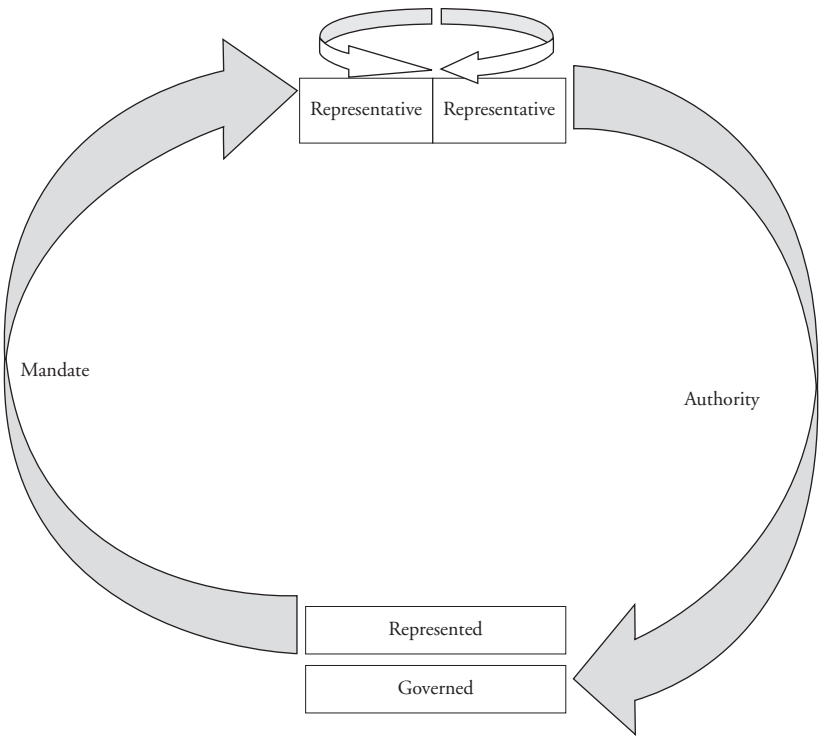
become fully accurate, representation would have to transform itself into one of its opposites: self-presentation. But, as Erving Goffman showed in his classical book, even self-presentation involves much confusion, concealment and simulation (Goffman 1959).

In the realm of private relations, the ambiguity inherent in the notion of representation is often minimized by means of a contract stipulating who the representative and represented are and specifying their mutual obligations. In politics, the chief way to reduce such ambiguity is through institutions: sets of rules that indicate when a relation of representation exists, how representatives are to be elected, what the relevant constituency is, what the competences of representatives are and so forth. But political institutions, because of their general character, can never be as precise as private contracts. Moreover, political representation is further complicated by the fact that a single individual usually represents thousands, even millions, of people, most of whom are personally unknown to him or her. In contrast, the number of representatives and represented in private contracts is usually much smaller and the relation between them is more personal and direct.

But perhaps the main factor that makes political representation far more ambiguous and complicated than its private counterpart lies in the very structure of representation: the main roles and relations that representation necessarily involves. Private, contractual representation is a form of intermediation: the representative is a mediator between the represented and a third person (a partner, a rival, a customer, a government agency, a tribunal, etc.). In contrast, political representation—at least in modern representative systems—is a form of authority: the representative is someone authorized to speak and act in the name of the represented, and his or her words and actions are primarily addressed to the represented themselves. Seen from one standpoint, the representative is an agent of the represented; from the opposite standpoint, he or she is their ruler. Thus, as portrayed in figure 7.1, the basic structure of political representation involves two sets of people, performing three roles, and linked by two relationships. This structure reverses the hierarchy that usually exists between principal and agent: it transforms the agents (usually professional politicians) into the true principals, and the

principals (citizens) into the real agents. By doing this, it shifts the authority that is assumed to lie originally in the represented toward the true rulers (the representatives). In contrast, in private, contractual representation, the authority usually remains in the hands of principals (the represented) and representatives are only their agents.

FIGURE 7.1.
THE STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION



Source: own construction.

CAS may involve themselves in the intermediary form of representation typical of private contracts. This happens, for example, when representatives of the CAS interact with external actors, such as government agencies, social organizations, business firms or even the general public. But they usually involve the authoritative form of representation characteristic of political systems. Thus, many of the

people who participate in the associative system claim to speak and act not only for themselves, but also for other people who are affected by, concerned with or otherwise interested in the issues with which the CAS deals. The agreements that these "representatives" make are expected to be binding not only to themselves, but also to those indirect participants. Therefore, one can say that intermediary representation is contingent to CAS, whereas authoritative representation is necessary to them. For this reason, unless otherwise stated, the rest of this chapter would focus exclusively on this authoritative form of representation, trying to determine how certain people may come to be recognized as legitimate representatives of interested individuals who do not participate directly in the associative system.

The first step in this analysis is to focus, in turn, on each of the parts of the structure of representation. Who can perform the role of representative in complex associative systems? In contrast to what happens in formal representative institutions, in CAS there are no rules defining who is to be recognized as a representative. To be sure, because of the diverse nature of CAS, some of their participants are representatives of government agencies, business firms or social organizations, formally authorized to perform that role. They take part in the system not on their own name, but only as delegates of those entities. But, as explained in previous chapters, one distinguishing characteristic of CAS is that many of their participants are invited by other participants or even self-invited. Some of these may be so important that they do not need to claim to speak or act for others, but only for themselves: they are not representatives but self-presenting individuals. Such would be the case, for example, of a very rich and powerful business person whose individual interests could not be disregarded by other participants; or an expert so knowledgeable that nobody in the CAS would be inclined to disregard his or her personal views. But many of the invited or self-invited participants are not so decisive as to claim that they do not represent anybody but themselves. Their inclusion in the system is justified on the grounds that they can express the views of people who are interested in the issues with which the associative system deals, even if those people have not formally authorized them to speak in their name.

Therefore, these participants have to earn their right to speak and act for certain groups and communities. To do so, they are often

guided, or justified, by the ideal of descriptive or sociological representation, which according to Pikin consists in "making present something absent by means of its resemblance or reflection, as in a mirror" (Pitkin 1967: 11). This implies that someone who aspires to be a representative of the business community has to be a full member of that community, recognized as such by both other members and by the people with whom the community normally interacts. Similarly, only a widely recognized scientist could claim to speak for the scientific community even if that community has not formally authorized her or him to do so. The underlying idea is that the views, interests and needs of these typical individuals are similar to those that prevail in the group or community to which they belong and which they are expected to represent. As Dovi (2006) points out, from a normative perspective, descriptive representation is effective to the extent that the representative resembles those whom he or she represents, people whose interests and experiences he or she shares.

Even if such a community of interests, needs and views between the individual and the represented group cannot be easily assumed, some participants can earn the right to speak or act for other people by tacitly invoking other types of representation. One of these types is symbolic representation. For example, an extraordinarily rich man can hardly be expected to be a faithful reflection of most members of the business community. But he may be taken as a symbol of that community or, even more abstractedly, of the entrepreneurial activity. In the same way, a specially prominent and successful scientist could be recognized as a symbol of the scientific community or even as the personification of science. Other alternative meanings of representation that can be invoked are those of "anticipatory" and "gyroscopic" representation. According to Mandsbridge, in the former the representative speaks and acts guided by what he or she "thinks that the represented would approve" in the future, whereas in the latter "the representative observes him or herself …searching for conceptions of interest, 'common sense' and principles derived from his or her own experience" (Mandsbridge 2003: 515). These are often the meanings that representation takes for persons who participate in the associative system as "activists," hoping to be

recognized as speakers for certain groups whose approval they expect to earn or even for certain opinion currents that they themselves expect to create.

Something common to all these forms of self-constructed representation is the importance of status: individuals would be able to function as true representatives only to the extent that they enjoy ample recognition as full-rights members of the relevant community or group, as emblematic or typical of such entities or as influential speakers for a certain opinion current.

In sum, from the stand-point of representation, we can classify the direct participants in complex associative systems in three basic categories: self-represented, formal representatives and self-constructed representatives (who in turn may be taken as "reflections," symbols or activists). This mixture of types of representation is the first distinguishing feature of complex associative representation.

The above refers to individual representatives. But what about the representative body as a whole—that is to say, all the individual representatives taken together? In this case, the ideal is clearly that of descriptive representation. As explained in previous chapters, diversity is one of the main characteristics of CAS. This means that to be effective the system should include all the relevant views, interests, opinions and needs—all the individuals and groups that are interested in the issues with which the associative system deals. In other words, the self-representatives, formal representatives and self-constructed representatives that participate in the CAS should be able to express all the relevant voices of the people interested in the issues in question.

To be congruent with the descriptive ideal, the whole representative body of the associative system should "be distinguished by an accurate correspondence or resemblance to what it represents" (Pitkin 1967: 60). In practice, the best way to approximate this ideal is through a key institutional mechanism: proportional representation. This means that every relevant group or opinion should have within the representative body roughly the same weight and extension that it has within the population that is being represented.

The uncontestable force of this aspiration to be descriptively accurate is a second basic feature of complex associative representation.

However, as shall be explained below, this ideal should be understood as a necessary, but not sufficient condition. It concerns only the composition of the representative body, not the actions that the members of such a body—and the body as a whole—should perform.

But before focusing on those actions, it is necessary to observe the other pole of the structure of representation: the represented. As explained in previous chapters, one basic characteristic of CAS is that their membership is open: there are no rules determining beforehand who should be included in the system. Moreover, this membership is dynamic: as the interaction evolves, some people will usually drop out of the system while others would join in. This means that it is not easy to assert what the appropriate constituency of a given CAS is.

This problem is compounded because, as Rehfeld argues, in spite of being a "quintessential" political institution, the constituency has scarcely been analyzed in the scholarly literature. And even Rehfeld himself seems excessively restrictive when he defines "constituency" as "the manner by which the state defines groups of citizens for the purpose of electing political representative(s)" (2005: 36). This definition is too statist, leaving the capacity to create a constituency exclusively in the hands of the state, and disregarding the possibility that non-state actors perform a similar role and, of course, virtually ignoring the significance of "self-constituting constituencies" (Pogge 2002). Moreover, Rehfeld's definition is excessively "electoralist," by definition excluding the non-electoral constituencies that are crucial to complex associative representation.

Even so, Rehfeld's definition may be used as the basis for our own definition of complex associative constituency. An elementary definition of this constituency would run as follows: the manners by which participants in complex associative systems define the groups and individuals that are interested in the issues with which the system expects to deal. This elementary definition can be enriched with an illustrative list of typical members of complex associative constituencies. In the first place, there are the interested: those groups (government agencies, social organizations, business firms, etc.) and individuals that are actively involved in the issues in question. For example, if the CAS is expected to deal with the environmental effects

of a given industry, the preliminary list of interested people is obvious: government regulators, firms participating in the industry, environmentalist NGOs and so forth. A second category is that of experts or "knowledgeholders": individuals, academic institutions or think-tanks that are recognized as knowledgeable on the relevant issues (in our example, lawyers, environmental engineers, specialized think-tanks, etc.). In the third place, there is the more diffuse category of stakeholders: the people who may affect or be affected, positively or negatively, by the decisions that the system makes (costumers, activists, etc.). It should be stressed that these categories are neither jointly exhaustive nor always mutually exclusive. Some groups and individuals may fall into two or three categories, and some relevant people may not fit into any of them. But this list is useful to the extent that it illustrates the *potential* range of membership into CAS constituencies.

To give more precision to this definition, it is possible to identify a set of relevant principles that should guide the formation of a complex associative constituency. The first principle is diversity: to the extent that this is viable, the associative system should represent at least the main interests, positions, and identities of the relevant population. A closely related principle is that of pertinence, which entails that the most relevant perspectives should be included, even if they are not the most visible ones. Since in practice it is impossible to represent all the diversity of an imprecisely defined population, the third principle should help participants make the necessary selection; this is the "principle of the adversary" (Schmitter 2001), which entails that, in order to encompass the full range of relevant views, the constituency should include all the views that stand at the opposite extremes of the relevant dimensions (opinions or situations). Finally, it is foreseeable that some of the relevant views would be stronger, in the sense of being better articulated and backed by powerful forces, while others would be dispersed and poorly articulated. Hence the relevance of the fourth principle—equity—which dictates that all relevant members of the constituency should be treated as equal. According to this principle, representation should not simply include all the forces and opinions that are well organized, thus reflecting the balance of power prevailing in society. The inclusion of

marginalized or formally disorganized but relevant groups must be encouraged and facilitated, and this often entails a corresponding limitation to the influence of the most powerful actors.

Obviously, all of these definitions and principles do not yield a precise criterion determining who should be included in a given complex associative constituency. The activity of creating such a constituency remains a form of associative art, a creative response to a problem that must be solved by participants themselves and that does not admit just one solution. Therefore, the first task of the people who are promoting the establishment of an associative system is to identify a preliminary list of the social groups, public agencies, business firms, experts, etc. who are, so to speak, the natural members of the constituency. Afterward, the task of defining who should and who should not be included would be made by the current participants and the interested people themselves. This self-construction of constituencies is the third distinctive feature of complex associative representation.

Having analyzed the two extremes of the representation structure, we now turn to the relation between them, to what Hanna Pitkin calls "the activity of representing." As Pitkin argues, this substance of representation—the "substantive acting for others"—has been scarcely analyzed in the scholarly literature in spite of its obvious importance (Pitkin 1967: 115). Nonetheless, the properties and characteristics of CAS that we discussed in previous chapters and the foregoing analysis of representatives and constituencies allows us to make several inferences about this activity.

One way to approach this issue is by trying to determine where complex associative representation would fall with respect to the classical controversy about mandates and autonomy. At one extreme of this controversy stand those who see the representative as a delegate or deputy, following a strict mandate from the represented; at the other stand those who see him or her as a trustee or liberal representative, "free to act as seems best to him in pursuit of" the welfare of the represented (Pitkin 1967: 145).

Where would complex associative representation fit along this continuum? For the first type of participants in CAS—self-presenting

individuals—this issue is clearly irrelevant. For the second type—formally authorized representatives—the issue is non-controversial, at least at the beginning of the interaction and when major explicit decisions are taken: they are expected to follow the instructions of the agencies, organizations or firms that appointed them. But for the third type—self-constructed representatives—the issue is both crucial and controversial. Therefore, the following discussion will center almost exclusively on them.

Given that CAS by definition are not precisely bounded organizations, with recognizable membership, the first task of these representatives is to create their own constituencies. In other words, self-constructed representatives need to construct themselves as such at the same time that they strive to construct their constituency. They need to begin by identifying those people who share a roughly similar situation—their potential constituency. Then, the challenge is to help these people identify and express their common interests and opinions.

Logically at least, once the constituency has been organized, the second task is to articulate its shared interests and opinions into coherent views that can be presented to other participants in the associative systems. Representation, in this sense, means selecting, out of the mass of shared interests and opinions, those that would be taken into the associative system. It also means integrating these interests and opinions into reasonably harmonious views. Finally, it means expressing these opinions in a way that is easily understandable by other participants.

After this step, complex associative representation takes the form of intercession. By participating in the negotiations and deliberations of the associative system, the representative should defend and promote the views of his or her constituency, striving to integrate them into the public good that the associative system would define and promote. While doing this, the representative acts in a way that is roughly similar to that of an advocate, who is expected to promote the legitimate interests of its customers (Urbinati 2006).

This implies that self-constructed associative representatives cannot be simply delegates or deputies following mandates. They should

be able to redefine and interpret the views of the represented according to the circumstances. In this sense, this representative would be closer to the image of the classical liberal representative.

This logically implies a fourth meaning: accountability. Like liberal representatives, self-constructed representatives have to account for their words and actions to their respective constituencies. But this activity is even more crucial for self-constructed representatives than for most of their liberal counterparts. The status of liberal representatives, who usually operate in the context of an institutionalized representative system, is guaranteed by a formal authorization (usually based on an electoral result). Lacking that authorization, self-constructed representatives have to renew their status as representatives by explaining and justifying their actions and words before their constituency.

Moreover, unlike most liberal representatives, self-constructed representatives cannot stop there. Normally, the constituencies of liberal representatives are legally bound to comply with the decisions taken by the representative body. Obviously, such is not the usual situation of CAS constituencies. Therefore, after accounting for his or her actions, CAS representatives must perform a fifth activity: persuasion. Representatives have to convince their constituencies that the decisions taken by the associative system are normatively appropriate and practically useful, not only for the system as a whole but for each of the persons represented in it. Obviously, the previous activities of representation, if well performed, should facilitate this task. If the constituency was appropriately organized, its views well articulated and promoted, etc., the constituency would feel morally compelled to accept the decisions taken by the representatives. But in most cases this procedural legitimacy, while always important, would not suffice: specific decisions would have to be justified in the eyes of the constituency.

In summary, for self-constructed representatives, complex associative representation entails five basic kinds of activities: organizing, articulating, interceding, accountability and persuading. Moreover, these logically connected activities cannot be arranged in a straight line. Representatives cannot simply assume that their constituencies

will continue to exist, and therefore their task does not finish when they give account of their actions and words. They have to reconstruct their constituencies anew. Therefore, the type of self-constructed representation that takes place in CAS should be better understood as a cycle, as the continuous construction of representation.

This means that, properly speaking, self-constructed representatives are neither delegates nor liberal representatives, even if they seem to be closer to the latter. Rather, they form a third type—the associative representative—which has its own logic and therefore is not simply a distortion or variant of the other two.

To these five kinds of activities, one should add the two typical activities of the other two kinds of direct participants: the execution of mandates that is often expected of formal representatives and the fully autonomous participation of self-presenting individuals. This combination of seven types of activities is the fourth distinguishing feature of complex associative representation.

To summarize the previous analysis, we can present a general definition of complex associative representation. Such representation consists of the actions by which a mixture of self-presenting participants, formal representatives and self-constructed representatives express, promote and integrate the interests and opinions of self-created constituencies, trying to respect the autonomy, diversity and equity of the people that are being represented.

Similarly, from the above discussion, we can derive four basic standards that, taken together would allow one to decide when a good instance of complex associative representation is in place. Such criteria are: 1) a sizable number of direct participants in the associative system are self-constructed representatives, as distinguished from self-presenting individuals and formally authorized representatives; 2) the representatives are integrated into a body whose composition resembles that of the target population; 3) the constituency includes all the relevant interests, in accordance with the diversity, pertinence, adversary and equity principles and 4) most members of the constituency are well informed about the decisions and definitions made by the system and believe that they are normatively correct and practically useful.

THREE EMPIRICAL MODELS

How well does the model presented above reflect the needs, aspirations and possibilities of participants in real complex associative systems? How do really existing CAS approximate that model? To respond to these questions, in this section we analyze the structures of representation established within real associative systems, observing how each of them approximated the four standards presented above.

It should be noted that these ideal standards are hard to achieve in practice; this is especially true of three standards: descriptive accuracy, constituency inclusiveness and acceptability of results. Therefore, they should be understood as ideals guiding real actions, rather than as rigid rules. Moreover, these standards may also lead to practical contradictions. For example, the existence of a high number of self-constructed representatives may make it more difficult that the constituency accept the decisions made by the system. Similarly, the equity principle may require that the constituency is constructed in such a way that undermines the descriptive accuracy of the representative body. Because of these inconsistencies, complex associative representation remains an art—an essential part of the art of association.

TABLE 7.1
THREE CASES OF COMPLEX ASSOCIATIVE REPRESENTATION

Standards	*Claustro*	*Chapultepec Accord*	*North American Group of the TC*
Proportion of self-constructed representatives	Low	Low	High
Descriptive accuracy of the representative body	High	Low	Low
Inclusive constituency	High	Low	Low
Decisions acceptable to the constituency	Uncertain	Low	Low

SOURCE: own construction.

In conducting this analysis, we focus on three cases: the UNAM Claustro, the Chapultepec Accord and the North American Group of the Trilateral Commission. We do not try to determine which of these cases possessed the best form of complex associative representation, that is to say, which of them came closer to the ideal model. Rather, our aim is to identify and characterize three different ways to approach that model. In congruence with this aim, we place emphasis on the differences among these three cases, paying less attention to their commonalities. The main characteristics of the three cases are summarized in table 7.1.

The Claustro: Inclusiveness above All

From the standpoint of representation, the UNAM Claustro seemed explicitly designed to maximize descriptive accuracy and constituency inclusiveness. The Claustro had a total of 105 members and 5 invitees. The great majority of members (100) were representatives of the university's academic personnel, elected by general vote within relevant academic sectors. These sectors were defined by combining two criteria: type of appointment (full-time professors, researchers, part-time instructors, and academic technicians) and type of university department (faculties, schools, research institutes, etc.). Great care was taken to ensure that the distribution of these 100 representative positions among sectors was congruent with the weight that each sector had within the academic personnel of the university. The remaining 5 members were representatives of the president of the university. This means that all 105 members of the Claustro were representatives formally elected or appointed to perform that role. There was no place for self-invited participants and self-constructed representatives. The 5 invitees were also formal representatives, appointed by the Special Commission for the University Congress or CECU (a body in charge of "designing and organizing the mechanisms and contents for the realization of a congress to reform the university").

The constituency was defined so as to include all the relevant population. All members of UNAM's academic personnel were entitled to vote. The criteria for eligibility were also generous, the only

important requirement being the length of the appointment (a minimum of three or six years, depending on the type of appointment). But turnout in the election of representatives was rather low, with only 36.7 percent of the people entitled to vote actually casting their ballots.

A similar desire for inclusiveness governed the design of the internal representative body, the Coordinating Board, which was charged with directing the work of the Claustro and drafting the reform proposal that the latter was expected to present. The Board, which also drafted the functioning rules of the Claustro, had 11 members, 10 of them representing explicitly defined sectors (e.g., full-time professors teaching the bachelor's degree, full-time professors working at the pre-graduate and graduate levels, science researchers, humanities and social science researchers, and so on). Formally, these representatives participating on the Board were elected or re-elected every three months in a general session of the Claustro. But in reality this session ratified the selection made within the relevant sectors. By participating on the Board, these members acquired a double role: as most other participants in the Claustro, they represented a part of the academic community; but they were also other representatives' representatives. The eleventh member of the Coordinating Board was a representative of the university's president, and there was also an invitee from the CECU. The board was presided by one of its members, elected or ratified by all of them every three months.

This inclusive design was apparently motivated by the desire to counteract the mutual distrust between members of the academic community (for example, between researchers and professors, between these and academic technicians, and between the academic personnel in general and the authorities of the university). This was a major challenge. As one member of the Claustro cited in chapter 4 regretted, distrust is pervasive in the university.

According to the participants that we interviewed, this challenge was overcome. At the beginning, representatives from the less numerous and less prestigious members of the university's academic personnel were rather defensive, being obviously afraid that their opinions would be ignored and their legitimate interests sacrificed to those of their more influential colleagues (namely, full-time pro-

fessors and researchers). But these fears were soon assuaged by the carefully designed proportional representation of all academic sectors, combined with decision rules that required consensus and special majorities for most important matters.

According to the evidence obtained through interviews with members of the Coordinating Board, most representatives were able to interpret and articulate the interests and opinions of their constituents. Some members of the Board—especially academic technicians—were more closely watched by their constituents (especially by the representatives that they represented), to whom they felt strongly obligated to report in formal meetings. But most Board members were notably free to define the interests and views according to their own criterion. And these interests and opinions were duly integrated into the decisions made by the whole Board and submitted to the whole Claustro, through a lengthy and complicated process that included many rounds of deliberation, negotiation, consultation and reformulation.[2] So absorbing was this process that several participants interviewed admitted that they often ended up advocating the views of other academic sectors, instead of those of the sector that elected them.

But there is no evidence of how the decisions made by the Claustro were received by the constituency. In part, this lack is a consequence of a peculiarity of the Claustro. In a strict sense, the Claustro did not make decisions but only submitted a proposal. The decision itself was expected to be made by another body, also representative but with a well-established role within the institutional structure of the university—the University Council. In terms of the representation structure depicted in figure 7.1, the downward relation from representative to the constituents was indirect, mediated by the participation of the University Council. At time of this writing, al-

[2] Thus, according to one member of the Board: "Most of the agreements have been reached through consensus. I think this has been very enriching because we have not had to resort to voting and have also prevented issues from going to the extremes and arriving at dead ends… Here we have worked by successive approximations. That is to say, you draft a document but if you see that it does not satisfy all that you believed it would satisfy, then you can reconsider it. This does not mean creating a vicious circle but rather that you can make all pertinent modifications."

most 11 years after the Claustro was constituted, the proposal that it submitted to the Council has yet to be voted upon.

The Chapultepec Accord: Representing Established Hierarchies

As in the case of the Claustro, the Chapultepec Accord also had a two-storied representative structure. The first floor consisted of the bulk of people who formally supported the Accord. On the night of September 30, 2005, when it was formally announced, the document was signed by three hundred people. Members of the economic elite were particularly prominent in this list of supporters, but there were also outstanding figures from the intellectual, artistic, scientific and political fields. By mid 2006, after almost nine months of intense promotion, the document had been endorsed by about 5,000 individuals.

No major participation was expected from these supporters, beyond the simple task of signing their name on the text of the Accord. The real action happened on the second floor of the structure. This was occupied by the Follow-Up Commission, the organism that—despite its self-effacing name—performed crucial tasks, including those of coordinating the whole associative enterprise, negotiating with other actors, promoting the Accord and reaching out to potential new supporters. Presiding over this organism was Carlos Slim, the animator of the whole project, whose leadership will be analyzed in the next chapter.

But, in contrast to what happened in the Claustro, the two floors of the structure were not united by a link of representation. The Follow-Up Commission was conceived as representative not of the bulk of signatories of the Accord but of people outside the associative system. Table 7.2 gives the main affiliation of the twenty members of the Commission. Officially, these people participated not as formally mandated representatives of the organizations that they led, but only as individuals. But, of course, the lack of a formal and specific mandate did not invalidate their organic connection with those organizations. Quite the opposite: it is obvious that such a connection gave them the credentials required for entering such an elitist club.

TABLE 7. 2
MAIN AFFILIATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMISSION

Sector	*Representatives*
Business	
Peak associations	1. Business Coordinating Council (CCE)
	2. Mexican Businessmen Council (CMHN)
	3. National Agricultural Council (CNA)
Corporations	4. Carso
	5. Telmex
	6. Comex
	7. Cemex
	8. Corporación Durango
Labour	9. Labour Congress (CT)
	10. Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM)
	11. National Union of Workers (UNT)
Peasants	12. National Peasants' Confederation (CNC)
Media	13. Radio and Television Business Chamber (CIRT)
	14. A television producer (from Televisión Azteca)
Civil society organizations	15. México Unido contra la Delincuencia (Mexico United Against Crime)
	16. Mexican Fund for Education and Development
Science	17. Nobel laureate Mario Molina
Education	18. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomus University of Mexico, UNAM)
Culture	19. Ángeles Mastretta (writer)
Popular art	20. Emmanuel (pop singer)

SOURCE: own construction based on the list of members reported by Acuerdo de Chapultepec (2005).

Five of the twenty members were leaders of large business corporations, all of which were monopolies or at least dominant firms in their respective business fields; two of these corporations were controlled by Slim himself. Four more positions were occupied by other prominent businessmen, identified by their role as leaders of peak business associations (one of them from the media sector). In total, business leaders filled almost half of all the positions available in the Follow-Up Commission. There were also three labor leaders, all of them from notorious corporatist organizations. Of the seven posi-

tions not taken by this business-labor majority, two were occupied by the leaders of civil society organizations. Another position was taken by the president of the National University, a highly respected individual in academic and political circles. Only four people came close to what we have called here self-constructed representatives, not representing well established organizations: a television producer (linked to Televisión Azteca, a major private media firm), a writer, a pop singer and a Nobel laureate.

The integration of the top representative body marks a major difference between the Chapultepec Accord and the UNAM Claustro. By selecting a large number of representatives through ad-hoc electoral processes, the Claustro evidently sought to avoid precisely the path that the Chapultepec Accord decided to follow: including only notable individuals and representatives from established organizations. In part, this difference in choice reflects a difference in the situation. Electing its own representatives was easy for a system like the Claustro which had a small and well-bounded constituency. But the constituency of the Chapultepec Accord was far larger. In fact, since the Accord was defined as a civil society initiative to solve the country's social, economic and political problems, the potential constituency encompassed the entire Mexican population, or at least that part of it that can be considered its "civil society."

Another major difference in the situation lies in the relationship with the established authorities. As previously stated, the Claustro was created by a decision of the authorities of the university, who then stepped back and let the associative system work, autonomously but under their benign watch. With this support, it was easy for the Claustro to hold its own electoral processes, which obviously required much organizational effort and reliable arbitration. However, the Chapultepec Accord was an ambitious organizational effort conducted independently from the authorities. Given the country's long tradition of political cooptation, simulation and corporatism, such independence was indispensable. Otherwise, the entire project would have been perceived as a simple façade set up by the government and the political elite. In these circumstances, holding independent elections with a nationwide constituency would have meant an enormous organizational effort, probably well beyond the capacities of any number of independent citizens.

Facing this situation, the leaders of the Chapultepec Accord opted for an alternative that seemed almost natural in the circumstances: to seek the support of established social hierarchies outside the government, especially major business corporations and corporatist labor unions. In other words, although the Accord was, in effect, a non-government initiative and its designers intended to maintain it that way, it was heavily dependent on other established social hierarchies.

This created an obvious ambiguity: whom did the Chapultepec Accord really represent—civil society, who was the alleged source of the initiative, or the corporations, unions and other organizations from which members of the Follow-Up Commission came? The significance of this ambiguity is easy to grasp: it is hard to see how the extremely powerful organizations directly represented in the Accord could be taken as an accurate description of the complexities, inequalities and diversity of Mexico's civil society.

A brief look at the activities performed by these representatives will help clarify this ambiguity. In contrast to the formal signature and subsequent promotion of the accord, which were widely publicized, the process leading to its drafting was rather opaque. One thing is certain: the central character was Carlos Slim. As explained in chapter 3, the Accord was drafted in behind-the-scenes negotiations coordinated by Slim. This closed procedure could hardly be expected to facilitate the expression and articulation of the myriad of interests, opinions and views that exist in the nation's civil society and that the Accord was supposed to represent.

A similar remark can be made about another major component of representative action identified in the previous section: the intercession and integration of different interests, opinions and views. It is noticeable in this regard that all the business, labor and media organizations from which most members of the Follow-Up Commission came are part of the old corporatist structure of the country: scarcely pluralist, hierarchical, and with a longstanding inclination for interest negotiation. Since there was no public debate for reaching consensus on the contents of the Accord, one can only guess that,

at best, such consensus was reached through negotiation rather than deliberation.

A similar conclusion can be reached by briefly analyzing how the main product of the associative system was received. Theoretically, the Accord was addressed to Mexico's civil society. But it is clear that, in practice, the main addressee was the political elite which had the formal capacity to transform the contents of the Accord into real laws and policies. Indeed, the timing of the Accord seems to have been chosen for this political effect: its formal announcement took place nine months before the presidential elections and its promotion coincided with the presidential campaigns. The short-term result was admirable. As noted in chapter 3, the Accord was promptly endorsed by state governors and by two of the main presidential candidates, though not by the one that was leading the race at that time.[3]

In this sense, the situation of the Accord was similar to that of the Claustro: the associative system could only propose, not enact, let alone execute, desired changes. But the practical impact of the Accord was even weaker than that of the Claustro. As noted in chapter 3, as the Election Day approached, the Accord was removed from the country's public scene, leaving no detectable trace in legislation. When powerful leaders of major business and labor corporations lost interest, the Accord found no inheritor within Mexico's civil society.

The North American Group: Power, Money and Status

As explained in previous chapter, the Trilateral Commission (TC) is a transnational governance structure whose avowed mission is "to bring together experienced leaders within the private sector to discuss issues of global concern." These leaders are organized in three regional groups, comprising "the main industrialized democratic countries": Europe, North America and the Asia Pacific (Trilateral Commission 2011). The North American Group (NAG) includes members from Canada (24), the U.S. (up to 90) and, since 2000, Mexico (13).

From the standpoint of representation, perhaps the toughest question that the NAG must face is how to define its constituency. Who

[3] The candidate in question was Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

are the "experienced leaders within the private sector" of North America who should take part in this group? The list of relevant leaders may be enormous, and no transnational associative system, however complex and inclusive, may realistically expect to reunite or even represent them all. Any associative system of this kind has to define its own profile—its orientation and character—which would, implicitly at least, provide criteria for narrowing down its constituency to a more manageable scope.

A central component of the worldview that the TC promotes is the notion of "interdependence," which is seen as both a reality and an ideal. Thus, the TC affirms: "the most important characteristic of the current [international] situation is the firm expansion and tightening of the interdependence network." Inspired by "international liberalism" and "complex interdependence," concepts developed by Joseph Nye and other international relations scholars, the TC advocates cooperation and persuasion as the chief means to achieve goals in the international sphere. With respect to domestic politics, the TC has shown a persistent commitment to limited liberal democracy, along the lines suggested by its famous report on "the crisis of democracy" (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975: 8). According to this report, democracy must be saved from itself, which requires slowing down the expansion of democratic practices and the multiplication of demands that were threatening to overwhelm the world's main democratic governments.

Given these ideological orientations, one should expect that the "experienced leaders" called to participate in the TC exhibit, as Burris suggests, a "moderately conservative" profile: well-articulated leaders of transnational business corporations who decidedly stand in favor of liberalizing transnational trade and investment; "globalist" intellectuals sympathetic to both economic integration and the international political system headed by the United States; political leaders with an "internationalist" view, closer to the U.S. Democrats than to the Republicans. Correspondingly, leaders not sharing this profile, however experienced and interested in global matters they might be, would be less likely to participate in the TC. Such would be the case, for example, of leaders of business corporations that

largely depend on their respective domestic markets and are therefore weary of trade liberalization, "isolationist" intellectuals, hard-line conservatives, left-leaning critics of globalization, and union leaders who protest against the job shifts caused by economic globalization.

These remarks help clarify the profile of the NAG's *core constituency*—the pool of leaders from which actual participants in the TC can be expected to be drawn and the people and opinions that those leaders are likely to represent. But it should be recalled that the TC is not an executive or decision-making organism: it is a deliberative body, seeking to "discuss issues of global concern." If the group invited only those people of similar situation and views, it would soon degenerate into a sect, a network of zealots whose meetings would do little more than reiterate their mutually shared opinions and prejudices. To put it in the terms proposed by Ronald Burt (2005), a deliberative transnational association like the NAG needs to have a relatively low level of "closure" and a high degree of "brokerage." In practical terms, this means that—apart from its core of like-minded individuals and groups—the NAG should have a *reference constituency* made up of people holding different views, including opinions diametrically opposed to those of the core constituency.

As the following analysis shall show, to respond to the conflicting requirements of closure and brokerage, the NAG apparently followed a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, it filled its main organisms with people representing its core constituency. On the other hand, it invited a number of external individuals representing its reference constituency.

With respect to the first prong, it is evident that the NAG has decided to play safe. Table 7.3 classifies the main affiliations of the 126 members that the group had in 2012, as reported by the Trilateral itself.[4] Since members usually report more than one affiliation, we found a total of 209, as shown in table 7.3. Political affiliations, which account for one-third of the total, are above all with executive agencies, especially in the areas of defense, security and intelligence, followed by finance, foreign relations, international trade and internal politics. In contrast, public agencies dealing with transportation,

[4] http://www.trilateral.org/ (accessed June 5, 2012).

agriculture and urban development are represented only marginally. In the U.S., many of the NAG members have occupied top level positions in both Republican and Democratic administrations, in almost equal proportions; some of them have done so in both kinds of administrations. A similar pattern is visible in Canada and Mexico.[5]

Table 7.3
Main Affiliations of nag Members

Sector	*Total*	*%*
Politics	70	33
Business	62	30
Think Tanks	27	13
Academia	35	17
Media	7	3
Other	8	4
Total	209	100

SOURCE: own construction, based on Trilateral Commission 2011.

Business affiliations, which are almost as numerous as their political counterparts, are dominated by transnational corporations. By far, the majority of these corporations specialize in finance, distantly followed by small numbers of consulting, energy and manufacturing firms.[6]

The TC has insisted on showing its independence from organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the Brookings Institution, which form the core of what Burris defines as the liberal business segment of the moderate conservative ideological wing. Nonetheless, organizations sharing these inclinations are still heavily represented within the NAG. Relevant cases include, among several others, Richard N. Haass, who has occupied leading positions in both the CFR and Brookings, and Strobe Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution and prominent member of the CFR.

With respect to the academic sector, the main thing to notice is the predominance of elite institutions, especially Harvard Univer-

[5] See Luna and Velasco (2013).

[6] This category also includes a short number (3) of private foundations, notably the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

sity, which accounts for 12 out of 35 academic affiliations. Finally, all but one of the media affiliations correspond to extremely influential global media based in the United States (like the New York Times, Times Magazine, Washington Post and CNN).

In short, the core constituency of the NAG consists of highly influential individuals who occupy positions of command in government agencies, transnational business corporations, elite universities and global media—all of them close to the "moderate conservative" wing of the U.S. establishment. Many of these are highly mobile people, who have occupied or currently hold positions in several organizations. Therefore, they are not as closely associated to a single organization as is the case of most representatives in the Chapultepec Accord. Nor are they formally elected representatives like most of the Claustro's participants. Therefore, compared to the other two cases, a peculiarity of the NAG is the high number of self-constructed representatives: people who are powerful by themselves and can be said to represent the views and interests of an influential elite, rather than that of particular organizations or categories of individuals.

These traits are accentuated in the internal representative body, known as the Executive Committee. Like that of the UNAM Claustro, this body is intended to represent the bulk of participants in the associative system. Its functions include inviting new members of the NAG, preparing the agenda for the regional meetings—the main public activity organized by the group, as will be analyzed shortly—and representing the NAG in the Executive Committee of the entire Trilateral Commission. In 2012, 14 of the 17 members of the NAG Executive Committee were from the U.S., while only 2 were from Mexico and 1 from Canada. As shown in table 7.4, the distribution of affiliations across sectors is similar to that of the entire NAG. But members of the NAG Executive Committee are still more mobile than those of the whole group: 82 percent of them report affiliations in more than one of those sectors.

The second prong of the strategy pursued by the NAG has been to bring in representatives from its reference constituency to participate in its regional meetings—the annual forums that the group convenes to discuss issues of global and regional interest. Since 2002, 92 out of 175 talks delivered in these meetings were given by non-members

of the Trilateral Commission.[7] Judged by these numbers, the NAG's annual meetings seemed to have provided, in effect, an open forum for the discussion of global and regional matters.

TABLE 7.4
MAIN AFFILIATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE NAG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sector	*Canada*	*United States*	*Mexico*	*Total*	*%*
Politics	1	10	0	11	32
Business	1	7	1	9	26
Think Tanks	0	4	1	5	15
Academia	0	6	0	6	18
Media	0	2	0	2	6
International Organizations	0	0	1	1	3
Total	2	29	3	34	100

SOURCE: own construction based on Trilateral Commission 2011.

But how plural was the composition of these external speakers? To answer this question, we identified their main affiliations, as reported by the NAG itself; since some speakers reported more than one affiliation, we counted 106 affiliations for the 92 external lectures. As can be seen from table 7.5, most of these talks were delivered by politicians, distantly followed by scholars and business people. The media and, especially, NGO's were scarcely represented, even though they are obviously important regional actors. Even more remarkable and significant is the absence of social organizations and human rights defenders.

Moreover, the high number of external talks (92) may be misleading. In fact, the real number of external speakers was lower (79), since 8 individuals delivered more than one lecture; in total, these frequent authors gave almost one-fourth of all the external speeches. Even more, 3 of these frequent invitees had the privilege of delivering 12 percent of all the external talks. This obviously reduced the

[7] Information about these meetings was taken from the Trilateral's internet page: http://www.trilateral.org/go.cfm?do=Page.View&pid=8 (accessed August 15, 2012).

capacity of the meetings to represent the diverse voices of the NAG's reference constituency.

Table 7.5
Affiliations of External Speakers

Sector o Activity	*Total*	*%*
Politics and Government	57	53.8
Academic Institutions	20	18.9
Business Firms	13	12.3
Think Tanks	8	7.5
Press	5	4.7
Writers	2	1.9
NGOs	1	0.9
Total	106	100.0

Source: own construction based on Trilateral Commission 2011.

Even more than in the two previous cases, we do not have concrete data to analyze the downward side of the representative relation (from representatives to constituency). The regional meetings of the NAG attracted some media attention, which probably gave them some practical influence. Even more importantly, the fact that NAG members occupy high positions in influential organizations, their opinions must have had some impact both within those organizations and in society in general. Even so, as the previous analysis of the meetings suggests, these opinions were confined within a powerful but narrow elite. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the NAG was representative not of North America's transnational community but only of its pro-U.S. "moderate conservative" circle.

Promises and Dangers of Complex Associative Representation

In this chapter we have analyzed three ways to deal with the central challenge of complex associative representation: how can a group of people stand and act for other people who are not present—and do

this in the absence of formal contracts or established institutions? The way associative systems respond to this challenge obviously affects their whole structure of representation, from constituency to highest representatives.

This challenge was smaller for the Claustro: the constituency was comparatively small and well bounded, and the Claustro itself was promoted and supported by the authorities of the university. Having established the Claustro, the university institutions stepped back and allowed it to function as an autonomous associative system. In this context, the Claustro could afford to magnify inclusiveness and consensus, and to combine these associative traits with a classical organizational device: the formal election of representatives.

The challenge was far larger for the Chapultepec Accord. The constituency was enormous—in a sense, all of Mexico's civil society—and the system was self-created, which entailed that it could not count on the official blessing and protection of the government. Given Mexico's tradition of political corporatism, cooptation and simulation, this independence from political actors was essential. But its counterpart was a dependence on non-governmental hierarchies, especially top business corporations and quite discredited labor unions.

For the NAG, the challenge was even larger, since the potential constituency arguably encompassed all of the North American population. Like the Chapultepec Accord, the NAG was not created by political authorities and needed to be independent from the three North American governments. Its way to cope with the challenge was to select influential and prestigious individuals associated with various powerful organizations and holding the same "moderate conservative" views about international politics and transnational trade. Its efforts to reach out to people outside this elitist circle were few and largely ineffectual.

These three paths had obviously negative consequences for the associative systems that took them. For the NAG, there was too much closure and too little brokering, which severely undercut its associative potential. Instead of being an open forum for the free discussion of regional and global issues, the NAG was rather a closed group dedicated to discussing and propagating the views of a tight trans-

national elite. The Chapultepec Accord could not solve a basic ambiguity: who was really represented—Mexico's civil society or the powerful business and labor organizations from which most of its representatives were drawn? And the UNAM Claustro, obsessed with consensus and inclusiveness, created a representative apparatus that was too complex and slow to generate the strong enthusiasm that an associative system like this should evoke in its constituency.

Could these three associative systems have responded differently to the challenge? In part, as the previous analysis showed, their choices on this matter were dictated by their situations. Even so, the analysis also suggests that the systems could have aimed for a better balance between the requirements of complex associative representation and the practical limitations of the context. Electing formal representatives of the country's civil society or of North American transnational communities was obviously unthinkable. Nevertheless, the Chapultepec Accord and the NAG could have done more to approximate the ideal of inclusiveness, diversity and consensus that was so important for the Claustro. To do so, the Chapultepec Accord could have brought in representatives from much less powerful but politically significant organizations, like NGOs, universities, social movements, and the like. Similarly, without sacrificing its close relation to its core constituency, the NAG could have opened itself more to its reference constituency by inviting speakers from NGOs, think-tanks, political parties, labor unions and business associations holding views different from those cherished by "moderate conservatives", U.S. "internationalists," and free-trade advocates. Conversely, the UNAM Claustro could have enriched, enlivened and diversified its representation structure by relying less on formally elected representatives and explicitly looking for representatives from the organizations, opinion currents and political inclinations that existed within the university. This would have made its deliberations more controversial but also, and for the same reason, more attractive to the whole community.

In other words, the main lesson that this three cases leave is that it would be desirable and possible to achieve a better balance among the ideals that motivated each of them: the importance of seeking to represent all the common members of the constituency, the need

to recognize the power of established hierarchies and the advantages of including influential individuals. By seeking a balance like this, real associative systems can better approach the ultimately unreachable ideal of complex associative representation defined in section 2.

The search for such a balance is very important, and not only for the associative systems themselves. As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, complex associative representation can supplement the formal representation than prevails in political institutions. By so doing, it can help rescue political representation from its current predicaments. To recover its lost legitimacy and adapt itself to present social and political circumstances, representation cannot remain confined within the limits of formal political institutions. Representation has to extend itself beyond governments and parliaments and become truly public.

This public representation should be understood as a series of chains or networks of representation, linking together the systems of traditional representation (electoral, bureaucratic or corporative) and the more flexible and dynamic structures of complex associative representation. This public representation would better respond to the changing affiliations of citizens, would offer flexible mechanisms of representation to different actors in different situations and would integrate different forms of representation in an autonomous area, located at the intersection of market, state and civil society.

But it is also important to acknowledge the potential pitfalls of complex associative representation, which are created precisely by the indeterminacy and flexibility that distinguish it. The representativeness of participants can be easily challenged. Deliberation among them can degenerate into an unstructured discussion without concrete results, or may be relegated and neutralized by negotiation or vertical imposition. The diversity of representatives may hinder communication or may lead to forced and exclusionary unanimity. Open membership can degenerate into corporate enclosure. Representatives may be co-opted or corrupted by the traditional structures of power (government, businesses, interest groups). Representatives may overpass their limits and transform the flexible representation structures into rigid hierarchies. Complex associative representation can lose much of its transformative power simply by decoupling itself

from the other chains of representation (government, corporations, etc.) that make the bulk of political decisions.

The analysis made in this chapter suggests some ways to mitigate these risks. First, although it is normal that complex associative systems combine different types of representatives, it is crucial that the majority of them can effectively participate in deliberative processes without being subject to rigid mandates from their constituents. Therefore, it is very important that, together with bureaucratic or corporate representatives, there are a substantial number of experts, distinguished citizens, activists and symbolic representatives, many of them self-constructed as such.

Second, although complex associative constituencies are open by definition, this openness should not degenerate into vagueness. The majority of participants should be representative of sectors, organizations, interests or opinions that are relevant to the issue. Nor should such openness be simply a façade, concealing a biased selection of participants. For this, it is important to construct the constituency taking into account the diversity, pertinence, proportionality and other principles identified in section 2.

Finally, as was also argued in section 2 and as the analysis of the three cases confirms, sometimes it is necessary to restrict the representation of extremely powerful actors and to facilitate that of weaker but still relevant members. It is equally important that the representation structure facilitates the horizontal interaction of representatives. Otherwise, deliberation would be rendered irrelevant, overwhelmed by negotiation and vertical imposition.

The analysis of complex associative representation not only helps us envision ways to expand the concept of representation, making it a truly public activity. It can also help us redefine political power, recognizing that it entails more than commands and coercion. Besides being a relation of order and obedience, power is coordination: the capacity to associate and work together. As David Hume argued in his classic essay on the principles of government: "It is …on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular" (Hume 1994: 16). If force is the distinctive tool of power as authority, the instruments characteristic of power

as coordination are persuasion, socialization and deliberation—the same activities that, as argued above, form the core of complex associative representing. Therefore, this form of representation can be useful for legitimizing power as authority, but also for developing power as coordination—for creating complex associative power.

Chapter 8

Complex Associative Leadership

As seen in the previous chapter, political representation is not only a channel for transmitting information, power, aspirations and the like: it is, above all, a mechanism for creating and justifying authority. But the authority that results from representation alone is fundamentally limited. According to the four most important meanings of the term "representation," representatives can stand for, speak and act for, reflect and even symbolize their constituency (Pitkin 1967). None of these meanings entail, directly at least, a basic component of authority: the capacity to lead, mobilize, inspire, command, repress and punish.

At first sight, association seems to have nothing to do with authority. The former is usually defined as voluntary cooperation; the latter, in contrast, is often identified with force, hierarchical organizations and laws, that is to say, with formal institutions and so-called power politics. But, as Lincoln (1994) argues, properly seen authority is a form of speech: "the capacity to make a consequential pronouncement." Analytically, it stands between coercion and persuasion, both of which "exist as capacities or potentialities implicit within authority, but are actualized only when those who claim authority sense that they have begun to lose the trust of those over whom they seek to exercise it" (Lincoln 1994: 4, 6). In other words, authority lies not so much in the institutional hierarchies with which it is commonly associated as in the capacity to perform certain kinds of acts—a capacity that may be embedded in very different organizational structures.

Based on a definition like this, one can argue that rather than being irrelevant for the study of authority, complex associative systems are particularly well suited for the task. By observing whether they are able to create their own leadership and endow it with the capacity to make binding pronouncements upon their members, one can see a dimension of authority construction that is often neglected or insufficiently analyzed when this process is observed in armies, bureaucracies and other hierarchical and formal organizations: the self-generation of authority through basically horizontal communicative and organizational efforts carried out by mutually autonomous actors.

For methodological reasons, the chapter will not focus on all forms of authority-building, but only on a specific section: the creation of efficacious and legitimate leadership. But this selection should not be seen as excessively limiting the reach of the analysis. Since complex associative systems usually lack formal authority positions with well-defined prerogatives and duties, it is reasonable to expect that they place almost any authority they may have in the persons of their leaders.

The analysis begins by quickly reviewing the literature on leadership, with the goal of inferring a set of characteristics that are peculiar to the form of leadership that operates within complex associative systems. Then attention turns to three empirical cases, each illustrating a peculiar way to construct authoritative leadership within complex associative systems: one that results in dense institutionalization and specialized leadership, another producing strong personal authority and personalized leadership, and a third that creates a mobile form of leadership. This analysis, which constitutes the core of the chapter, is followed by a brief exploration of the consequences that each of these routes has for the performance of their respective associative systems.[1]

A general conclusion arising from the analysis is that complex associative systems may be seen as dynamic systems of authority and leadership. The chapter ends with an attempt to observe how this

[1] Our previous analysis of CAS leadership (focused on the case of the Claustro) is presented in Velasco (2014).

conclusion may be useful in the study of authority and leadership in general.

Authority and Leadership: the Genus and the Species

To determine what is specific about associative leadership, one should begin by pointing out the main characteristics of leadership in general. Given the obvious importance of leadership in human society, one should expect these characteristics to have been precisely identified in the scholarly literature. In fact, however, the analysis of this theme is surprisingly scant. What Burns wrote in 1978 retains most of its truth: "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p. 2). Therefore, to see what characteristics have been attributed to leadership in general, one has to review a rather large number of works by very different authors.

The first thing to notice about leadership in general is that it is a kind of power. As John Searle argues, this "special case" consists in "the ability to get [people] to want to do something they would not otherwise have wanted to do." (2010, loc. 3147). This entails that leadership should be distinguished from other forms of power: the arbitrary power of a tyrant, the unilateral power of a slave master, the inexorable power of a prison guard, the brutish power of an armed assaulter over his defenseless victims, the absolute power of a religious chief who demands the implicit obedience of all the faithful, the unchallengeable power of an expert over the inmates of a psychiatric hospital or any other total institution, etc. Compared to these personages, a leader stands out as someone who conducts or guides people who could stop, go in another direction or follow another leader. In other words, a leader has voluntary followers, not subjects, victims or pupils unable to make their own decisions. For, as Bertrand Russell noted: "in any genuinely cooperative enterprise, the follower is psychologically no more a slave than the leader" (1943: 16). It is clear, therefore, that the leader acts more through "persuasion and example" than through force and necessity (Gardner 1990: 1).

However, although the leader has no absolute power, he or she has authority. The leader is more than a coordinator, a moderator, an influential person, an agent, a delegate, a spokesman or a prestigious person. The leader is someone who actually guides the people with whom he or she interacts—someone able to structure their actions, modify their preferences and, to some extent, incarnate them. In this last sense, the leader is, somehow, a representative.[2] Moreover, having authority also means having legitimacy, i.e., being recognized by one's followers as someone entitled to lead them (although, of course, that right does not need to be codified).

Thus, leadership can be seen as a midpoint between absolute power and simple influence. But, of course, there are all kinds of transitions; in concrete cases, it may be difficult to establish the border between these three types. Even the seemingly most unilateral power relation is still a form of social interaction. For, as Simmel notes: "even the desire of domination has some interest in the other person… Only when egoism does not even amount to a desire for domination; only when the other is absolutely indifferent and a mere means for purposes which lie beyond him, is the last shadow of any sociating process removed" (Simmel 1950: 181).[3] In addition, even the purest relationship of camaraderie always involves a certain preeminence of one of the parties.

Being a type of legitimate power, leadership always implies discretion. The leader is not a mere bureaucrat, someone who can perform a function (even an important one) only by strictly following a norm. For, as Zaleznik (1977: 67-68) points out: "Managers tend to adopt impersonal, if not passive, attitudes toward goals. Managerial goals arise out of necessities rather than desires and, therefore, are deeply embedded in their organization's history and culture." In contrast, leaders "are active instead of reactive, shaping ideas instead of responding to them. Leaders adopt a personal and active attitude

[2] In Jones (1989: 7), the category of leaders also includes "delegates" and "lackeys." But, obviously, to say that a lackey is a leader sounds like a contradiction in terms.

[3] In fact, according to the theory of adaptive leadership, this term denotes "a social interaction process where individuals engage in repeated leading-following interactions, and through these interactions, co-construct identities and relationships as leaders and followers" (DeRue 2011: 126).

toward goals. The influence a leader exerts …changes the way people think about what is desirable, possible, and necessary." As Weber (1978: 956-1002) makes clear, a bureaucrat needs a political boss, someone who leads and takes personal responsibility for decisions —decisions that are more than simple derivations of laws and statutes. Therefore, leaders always go beyond what the laws specifies. As Searle (2010: loc. 3147) points out, "The ability to do that is part of what constitutes political leadership."[4]

Moreover, even though leaders often resort to expert knowledge, they must not be confused with technicians or experts. As Plato (1973: 179) says: "the true pilot must pay attention to the year and seasons and sky and stars and winds, and whatever else belongs to his art." But that is not enough to make him a captain. Of course, a leader must know the matter with which the group concerns itself, but this knowledge is not the same as that of a specialist. What is decisive about leaders is their capacity to construct their own authority, for which they need something more than technical knowledge: intuition, communicative capacity, empathy, etc.

Finally, a leader should not be confused with an intermediary or broker. According to a sociologist who has extensively analyzed the subject, a broker is an "individual whose relationships span a structural hole"—the vacuum separating two or more groups, each of which is made up of densely connected individuals (Burt 2000: 353). The main competitive advantage of a broker is the access to original information, that is to say, information that is not directly accessible to the other members of their group. In this sense, it is obvious that every leader is an intermediary: someone able to connect among themselves the different people, factions and segments of the group under his or her direction. But a true leader is more than a "central contact," a strategic point in the flow of information: the leader is not only a transmitter, but also a creator of information: someone who defines what is relevant, who makes that information meaningful and

[4] Therefore, Zaleznik (1977: 81) is right when he affirms: "The ability to confront is also the ability to tolerate aggressive interchange. And that skill not only has the net effect of stripping away the veils of ambiguity and signaling so characteristic of managerial cultures, but also encourages the emotional relationships leaders need if they are to survive."

who organizes the flow of information. It can be said, therefore, that every leader is an intermediary but not every intermediary is a leader. The difference between a leader and a simple intermediary is, of course, authority.

After mentioning some generic characteristics of leadership, the next step is to try to infer what characteristics are specific to associative leadership, those that distinguish it from other members of the genus. The basis for these inferences are the generic characteristics of leadership, the specific characteristics of other types of leadership and the properties of complex associative systems discussed in earlier chapters of this book.

To begin this task, it is useful to recall Max Weber's famous typology (1978), in which each type of legitimate domination has its own distinctive type of leadership: a rational-legal director, a traditional chief and a charismatic leader. Despite their multiple differences, these forms of leadership share three basic characteristics. First, they are exerted upon well defined groups of followers: a bureaucratic organization, a traditional community or a group of loyalists or devotees. Second, the "basis of legitimacy"—the belief that makes mandate and obedience possible—is clear in each case: formal rules, traditions or the extraordinary personality of the leader. And, therefore, the structure of authority tends to be coherent, organized on three main levels: the leader, the staff and the mass of followers or subordinated.

Obviously, none of this is compatible with CAS, where organization is imprecise, cooperation is guided by different and even contradictory beliefs and the structure of authority is ambiguous and shifting. Therefore, the legitimacy of CAS leaders cannot be mainly based on laws, tradition or the supposedly extraordinary capacities of leaders, but on attributes that are perhaps less tangible but not less important: the knowledge of people and of relevant issues, the capacity for promoting and conducting deliberation and negotiation, the access to interpersonal and inter-institutional networks, the capacity for "translation," the ability to inspire interpersonal trust.

Of the three ideal types that Weber analyzes, charismatic leadership comes closer, perhaps, to associative leadership. But what is more important in the latter is not the personal superiority of the

leader. True, the leader must possess, to a certain extent, the characteristics that according to Bertrand Russell "confer authority: self-confidence, quick decision, and skill in deciding upon the right measures" (1943: 23). But this superiority must be tempered by other less authoritarian characteristics: ability to communicate and coordinate, patience to conciliate and build consensus, etc. Therefore, compared to its charismatic counterpart, complex associative leadership cannot be as personalized. Even though CAS develop out of interpersonal relationships and remain at that level of social interaction, they cannot simply depend upon a single person. Participants cannot simply be a bulk of personal followers of the leader (for example, his warriors nor his apostles). Hence, as will be explained below, to be efficacious, this leader must promote the creation of impersonal rules that transcend him or her and ensure the survival of the organization even in the absence of its main founder.

But if associative leadership cannot be assimilated to Weber's typology, could it not be defined by the social field in which it develops? To be sure, scholars have analyzed several types of specialized leadership: bureaucratic, military, party, business, etc. However, what is characteristic of complex associative systems is, precisely, that they develop outside the main established social fields. It is obvious, therefore, that their leaders cannot have the institutional and structural support enjoyed by these specialized leaderships, all of which play vital roles in social reproduction. Therefore, complex associative leadership is necessarily more shifting and ambiguous than any of its specialized, socially consecrated leaderships.

From these initial inferences, it is now possible to draw some reasonably precise hypotheses about complex associative leadership and complex associative leaders. The first of these concerns the structure of leadership. It is reasonable to expect this structure to be more inter-personal than institutional. In other words, this structure will mainly consist of regularities and tensions, created by personal interactions between the leader and the followers, rather than of abstract rules and procedures. Moreover, this structure will tend to be more horizontal than those of other types of leadership. The complex associative leader will be a *primus inter pares*, not a *magister*. To cite two classic examples, the leader will resemble not Alexander Magnus,

who was the chief of his own army, but Agamemnon: a king, to be sure, but a "king of kings," whose followers were not his subjects but his equals, free to obey or challenge him (as Achilles did in decisive moments of the Troy War).

Because of this, the complex associative leader will always remain an emergent figure, whose authority and influence will continuously be in construction. In these circumstances, leadership will offer an opportunity for social ascent. Therefore, individuals aspiring to that position will usually have many competitors and rivals. For the same reason, these leaders will often be seen, by both their followers and rivals, as people who may be co-opted, people who may be bought off or captured by the established powers (business firms, the government, or some formal organization). In consequence, these leaders will be particularly vulnerable to doubts and criticisms about their reliability.

Finally, the structure of leadership will be dynamic: hierarchies will change often, according to the challenges and tasks of the moment, the kind of activity that is being performed and the part of the system that is being led. It will not be strange, therefore, that leaders change frequently and that at any moment several leaders coexist within the same hierarchy.

The second inference concerns the activity of leadership. Complex associative leaders should be expected to devote much of their time to generating and building trust among their followers. Of course, this cannot be the absolute trust that religions and charismatic leaders normally demand, but one that is more conditional and reciprocal based on shared norms, expected benefits and perceived technical capabilities. Whatever he or she does, a complex associative leader cannot afford to be, as Machiavelli said, "a great pretender and dissembler." (1998: 70). Quite the opposite, these leaders should always strive to present themselves as prudent people, with moderate ambitions.

Besides endeavoring to generate trust, these leaders should devote much of their time to "translating," that is to say, to facilitating communication and understanding among their diverse followers. For the same reason, they should devote much of their efforts to organize and conduct negotiation, showing that they are able to deal with

conflicts of interests among the members of their associative systems and to facilitate the search for mutually advantageous agreements. And, of course, they should promote deliberation, facilitating the participation of members in reasonable and equitable discussions, taking care that none of them are systematically excluded or that the particular interests of participants overwhelm the general interests of the system.

In other words, seen as an activity, complex associative leadership consists in generating trust, translating the different logics of participants into a "language" that every member can understand, conducting negotiation and propitiating deliberation. Hence, these leaders spend less time issuing commands than managing communication; their job consists less in distributing obligations and prizes than in coordinating the actions and combining the achievement of the others.

The third inference concerns the personal traits of leaders. What personal characteristics should a leader have in order to perform, successfully, these activities? To begin with, one should not expect the person leading a complex associative system to be an intellectual leader, someone who proposes large innovative ideas—a visionary, a prophet, an exceptional thinker. Complex associative leaders are practical people; their kingdom is of this world. They are individuals ready to serve as a link among people who share an interest, explicit or latent; ready to devote their time and efforts to promote the creation of a problem-oriented associative system. These people may, of course, be great thinkers, but it is not in that quality that they direct the establishment and functioning of such a system.

Unlike conventional political leaders, complex associative leaders should not be expected to be eloquent tribunes or dramatic polemists. They are conductors not of masses but of individuals and, at most, of small groups. They do not seek to convince with great speeches and an exalted rhetoric but with discreet reasons. Complex associative leadership is always interpersonal, working through direct contacts between concrete persons, not massive or impersonal. The associative system may be large, but in that case within this system we should find a network of interpersonal leaders, rather than a single all-encompassing leadership.

Moreover, these leaders should resign themselves to exerting only a moderate influence over their followers. From an organizational standpoint, their impact may be profound: when successful, they will define rules and establish a system that will transcend themselves. But from a personal standpoint, their leadership will be external: it will not seek to shape and transform the personality of the followers, or to effect deep changes in the persons subject to it or to indoctrinate or reeducate them. Instead, taking people as they are, leaders will encourage them to cooperate. In so doing, they will not require their followers to surrender their will to them; nor will they seek to control all the information about them, as a leader of a secret sect or group will try to do (Simmel 1906). Instead, complex associative leaders will be content to know only the information directly relevant for the functioning of the associative system.

In several of the characteristics mentioned so far, the difference between complex associative leadership and its congeners is one of degree, not of kind. Other kinds of leadership are also flexible, intensely interpersonal, notably horizontal, etc. What is categorically peculiar to complex associative leadership is the combination of all of these characteristics.

Also peculiar is the challenge that this combination creates. In fact, this challenge is triple. First, since these associative systems neither normally exist by legal mandate nor satisfy an officially recognized social need, the first basic task of the leader or leaders is to establish the system. This means not so much creating the system from scratch as to animate it, that is to say, to bring it to life: to encourage potential participants to realize that they have potentially converging concerns and that those concerns could be defined as a common problem for which mutually advantageous solutions could be found. The task is, in other words, to help them recognize that the actions of each affects all the others; that, therefore, in a sense they already form part of a latent associative system, even if they do not know each other; and that all of them will profit if they make this association explicit.

Once the system has been established, the second challenge for the leader is to promote the creation of institutions. It is true that, as

previously pointed out, complex associative systems are less institutionalized than the majority of formal organizations (economic firms, political organizations and the like). Even so, they cannot survive, let alone successfully function, if they do not have at least some basic rules—written or unwritten—defining, among other things, who can take part in the system, how decisions are to be made, how labor should be divided, how disputes are to be solved, and so forth. This means that the leader must not only be the animator of the system but also its main organizer.

Finally, having directed the establishment and institutionalization of the system, the leader has still one more challenge to confront. Complex associative leaders cannot do like the legislators that Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2003: 25-28) imagined, who should voluntarily go into exile so as not to interfere with the working of their creation. On the contrary, they must stay on to encourage this work, facilitating communication among participants, urging them to persist in the search for common problems and for solutions that are advantageous to everyone. Otherwise, without the active backing of the law and established powers, the system would soon decay.

In other words, the peculiar challenge of complex associative leadership is to animate the system, to institutionalize it and to keep it alive. If leaders successfully cope with that challenge, they will not only contribute to solving the problems that affect the participants in the system; they will also contribute to something that is more fundamental: strengthen the associative life of their society, multiplying the alternative spaces for public action and educating citizens in the arduous art of voluntary cooperation.

In this sense, paraphrasing Georg Simmel (1950: 283-291) one could say that the most important promise of complex associative leadership is to further the ideal of equality without ignoring the inevitability of hierarchy: since it is impossible to suppress all hierarchies, since they seem inherent to large-scale human cooperation, the second best solution is to multiply them, by multiplying the number of associations and making them more flexible, voluntary and fluid.

Three Cases of Associative Leadership

How accurate are these inferences about the characteristics of complex associative leadership? How able is the leadership of real existing complex associative systems to face the distinctive challenge identified above? To answer these questions, in this section we will briefly analyze three actual cases of complex associative leadership.

But before presenting this analysis, it should be noted that the distinctive challenge to leadership mentioned above is not easy to face in practice. To meet it successfully, a number of personality traits and objective circumstances may converge that can be mutually inconsistent, even incompatible. For instance, to convene the potential participants and set up the system, a leader must have much energy and determination, qualities that are not easily compatible with the circumspection and flexibility that are necessary to create the system's institutions and with the persistence that is indispensable to keep the system alive once it has been established. Given these and similar practical inconsistencies, complex associative leadership cannot be reduced to simple techniques; it will always be an art, an essential part of the art of association.

The UNAM Claustro: Dense Institutionalization and Specialized Leadership

Given that the Claustro was created within a restricted, highly institutionalized public space, the main challenge confronting its leadership was not to convene all the participants. The university authorities took care of that. The true challenge was to give real life to the associative system. This entailed confronting the distrust that had long prevailed among the different sectors of UNAM's academic personnel; overcoming the skepticism of much of the academic community toward this sort of initiatives; and finding a way to deal with the authorities of the university (the president, directors and even the leadership of the university labor union), respectfully but without subordination.

This challenge involved several risks. One of them was formalism: that the Claustro became a simple label, a purely formal organization

paralyzed by indifference, irrelevance and distrust. Another risk was precisely the opposite: that the Claustro turned into a battlefield, nullified by constant clashes between different academic sectors. The relationship with university authorities was equally risky. It was not easy to find the right balance between cooperation and independence; and, once achieved, the equilibrium could easily degenerate into either confrontation or subordination, both equally damaging to the functioning of the Claustro.

To deal with this challenge and manage the risks that it involved, the Claustro needed a leadership with distinctive characteristics. The person playing a role like this should enjoy widespread recognition in the university, with widespread prestige extending over the different academic sectors. That person should be recognized, moreover, as someone able to deal sensibly with the authorities of the university, but whose personal independence from them was without doubt; that is to say, such a person should not be regarded as either an enemy or an agent of some or all of those authorities. Moreover, that person should be endowed with a certain charisma, which, according to Max Weber's classical analysis, is the best antidote to the rigidity of tradition and institutions (1978: 1111-1117). Even more, since such a person was expected to lead representatives of an academic community, he or she had to be a rightful a member of that community, with a solid academic career. Moreover, that person should have remarkable communicative capacities, being able to persuade and refute without violence; he or she needed to be a "translator," able to express the worries, interests, even the traditions of different academic sectors in a way that was easily understood by everyone. Finally, that person should have executive capacity, being able to move from deliberations and negotiations toward practical agreements and actions. In short, what was needed was a person widely recognized as independent, yet willing to negotiate and deliberate respectfully with different actors, including the authorities.

This leader, of course, could be part of a broader leadership system. Within that system there might be a variety of intermediate leaders, some of them directly representing specific academic sectors and others in charge of certain specialized tasks. Yet, the main leader should be able to transcend those partial loyalties and affiliations, endeavoring

to conciliate and integrate the members in a reasonably harmonious whole. To do this, he or she must be a leader of leaders.

In practice, however, the leadership of the Claustro was much more modest. Participants interviewed in the course of this research were generally reluctant to identify a main leader. When urged to do so, several mentioned a person who had directed the elaboration of the Claustro's internal norms, rules and methods; but, as they always emphasized, such a person participated in the Claustro for a short period although she managed to leave an enduring heritage. Several of them refused to describe the current president of the Coordinating Board as a leader, describing him instead as a facilitator or coordinator. The dominant perception seemed to be that, instead of a top leader, there were several secondary leaders and that, in any case, leadership within the Claustro was moderate rather than expansive. It was, as an interviewee put it, "a leadership of modesty, of prudence and of democratic respect." Nobody put the autonomy of those leaders into question but nobody seemed to admire their strength, either.

In any circumstances, it is not easy to find a leader with the characteristics that the Claustro situation called for. But the Claustro seemed designed precisely to prevent the emergence of a leader like that, surely out of fear that he or she could provoke a major conflict in the university.[5] Three rules were particularly important in this sense: all representatives were to be elected by sector, which encouraged each of the constituencies to choose people strongly identified with their sector instead of individuals capable of representing the academic community as a whole; the presidency of the Coordinating Board was to be rotated, a rule explicitly designed to prevent the creation of strong, durable leadership; and the mission of the Claustro was to remain modest, to be accomplished as soon as the reform proposal was finished and submitted for approval (or rejection) to the University Council—a mission that was extremely unlikely to steer powerful passions and bring forth the most audacious personalities.

[5] Here one can see a more general problem, clearly identified by March and Weil (2005: 30): when leaders are selected by established institutions, "they are …generally conservative and gifted with the talents required for exploitation" of already known opportunities but not for the exploration of new opportunities."

The Claustro did manage to draft its proposal for reform of the UNAM's academic labor code. But it did so at such an extremely slow pace that it wore out the enthusiasm of even the most devoted participants. Almost eleven years after the Claustro was installed, its reform proposal was yet to be voted upon by the University Council, which means that, in a sense, its mission was not fully accomplished.[6]

Of course, many factors combine to explain why this performance was so modest. But among them one can safely count the fact that it did not have the sort of leadership that the circumstances called for.

The Chapultepec Accord: Personal Authority and Personalized Leadership

If the UNAM Claustro needed, above all, an animator, the Chapultepec Accord demanded a leader that served as unifier and moderator. To begin with, that leader had to unify the different stakeholders who, given the ambitions of the project, were to be found in all parts and social sectors of Mexico. Moreover, since not every stakeholder could participate directly, the active participants had to be representatives or leaders of relevant groups or currents of opinion. In other words, the leader of a project as ambitious as this one had to be able to attract many other leaders and together with them from a leadership system both dynamic and efficacious. Once these leaders were reunited, the obvious challenge was to put them to work in an associative system with clear, inclusive, equitable and efficacious rules.

In these circumstances, the risk of excessive "routinzation"—that the associative system become a bureaucratic organization—was clearly small. In contrast, there was a big risk that the system become a simple chatting box, full of exalted declarations but with little practical impact. Another big risk was that the system failed to include, equitably, all the relevant groups and opinions of the country, either because one or more of them were totally excluded or because some of them were included only nominally with no real influence.

[6] According to its founding documents, "the Claustro will be dismissed when the University Council votes upon its project of reform" (Claustro Académico para la Reforma del Estatuto del Personal Académico 2005).

To achieve this mission, the leader had to take two largely incompatible, approaches. In a first stage, the leader had to act with great audacity and much initiative, mobilizing at maximum his or her personal prestige and influence to convene and encourage all the relevant participants. To do this, the leader had to be a very well-known person in the country, somebody who could stand, so to speak, above the controversies that divided the different social sectors, organizations and opinions. In other words, at the same time the leader must be both influential and reliable. But during a second stage, this leader had to undergo a radical change, becoming a self-limiting person, able to promote the dispersion of authority and let each of the sectors represented in the system talk with its own voice. To do this, he or she had to abstain from personally making all the relevant decisions, leaving this task in the hands of lesser leaders and exerting only a moral second-order leadership—like a modest king who reigns but does not rule and does not interfere with those who rule.

A crucial task of this second-order leadership is to direct the establishment of the associative system, trying to make it independent from its founder. Another equally important task is to foment trust among participants and facilitate their communication. And perhaps even more important was the third task: to promote the acceptance, strengthening and preservation of the values of the associative system, among which equity and toleration should occupy prominent places.

Was the leadership of the Chapultepec Accord congruent with these needs? This associative system had one undisputed leader: Carlos Slim who, in his own words, "coordinated the process until we slowly reached an agreement" (Smith and Arai 2006). Slim's leadership performed quite well during the first stage. An eloquent indicator in this respect is that he persuaded three of the four candidates then running for the country's presidency to underwrite the Accord. The fourth candidate, from the Left, while declining to underwrite the agreement and implicitly criticizing its promoter, did not go so far as to denounce it. But even at this stage, there was an important deficiency: Slim could not, or would not, attract more leaders, especially those who could counterbalance the power of the business elite which was excessively represented in the Accord and monopolized

8 out of 19 positions in the top organ of the Agreement, the Information and Follow-Up Commission.[7]

Yet, Slim was obviously incapable of facing the second challenge. Instead of taking a discreet position as soon as the system was established, becoming an indirect second-level leader, he continued to be the protagonist of the entire project. His predominance prevented the system from developing the institutions that it needed to become a true national forum. On the contrary, the system kept depending upon a single person. Another consequence was that the system failed to break away from its elitism and excessive pro-business orientation.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Chapultepec Accord practically vanished a year after its glamorous apparition. In the following years, no group claimed its heritage, taking it as an example of how national problems could be approached; none of the political leaders that praised it during its glorious days has presented even a single proposal inspired by it. In this respect, the Accord sharply contrasted with its predecessors: the "Twenty Commitments for Democracy," the "San Angel Group," the "Seminar of the Chapultepec Castle" or the series of conferences known as the "Commitments with the Nation", all of which left visible imprints on the country's institutions and public discourse.

Although many causes certainly contributed to the failure of the Chapultepec Accord, one of them was, to be sure, its boundless ambition. If its goal was a general transformation of Mexican society, the Accord needed a kind of leader that is hard to find: a reliable colossus, willing to step aside and help his creation advance by itself. Such leaders, at once powerful and delicate, do appear from time to time on the political scene. But they are so rare that it is unwise to make the transformation of a country dependent on their apparition. Complex associative systems, if they really wish to succeeded, should set their aims much lower, establishing goals that can be achieved by normal persons—unless, of course, they know for sure that they have a truly great leader.

[7] Even more, 2 of those 8 positions were taken by business groups controlled by Slim (Carso and Telmex).

Knowledge Networks: Shifting Leadership

As explained in previous chapters, the knowledge networks that we analyze in this book are diverse, and it is often difficult to place all of them in a single category. But with regard to leadership, it is easy to see that they faced a common challenge arising from a similar original situation. It should be remembered that, at their core, these networks consisted of a team of people drawn from academic institutions and business firms. Although the formal goal of the cooperative enterprise was usually determined beforehand, in practice this definition resulted vague. This meant that participants themselves had to define the goal, as well as the rules and procedures that would guide their interaction in the course of the cooperation itself. And given the obvious differences between the two sets of participants, this multiple task could not be done spontaneously without appropriate leadership.

Not surprisingly, most of the participants interviewed affirmed that the project had a leader. However, when asked to identify that person, many of them were reluctant or hesitant; in the end, some simply backtracked and affirmed that in fact there was no such a leader. Since no evident danger existed and, in any case the interviews were confidential, it is clear that factors other than concerns about security were at play. Several interviewees implied that one of these factors was the need to create and preserve a feeling of shared effort. One participant stated this rationale unequivocally: "For a project like this to be successful, participants must feel it as their own; and if I say I am the leader, they would think that this is my project and that they were working for me."

But there was also a cognitive reason behind this hesitancy or outright refusal. As the interviews suggested, leadership within these networks had several peculiar characteristics that made it difficult to attribute it to one specific person. One of such characteristics was the flexible, even imprecise, definition of the role of leader. It is true that the projects usually had a formally appointed leader—known as the "responsible person" or the "coordinator." But, as many participants explained, these persons were not necessarily the real leaders and their actual functions were often confined to administrative issues

("to administer the money" or "keep the accounts in order"). Sometimes, participants identified one specific person as the real leader. One of them said, for example: "Even though X is not the direct head of the project, he is the most experienced person, the one who has contributed the most innovative ideas …and his opinions are the most influential for the team." Curiously enough, sometimes the person who was recognized as the real leader was someone with a relatively low status, often a student who, according to the rest, was the "most strongly committed" and hardest-working participant. But some interviewees simply said that anyone could be the leader: "often any person within the group may have an important idea and can cause a complete change in the objective of the project; this capacity is not restricted to the director or coordinator of the project." But whether leadership could be attributed to a single person or to "anyone," the basic situation was the same, as one participant said with particular clearness: "even though on paper roles are clearly defined, in practice this definition becomes problematic."

A second characteristic is the multiplicity of leaders or, as one participant aptly called it, "a widely shared leadership." As indicated above, one source of this multiplicity is structural, namely, the different origins of the participants. Thus, projects usually had at least two leaders, one from the business firm and another from the academic institution. Closely resembling —but not perfectly matching— this division, there was another arising from the different objectives of academic and business participants. An academic participant explained this type of division: X "sometimes do want [to be the leader], but sometimes I do not let him. He wants to solve the problem of his business firm while I am interested in solving the scientific problem." But, as the two original groups merged into a single team, another source of division appeared: the diversity of tasks and the creation of different sub-teams to deal with each of them. In the words of a participant: "within the project there are work teams, there are positions, so to speak, and obviously because of that there are different roles, activities" and leaders. For these reasons, rather than speaking of a single leader or even a number of individual leaders, it would be more appropriate to speak of a system of leadership: X, said one informant, "is the leader of one of the

projects, but then there is a responsible person for each unit, and I …coordinate all of them." Yet, it is important to notice that this coordination was not always easy. Sometimes, as one interviewee stated, this coordination requires "breaking down the leadership that exists within each sub-group and unit."

A third characteristic, closely related to the previous, is that this system of leadership was in almost permanent flux. Leadership, in the vivid words of one informant, often "jumped" from one place to another. This flux was caused, at least to a certain extent, by the evolving needs of the project and the succession of tasks. The person who led the initial phase of the work was not necessarily the same who did so in the last phases.[8] But this dynamism had an additional source: the belief—shared by several current leaders—that one of their main tasks was to train new leaders: "I lead," held one of them, "but my purpose is that they [the other participants] become leaders in the very near future so that they do not need my leadership anymore."

A fourth characteristic is the multiplicity of tasks that leaders are expected to do. Leadership within these networks seems to be a truly multi-faceted assignment. Participants mentioned a large number of duties, obviously not always easy to combine. Leaders were said to be in charge of "having the original idea of the project," "putting the team together," "coordinating it," "devising new schemata," "being the main means of communication among members," "functioning as advisers" to the other team members, "making the decisions," "following up the implementation of these decisions," "supervising the day-to-day progress of the project," etc.

In the fifth place, leaders of these knowledge networks were said to have quite a variety of distinctive personal traits, some of them potentially opposed to each other. To begin with, they were often described as people endowed with a "global vision," a lot of experience and many innovative ideas. They were also defined as very knowledgeable persons—with deep and wide knowledge, though not

[8] The role of leadership, an interviewee explained, "is being performed by X. But this issue is not static. It may well be that in another phase the leader of the project will be taken over by a different person. It all depends on the task at hand. The project has nine phases and currently we are still in phase one."

necessarily very specialized. For example, X, a leader of a project dealing with paints, coatings and related products, was described in these terms: "he had been studying optical properties in general, and therefore paints are a particular topic in his field of study." But leaders are credited with considerable amounts of tacit knowledge, some of it of technical nature but most of it related to the management of inter-personal relations: long "experience working with research groups, the ability to lead a project, the ability to determine when a line of investigation has been sufficiently studied, the ability to control time …" Finally, leaders are seen as people with remarkable personalities with such abilities as perseverance, openness, creativity, entrepreneurship, and maturity. In short, the leaders of these networks stood out—at least in the eyes of other participants—not for their love of power, their ability to face danger, their rhetorical capacities, their ambition and other qualities usually emphasized in political, economic and military leadership, but for other, apparently more modest capacities: the amplitude of their vision, their general knowledge, their capacity to organize small groups and their capacity for patient perseverant work.

To summarize, leadership in these knowledge networks was important and almost omnipresent. But it is difficult to ascribe it to specific persons. Rather than a collection of personal leaders, it was a fluid, open-ended system of leadership whose membership changed according to the tasks and phases of cooperation. Authority, understood as a capacity to make binding decisions, was constructed by the leaders themselves, thanks to their ample knowledge and their useful personal capacities, and was vested not so much in concrete individuals but in the leadership system as a whole.

Conclusion

The preceding analysis allows us to address two general questions: How did these cases of leadership contribute to the performance of their associative systems? And how could the preceding analysis contribute to the study of leadership and authority in general?

With respect to the former question, our data do not allow us to specify how the leadership of knowledge networks contributed or

not to the performance of their respective networks. It is obvious, however, that such influence must not have been trivial. Otherwise, how could one account for the fact that most of the participants interviewed recognized the existence of leadership, stressed the importance of the tasks that leaders performed and attributed quite special personal traits to the leaders?

Our ability with regard to the other two cases is somewhat better. The main idea in this respect is summarized in table 8.1 which shows the ways in which leaders of the UNAM Claustro and the Chapultepec Accord faced the peculiar challenge of complex associative leadership.

TABLE 8.1
CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES OF LEADERSHIP

	Chapultepec	*Claustro*
Creating the group	Yes	It was not their achievement
Institutionalizing it	No	Yes
Maintaining it	He did not want to	They could not

SOURCE: own construction.

The leadership of the Chapultepec Accord was very prominent but ultimately scarcely efficacious. It enabled the associative system to produce a quick and vary visible result, but it did not manage to create durable institutions and promote interpersonal trust. The leadership of the UNAM Claustro was more modest and slow. Under its conduction, the system needed years of intense discussions to produce its main practical result. And this result was not only scarcely visible, its real impact was also dubious (since it is unknown whether its proposal will ever be voted upon, let alone approved).

The ideal complex associative leadership should resemble a negative combination of both of these cases: neither as dazzling as that of the Chapultepec Accord, nor as circumspect as that of the Claustro. In other words, a complex associative leadership works better when it manages to establish, and maintain, the delicate equilibrium between dispersion of authority and efficacious leadership. The success of the system depends, to a large extent, on how well it succeeds in this task.

A complex associative system that manages to produce the desired leaders should not only be able to generate benefits for each of its participants and solve the public problem in which it is interested. Its main social contribution will be to promote the development of associative life. This contribution appears in two main ways. Directly, by enabling a certain number of citizens to realize that they are part of a latent association and therefore encouraging them to make that association explicit, the system will enhance the political participation of those citizens and, by so doing, will diversify political representation and increase the associative density of the country. Indirectly, this effort will have a pedagogic effect: it will set a precedent, an example of how to deal with public problems. Leaders who help their associative systems to do this will in fact produce the greatest social benefit that can be expected from them: teach citizens how to solve, in an inclusive and equitable way, the public problems that cannot be left exclusively in the hands of the government.

With respect to the second question, it should be noted that the establishment of complex associative leadership can be seen as an extreme case of leadership construction: the creation of much needed leadership in particularly adverse circumstances. As noted, none of the three actual CAS analyzed here could have functioned, let alone produced any important results, without their leadership. Yet, many factors seemed to sabotage the creation of such leaderships. These difficulties were very different from the ones that arise in other, more conventional, contexts: the physical dangers of the cooperative enterprise, the lack of the armed force necessary to impose obedience to the emerging leader or to neutralize other pretenders, and so on. Rather, the main difficulty was less spectacular but perhaps more potent: the absence or limited usefulness of the resources that are traditionally used in leadership building.

Historically, one of the easiest ways to create an organization and endow it with potent leadership is the decisive support of established institutions and organizations. Such support was certainly important in the three cases analyzed in this chapter. But it was not sufficient in any of them: they all had to construct their own leadership, often simply ignoring the officially appointed leaders.

When established institutions and organizations are not supportive enough, or even when they are hostile, one of the most efficacious

instruments for leadership creation is personal charisma. To be sure, the three cases analyzed here show that charisma is, indeed, an important ingredient of complex associative leadership. But they also show that complex associative systems, by their very nature, are opposed to strong personalized leadership. Therefore, while important, personal charisma has a limited utility in these systems.

Economic interest, another powerful leadership-building tool, was important, but its usefulness was limited by the fact that many participants in these systems were not mainly guided by the expectation of economic profit but by other criteria that they deemed particularly important. As the analysis of knowledge networks show, something similar happened with expert knowledge. This knowledge did play a role in the construction of associative systems and their leadership. But other factors, including general knowledge and tacit knowledge, were at least equally important.

Other traditionally potent tools for leadership building, like armed force rituals and magic, were simply irrelevant. In the associative systems analyzed here, armed force was not only absent but would have been scarcely usable: people who joined these systems were autonomous and remained so even after the system was working at its full capacity. Therefore, they could not be forced to cooperate. Similarly, being radically secular, these systems left little room for the utility of magic beliefs and myths.

But if traditionally powerful tools are absent, unviable or scarcely useful, then how do complex associative leadership manage to establish the leaderships that is crucial to their origin and development? The key lies in self-creation. CAS leaders are expected to foster trust, build institutions, encourage deliberation, and oversee the performance of profitable and useful practical activities. And they became able to do these feats by doing them—by engaging in deliberation and personal persuasion; by carefully appealing to the practical interests of actual and potential participants; by proving themselves to be trustworthy persons; by facilitating communication among members.

One important implication of this self-creation is that the struggle for leadership in CAS consists not so much in the construction of a hierarchy or in the conquest of positions of leadership, as in the

effort to attain a delicate equilibrium—between personal influence and collective work, between protracted deliberation and practical decisions, between decentralization and central coordination, between commands and persuasion, between leadership and representation, between hierarchy and horizontal cooperation. And it is an equilibrium that cannot be determined beforehand: its optimal location depends on the specificities of each associative effort.

And this is perhaps the main lesson that the analysis of complex associative leadership can teach us about leadership and authority in general. In the end, leadership—divested of all the traditional instruments that both facilitate its construction and obscure its study—is the permanent search for an imprecise equilibrium between personal autonomy and hierarchical organization.

Conclusion: The Tensions and Challenges of Complex Associative Systems

To conclude our analysis, we can say that complex associative systems are structures with emerging properties and distinctive characteristics; variously combined, these properties and characteristics create a series of distinguishing tensions.

We have preferred the phrase "complex associative systems," rather than that of "governance networks," because the latter, though it is currently fashionable, put the emphasis on the function of governing, not on the fact of association which is what interests us here. Moreover, associative systems are explicit or manifest: they usually have a proper name and both their members and interested observers are aware of their existence. In contrast, social networks—including, of course, governance networks—may be subjacent structures, made up of links of which even the actors themselves may not be aware; sometimes, careful research is needed to reveal these structures.

Compared to other members of the broader genre "associative life," CAS are distinguished by a combination of five elements. First, they are autonomous, able to generate their own rules, set their goals and objectives and make their own decisions. This means that they are not subordinated to a government agency, economic firm, university, association, etc., although, of course, they are subject to the legal framework of the country or group of countries where they operate.

In the second place, the members of these systems are autonomous: they participate because they want to do so; they control their own resources and can leave whenever they choose to do so. In the third

place, these members are diverse, normally coming from different social milieus, having different careers and controlling resources that are mutually incommensurable (for example, money, political authority, technical skills and so forth).

But, in the fourth place, besides being autonomous and diverse, participants are also interdependent: the resources that each of them control are necessary, and often even indispensable, to solve the problem that the system seeks to solve. None of these participants can solve the problem without the help of the others. Finally, these systems are dynamic: their borders contract or expand as participants come and go; their goals are shifting and their organizational structures flexible. Moreover, these systems often branch off, giving rise to new associative experiences. In other words, complex associative systems are not built once and for all; they are permanently under construction.

From these basic properties derive a series of visible characteristics regarding the origins, forms of organization and regulative mechanisms of CAS. It is thanks to these characteristics that we are able to identify actual existing CAS. Each concrete associative system is a particular equilibrium, generally unstable, among a set of tensions that give them their characteristic dynamism. At the basis of these tensions lies the contradiction between the autonomy and interdependence of the members.

Besides facilitating participation, CAS stand out for their capacity to process conflicts and foster agreements among a diversity of political, social and economic actors. Thanks to this capacity, they can generate solutions to deeply felt public problems, such as poverty, insecurity, corruption or unemployment. Ideally, they also arise to ensure and certify that strategic participants honor their commitments. Based on the principles of horizontality and mutual scrutiny, CAS may foster equity and therefore establish fair (although generally unstable) balances among participants with different amounts of power. The importance that CAS usually attribute to knowledge and information—as made evident, for example, by the participation of experts and scholars—may also help improve the quality of public debate and deliberation.

But, despite their great potential and enormous variety, these forms of cooperation face a common challenge: to reunite and coordinate the efforts of a variety of individuals, groups and institutions, most of them independent from each other and each of them with their own views and goals. Therefore, the distinctive challenge that these structures face is to articulate the actions of their diverse participants without, in the process, destroying that diversity.

In the previous chapters, we have seen how several of these structures—all of which exhibit, to a significant degree, the peculiar characteristics of complex associative systems—have dealt with this challenge and how this has affected their functioning and performance. In this concluding chapter, we will emphasize how the basic tensions of CAS manifest themselves in three key dimensions: internal communication and cohesion, decision-making and political organization.

Cohesion and Communication

To cooperate with very different people and groups, when there are no laws, ideologies or identities guaranteeing that cooperation, may be a risky undertaking. Whoever decides to do it incurs a multitude of risks: from ridicule (for earnestly performing a task that nobody else seriously undertakes) to important material losses (if the others betray the common effort, abandon it or take undue advantage of it).

In these circumstances, a social glue that is as powerful as shapeless becomes critical: trust. Trust, as the term is used in this book, has three basic components: interdependence, uncertainty and positive expectations. Although the scholarly literature has identified several types of trust, our analysis shows that three of them are particularly important for CAS: calculated or strategic, technical and normative. Technical trust is founded on a positive perception about the capacities and skills of the others. Calculated or strategic trust is based on an optimistic estimation of the costs and benefits of cooperation. Finally, normative trust arises out of a sense of shared norms, beliefs and values.

The existence of one type of trust can facilitate the development of the others; but, conversely, the predominance of one type can suffocate the others. For example, when trust is founded on exclusively technical or strategic expectations, communication among participants may become difficult. The prevalence of any of these kinds of trust may prevent the development of normative trust. On the other hand, collaborative relations based exclusively on normative closeness may have excellent interpersonal communication, but this very fact may undermine the capacity to produce technically accurate or strategically efficient solutions.

The above means that trust can have either positive or negative consequences. It can promote the integration of the associative system and its stabilization and even generate new sets of collaborative relations. But it can also create problems of coordination, efficacy or efficiency. The key to these contradictory effects largely lies in the characteristics of the mix. It is true that all CAS need these three kinds of trust. But they need it in different proportions according to the innumerable variations in the context, objectives, problem, identity of participants and many other factors intervening in each system.

This is why we argue that normative, strategic and technical "trusts" should not be seen as separate types, but as different dimensions of a single phenomenon: complex interpersonal trust. Thus, in contrast to other, less complex social interactions which are based on a single type of trust, CAS require normative solidarity, expectation of benefits and a positive perception about the competences of the others.

In other words, in complex associative systems cooperation implies a tension not only between trust and distrust, that is to say, between positive and negative expectations about the others. It implies, as well, several other tensions among the technical, normative and strategic dimensions of complex trust. It could be said, therefore, that CAS are, among other things, a continuous search for an appropriate balance of these elements. To strike the right balance, adjusting it to the changes in the number and identity of participants and in the contexts in which cooperation takes place, is a major part of the art of complex association.

But trust is relevant only if participants are able to communicate with each other. To do so, participants must have a common language to express their differences and coincidences in a mutually intelligible way. Yet, given the diversity of participants, communication poses a crucial challenge to complex associative systems: How to create a shared language out of the different cognitive orientations and organizational logics of participants? How to make the different purposes, preferences, needs, interests and causes that guide the different participants commensurable? And how to do this without, at the same time, destroying the diversity that is characteristic of these systems? To refer to the process through which CAS face that challenge, we use the metaphor of translation.

Our analysis showed that this translation takes place at both the structural and personal levels. By reuniting diverse people and groups, CAS function as structures of translation, connecting members who come from different institutional, organizational and social contexts. At the same time, within each CAS certain individuals take on the role of translators, facilitating communication and understanding among members. Usually, these are individuals who have worked in different types of organizations and therefore understand their different cultures and procedures; they are connected with the other participants by a diversity of formal and informal links; because of their personal attributes, they are perceived as agreeable and accessible individuals by the other participants; they may occupy central or marginal places in the organization; and they are very active in decision-making and problem-solving processes.

But, like trust, translation also creates a double risk: it may be insufficient or excessive. If it is insufficient, participants will simply be unable to understand each other and the collaboration will collapse. But if it is excessive, the associative system will lose its complexity: participants will abandon their own "languages" and the structure of cooperation will consolidate in a single, unitary organization. If this happens, the structure will gain coherence, but it will lose the richness that results from diversity.

To end up this summary review of trust and translation, we should point out that, within certain limits, there seems to be an inverse relation between these two elements. This is because the importance

of translation and translators varies with the degree of difficulty of communication among members which in turn depends, to a certain extent, on trust. But it is also true that trust and translation feed upon each other. Thus, trustworthiness is an essential characteristic of individuals that act as translators. Translators must be trustworthy in a complex way, with characteristics that match each of the three dimensions of complex interpersonal trust.

Decision-Making

Since their members are autonomous, CAS cannot make decisions that go against, or even ignore, what any of them considers his or her legitimate interests. If a participant thinks that such interests have been sacrificed, he or she will feel strongly tempted to abandon the associative system. And since members are diverse, it is not easy to find a solution that satisfies everyone, not just some or even the majority. Hence, from the standpoint of decision-making, CAS look like a constant search for compromise or consensus. This entails two opposite risks: that the search takes too long and fails to generate tangible results in a reasonable time span, or that it is too hasty and leaves many participants dissatisfied.

In this context, the basic mechanisms for achieving compromises and consensus are, respectively, negotiation and deliberation. Negotiation is anchored in several characteristics of CAS, but especially in the interdependence of the members. As long as participants are diverse and autonomous, each of them controlling important resources, negotiation will remain necessary. Therefore, it is not exaggerated to say that CAS are systems of competitive cooperation, continuously searching for acceptable ways to distribute the costs and benefits of the interaction.

Yet, although indispensable, negotiation cannot be the only decision-making mechanism in CAS, not even the predominant one. Negotiation is possible as long as participants have interests that can be specified as reasonably well defined objectives and goals that can be achieved through reasonably coherent strategies, oriented to obtaining benefits and minimizing losses.

It is clear that, because of their very nature, CAS often fail to meet these conditions. In the first place, the interests of participants—and hence also their objectives, goals, strategies, benefits and losses—are not usually predefined; rather, they are defined and redefined in the course of the interaction. In other words, they are internal to the associative system. This implies that negotiation, while indispensable, is secondary: before the distribution of costs and benefits of the interaction can be negotiated, it is necessary to define expectations from this perspective. Something similar happens with the problems that CAS normally seek to solve. These problems are complex, difficult not only to solve but also to define. If isolated participants were able to define them in a way that is both technically correct and profitable, then it would hardly be necessary to create a system of this type. But such is clearly not the case. Problems have to be defined during the interaction itself. Obviously, these definitions cannot be made by means of negotiation: another decision-making mechanism is necessary.

Moreover, CAS should not only be seen as structures of exchange and conflict resolution. They are, above all, autonomous organizations, that is to say, collective entities with their own interests, goals, strategies, benefits, losses and problems, different from those of their individual members. And precisely because their members are both diverse and autonomous, these systems could not function unless they managed to establish themselves as a common ground, created by the interactions of their members but not reducible to the actions of any of them (or even of all of them separately).

The mechanism by which CAS manage to do all of this is deliberation, that is to say, the exchange of arguments to arrive at reasonable definitions, decisions and solutions. But even if it fails to produce these collective agreements, deliberation may at least clarify the differences, thereby facilitating the mutual understanding among participants and, consequently, a better definition of particular interests.

Deliberation has many obvious advantages when used in CAS. To the extent that they emerge from a reasonable consensus in which each member is allowed to participate in an equitable way, the decisions reached through deliberation are self-enforcing: they are guaranteed, first, by the opinion of each participant and, second, by peer

pressure. Moreover, these decisions may be functionally efficacious, almost by definition: to the extent that each participant accepts them as their own, they are likely to be conscientiously, even enthusiastically, implemented.

Yet, deliberation also involves important dangers. Perhaps the most obvious one is that discussion may be excessively prolonged, requiring much attention and time and producing few tangible results. Moreover, by opening everything to collective criticism, it can increase the number of controversial issues and, in extreme cases, create disagreements where they did not exist before.

In sum, negotiation is indispensable but insufficient. It must be accompanied, even preceded, by deliberation. But deliberation may be wasteful and inefficacious. Therefore, as with trust and translation, CAS need to find the appropriate balance between these two decision-making mechanisms, so that each supplements the other and moderate its defects. But the exact nature of this balance cannot be determined beforehand; and once determined it cannot remain static since the conditions of the interaction are always evolving.

Political Structure

As has been argued several times, CAS are much more horizontal, decentralized and dynamic than most conventional forms of social organization, like business firms, political parties and government institutions. But, however decentralized they may be, their actions need to be coordinated, their discussions conducted, their agreements honored and implemented. Otherwise, a CAS would not be a true associative system but only a collection of superficial and fleeting encounters, shapeless social relations, unable to create a real association.

Therefore, while they are certainly voluntary, CAS must also contain political structures, endowed with authority. As is obvious, it is not easy to reconcile these two extremes: the autonomy of members and the authority of the system. In fact, from a political standpoint CAS may be seen as attempts to manage that tension. To show how they handle this task, we focus on the two main tools that CAS use to construct their authority: representation and leadership.

Like other types of political representation, the one that takes place in CAS is a form of constructing authority: the representative is someone with authority to speak and act on behalf of the represented. Hence, seen from one extreme, the representative is an agent of the represented; but, from the opposite extreme, he or she is their superior. But, unlike other forms of political representation, complex associative representation faces a central challenge: to make it possible for a group of individuals to speak and act for other people who are not present but who, nevertheless, do not give up their own autonomy—and do this in the absence of formal contracts or well recognized institutions that guarantee such a relationship.

To understand how complex associative representation deals with that challenge, the analysis should consider the three levels that make up any structure of political representation: the representative, the represented and the relation between both of these levels. According to our analysis, this structure has several distinctive characteristics. The first of them is the diversity of the representatives, who tend to be of three types: delegates from well established organizations (firms, government agencies, social organizations, and so forth); self-constructed representatives, who must earn their right to speak for certain groups or communities interested in the theme with which the CAS deals; and self-representatives, personages who are so important in their communities of reference that they do not need to claim to speak or act for others (for example, a widely recognized expert or a very powerful businessman).

A second distinctive characteristic of complex associative representation is that the integration of the representative body is mostly guided by a descriptive ideal: it is assumed that such a body should reflect all the relevant views, opinions, needs and aspirations of the people who are interested in the theme. Besides, this description should be proportional, so that every group or opinion carries within the representative body about the same weight as it carries in the represented population.

A third distinctive characteristic is that the represented—the constituency—is self-constructed: participants themselves define, during the process of cooperation, who must be represented in the

system. To be at once efficacious and legitimate, this construction must be guided by four basic principles: diversity, pertinence, opposition (that the extreme views about each of the issues are included) and equity.

Finally, seen as an activity, complex associative representation is a combination of five types of actions, which usually must be performed simultaneously and continuously: representatives must reunite and organize the participants, coordinate them, defend their interests, give accounts to them and persuade them to support the decisions allegedly made on their behalf.

With these distinctive characteristics in mind, we can define complex associative representation as all the actions by means of which a series of auto-represented participants, delegates and self-constructed representatives express, promote and integrate the interests and opinions of a self-constituted constituency, trying to respect their autonomy, diversity and equality. The success of these actions will determine, to a significant extent, the success of the associative enterprise.

But even if the associative system manages to solve the problem of representation, its authority will still be incomplete. This is because, according to the main meanings of representation, representatives can present themselves on behalf of the represented, speak or act for them, describe them or even symbolize them. But none of these meanings includes—at any rate, directly—a basic attribute of authority: the capacity to conduct, lead, inspire, command and, in extreme cases, repress and punish. To understand how complex associative systems construct this more "authoritarian" part of authority, it is necessary to observe another political phenomenon: leadership.

To find out what are the distinctive characteristics of complex associative leadership, we have to distinguish this from other types of leadership. Leaders, associative or otherwise, are individuals who have voluntary followers (not subjects, victims or pupils), people who can stop, go in another direction or follow another leader. But, unlike other types of leadership, complex associative leadership cannot take its legitimacy for granted, since its authority is not firmly based on laws, traditions or the supposedly extraordinary personal

qualities of the leader. It is based on other, more imprecise attributes, like the knowledge of relevant people or issues, the ability to promote and conduct negotiation and deliberation, the capacity to understand the different "languages" of participants and the ability to inspire trust, etc.

Therefore, as compared to other types of leadership, complex associative leadership has a structure that is more personal than institutional and more horizontal than hierarchical. This structure is also more dynamic, since its shape and functions often vary according to changes in the activities that the system undertakes. Moreover, this structure is characterized by the coexistence of various leaders and a high rate of personnel turnover.

Seen as an activity, this leadership consists less in issuing commands than in cultivating trust, facilitating communication, conducting negotiations and promoting deliberation. To be able to perform these activities, leaders need a number of special personal characteristics: rather than great intellectual or political personages, they must be practical people, willing to devote a considerable part of their time and energy to the creation of an associative system; they do not need to be skillful conductors of large masses but of individuals and, at most, of small groups; they do not need to be great orators but good interpersonal communicators; they must not ambition to change the entire personalities and lives of their followers but only to exert an external influence on them, encouraging them to cooperate without asking them to give up their own views and values.

But the main difference between complex associative leadership and other types of leadership lies in the triple challenge that the former must face: to bring the system into existence, endow it with its main institutions and procedures and keep it alive, without suffocating, in the process, the autonomy and diversity of the people and groups that are being led. It is not easy to deal with this challenge. But if the leadership of the system manages to do so, it will contribute not only to solving a public problem that is important for its members, but also to strengthening the associative life of their society.

Performance

Summarizing the analysis presented so far, we can affirm that complex associative systems are constituted of a series of tensions: between trust and distrust, among the three dimensions of trust, between the diversity of "languages" and the creation of a sort of lingua franca, between indecision and invasive decision, between authority and anarchy.

For reasons that have already been discussed, it is impossible to find an optimal equilibrium among these multiple tensions. This is why complex association never ceases to be an art with uncertain results. This implies, among other things, that it would be inappropriate to evaluate complex associative systems by the criteria that are commonly used to assess the performance of more conventional organizations. CAS must be evaluated not only by their capacity to use their resources efficiently but also—and, indeed, mainly—by their capacity to face their basic challenge; that is to say, by their capacity to combine the actions of their members without threatening their autonomy and diversity.

Therefore, we argue that the performance of CAS should be classified as two distinct types: practical and associative. To evaluate practical performance, we can use such conventional criteria as effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency. But even here it is necessary to modify such criteria so that each of them includes three basic dimensions: normative, technical and exchange. For instance, to determine whether the practical performance of a given CAS was efficacious, it is not enough to observe if the system was able to solve the problems that it was meant to solve; it is important, as well, to observe whether these solutions complied with the normative standards of participants and whether they generated tangible benefits for every participant.

But, as already suggested, the greatest task in the evaluation of CAS is to assess their associative performance. Generally speaking, to evaluate this type of performance, one should ask whether, in producing practical results, the system strengthened or weakened the organizational capacities that are necessary for this kind of association; that is to say, whether the system preserved, increased or wasted its own associative capital and that of its environment.

This associative performance should be evaluated at three levels. The first is the system's capacity to preserve and develop itself; that is to say, its capacity to produce and reproduce interpersonal trust among its members, to generate a shared "language," to create the internal procedures and institutions necessary for negotiation and deliberation.

The second level concerns the capacity of the system to create its own authority. This includes its capacity to be acknowledged as a relevant actor by the public in whose name it claims to speak and by other people and individuals with whom it interacts. This level includes, as well, the system's capacity to make decisions that decisively impact the public sphere.

The third level of complex associative performance consists of the system's capacity to extend and intensify associative life in general; that is, to make the members of society more able to associate with one another to discuss and solve shared problems. A system with this capacity becomes truly transcendent, since the effects of its actions go well beyond its own boundaries.

Obviously, performance at this third level becomes very diffuse, but two of its components are both precise and transcendental: the creation of new associations and associative learning. The first exists to the extent that the CAS promotes the development of associative networks, supports the creation of other associations and associative systems and provides a space for the participation of associations, institutions and individuals.

The second component, associative learning, consists in the system's ability to teach its members how to act in association: how to interact with different individuals and groups, how to communicate with them and learn from them, how to distinguish those who are reliable from those who are not, how to earn the trust of the others, how to negotiate and deliberate with them and how to make, collectively, decisions that are advantageous for everyone. As they acquire this knowledge and ability, members of the associative system can put them into practice in other areas of their private, professional and, above all, public lives. This associative learning can also be indirect: even those who do not participate in the associative system may learn from its example and emulate it in other areas of public life.

This pedagogic function is perhaps the greatest contribution that CAS can make to public life. But here, as well, one can discover yet one more of the multiple tensions that define these systems. Instead of learning how to associate with one another to solve, in a voluntary and free manner, important social problems, participants may learn exactly the obverse: that it is too difficult to communicate with people who are very different from oneself, that the others are unreliable and too complicated, that it is not easy to negotiate with them and that it is absurd to even try exchanging rational arguments with them.

Hence, it is not exaggerated to say that, in the end, the art of participating in complex associative systems is a continuous tension between hope and frustration.

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