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**Challenges and Opportunities in the
Construction of Alternatives to Neo-
Liberalism:**

**The Hemispheric Social Alliance and the
Free Trade Area of the Americas Process**

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Studies**

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SUMMARY

The Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) emerged in 1997 in reaction to the advance of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) neo-liberal agenda. As a transnational coalition integrated by trade union organisations, social movements and NGOs from all over the continent, the HSA denounced the detrimental social, economic and environmental consequences of the FTAA project on the most vulnerable sectors of the populations of the Americas. This thesis examines the role of the HSA in the construction of counter-hegemonic alternatives to the FTAA project. The analysis encompasses the time period that starts with the formation of the HSA in 1997 until the halting of the FTAA process in 2005 and draws on the political process approach of social movement theory – particularly on its notion of political opportunity structures as factors conditioning the capacity of social movements to access and control political resources for the advancement of collectively defined political goals. It is argued that the actions pursued by the HSA to construct an alternative to the FTAA have led to moderate, albeit significant, results. Considerable progress was achieved in fostering a political climate of distrust and opposition to neo-liberalism throughout the Americas, which contributed to the stalling of the FTAA process in 2005. In spite of this, the HSA continues to face the challenge of building political alternatives that reflect and expand a commitment to deeper forms of democracy and sustainable development in the region.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABF: Americas Business Forum.

ACJR: Alianza Chilena por un Comercio Justo y Responsable (Chilean Alliance for a Just and Responsible Trade).

AFL-CIO: American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations.

ALAI: Agencia Latinoamericana de Información (Latin American Information Agency).

ALBA: Alternativa Bolivariana para América (Bolivarian Alternative for America).

ART: Alliance for Responsible Trade.

ASF: Americas Social Forum (Foro Social de las Américas).

BFTA: Bilateral Free Trade Agreement.

CACM: Mercado Común Centroamericano (Central American Common Market).

CADA: Campaña por la Desmilitarización de las Américas (Campaign for the Desmilitarization of the Americas).

CAN: Comunidad Andina de Naciones (Community of Andean Nations).

CARICOM: Caribbean Community.

CCSCS: Coordinadora de Centrales Sindicales del Cono Sur (South Cone Union Labor Councils Coordination).

CEGCI: OAS Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management.

CGR: FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on Participation of Civil Society.

CLACSO: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (Latin American Council of Social Sciences).

CLC: Canadian Labour Congress.

CLOC: Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (Latin American Confederation of Peasant Organisations).

COMPA: Convergencia de los Movimientos de los Pueblos de las Américas (Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas).

CONAIE: Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador).

CSO: Civil Society Organisation.

CSN: Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux de Québec (Confederation of National Trade Unions of Québec).

CSN: Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones (South American Community of Nations)

CTC-Cuba: Central Union of Cuban Workers (Central de Trabajadores de Cuba).

CUSFTA: Canada-US Free Trade Agreement.

CUT-Brazil: Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (United Workers Federation).

DR-CAFTA: Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement.

ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

FAT-Mexico: Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (Labour's Authentic Front).

FTAA: Free Trade Area of the Americas.

HSA: Hemispheric Social Alliance.

IADB: Inter-American Development Bank.

IBASE: Instituto Brasileiro de Análisis Social y Económico (Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis).

ICFTU: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

ILO: International Labour Organisation.

ORIT: Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (Interamerican Regional Labor Organization).

MAS: Movimiento al Socialismo de Bolivia (Bolivia's Movement to

Socialism).

MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market).

MST: Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Workers Movement).

NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement.

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation.

OAS: Organisation of American States.

OCLAE: Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (Continental Latin American and Caribbean Students Organisation).

PT: Brazilian Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores do Brasil).

REBRIP: Rede Brasileira pela Integração dos Povos (Brazilian Network for People's Integration).

RECALCA: Red Colombiana frente al ALCA y el TLC (Colombian Network against the FTAA and the FTA).

RECHIP: Red Chile de acción por una Iniciativa de los Pueblos (Chilean Action Network for a Peoples' Initiative).

RQIC: Réseau Québécois sur l'Intégration Continentale (Québec's Network on Continental Integration).

RMALC: Red Mexicana de Acción frente el Libre Comercio (Mexican Network of Action Against Free Trade).

SIRG: Summit Implementation Review Group.

WSF: World Social Forum.

WTO: World Trade Organisation.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the role of the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) in the construction of political alternatives to the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) project. The aim is to explore the main challenges and opportunities of this endeavour in order to be able to reflect on ways to overcome the limitations and take advantage of the possibilities available to create alternatives to neo-liberalism through the articulation of multi-sectoral transnational coalitions. The analysis comprises the time period that starts with the formation of the HSA in 1997 until the halting of the FTAA process in 2005.

At the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994, thirty-four governments of the Western Hemisphere (all countries apart from Cuba) announced their commitment to create an FTAA stretching from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. The FTAA project represents the most ambitious trade integration scheme ever attempted in history (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2001), but equally one of the most controversial and disputed ones. Originally promoted by the United States government in 1990 as part of the 'Enterprise for the Americas Initiative', the FTAA constitutes a key prong of the U.S. strategy of engagement with Latin America in the post-Cold War period. Unlike previous regional integration initiatives undertaken in the hemisphere, such as the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR, 1991) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1994), the FTAA proposal takes place in a political context characterised by

growing scepticism towards the neo-liberal development strategy, and by the later coming to power of Left governments in many Latin American countries. The disillusion with neo-liberal reforms during the 1990s led to the rise of increasingly militant and organised sectors of civil society demanding the democratisation of trade politics in the region.

The FTAA project does not account for the deep level of asymmetries that differentiate national and sectoral economies from around the continent. Critics have argued that only the most developed economies in the continent could benefit from the FTAA, particularly the most powerful economic sectors in the United States (Estay and Sánchez, 2005; Sangmeister and Taalouch, 2003). Since the FTAA does not contemplate a compensation mechanism for the sectors that will invariably suffer at the hands of trade liberalisation, the establishment of this trade area will further exacerbate the already extreme asymmetries in levels of development between and across countries that make Latin America the most unequal region in the world (Berry, 1998; Cardoso and Helwege, 1992; IDB, 2003; O'Donnell and Tokman, 1998; Portes and Hoffman, 2003). In the absence of special and differential treatment for poorer economies in the FTAA, for all intents and purposes (...) 'the development agenda was (...) taken out of the trade agenda' (Ceara-Hatton and Isa-Contreras, 2003: 42).

In addition to its distributive implications, the type of hemispheric governance model that is proposed by the FTAA has also been subject to severe criticism.

Inspired by the NAFTA integration model, the FTAA would become an 'economic constitution' (Gill, 2002) for the Americas, as it aspires to institutionalise an infrastructure of rules and disciplines to regulate socio-economic and political processes for the benefit of corporate capital. The imposition of this governance model would come at the expense of democratic sovereignty, the rule of law and the policy autonomy of states to promote sustainable forms of development (Anderson and Arruda, 2002; Barenberg and Evans, 2004; Hillebrand, 2003).

The HSA emerged in 1997 in reaction to the advance of an FTAA neo-liberal agenda. As a transnational coalition integrated by trade union organisations, social movements and NGOs from all over the continent, the HSA denounced the detrimental social, economic and environmental consequences of the FTAA project on the most vulnerable sectors of the populations of the Americas. The initial drive that led to the formation of this coalition was the need to ensure that the FTAA project would not be merely a vehicle to advance a trade liberalisation agenda, which had already had such demonstrably negative social consequences in the region.

The HSA does not promote a return to some romanticised protectionist view of the past. It understands that international trade can be beneficial if it helps develop national economies. Trade cannot be the end of hemispheric integration, but only a means to attain development. Contrary to the neo-liberal assumptions implicit in the FTAA project, the HSA opposes the belief that

markets alone can ensure the sustainable development of the Americas region. National and hemispheric public instruments must actively guarantee that trade integration contributes to an equitable distribution of wealth, deeper forms democratic sovereignty, gender equality, and preservation of the natural environment.

To prevent the imposition of a new wave of neo-liberal reform through the FTAA process, the HSA set out to build consensus among the main social forces in the continent for an alternative agenda on development. This differs from the World Social Forum (WSF) process in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in which there is no expressed commitment to attain a common agenda or public declaration. The ongoing contributions of the HSA to the creation of an alternative agenda of sustainable development and economic justice are clearly laid out in its *Alternative for the Americas* documents. These policy documents reflect the concerns of social organisations from across the continent working on issues of labour, human rights, environment, indigenous rights, gender, rural problems and religious faith.

As a general principle, the HSA demands a balanced treatment of the needs of investors for rules with the development objectives of national economies. It is proposed that a desirable trade agreement should reflect the different levels of development that exist between countries in the region, and allow them to impose performance requirements on foreign investors in line with their particular development priorities (for example, by allowing them to protect

small and medium scale producers, and protect or exclude sectors of the economy that are considered key to their development). The FTAA should also guarantee that countries have the right to maintain food and nutritional security, for example, by excluding basic grains from trade liberalisation measures. While laws that are passed to protect public health, the environment, and other matters related to the interests and well being of the general public may potentially conflict with the rights of investors, the autonomy of states to pass legislation should be safeguarded. Furthermore, the HSA demands that the rights and privileges granted by the FTAA should be conditional to the respect of countries of basic internationally recognised workers rights, as established in the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Low wages and poor working conditions should not be the main competitive advantage of a country's economy. The differential impact of trade liberalisation on women should also be addressed (HSA, 1998; 2002a).

The actions pursued by the HSA to construct an alternative to the FTAA project have led to moderate, albeit significant, results. Considerable progress was achieved in fostering a political climate of distrust and opposition to neo-liberalism throughout the Americas, which contributed to the stalling of the FTAA process in 2005 (Sosa Iglesias, 2005: 281).

The main claim of this thesis is that while successfully shifting the balance of power against the FTAA, the HSA continues to face the challenge of building political alternatives to neo-liberalism in the Americas that reflect and expand a

commitment to deeper forms of democracy and sustainable development.

Theoretical approach

It is often argued that the failure of the FTAA project was due to the unresolved differences between the governments of the United States and Brazil over issues of market access, agricultural subsidies, and rules on intellectual property rights, government procurements and services. This explanation is certainly an accurate description of one aspect of the hemispheric negotiations, but is not sufficient to understand the reasons behind the failure of the FTAA project. Other explanations need to complement the intergovernmental accounts of this process. In particular, there is a need for an account of the FTAA process that brings to light the continental resistance to this trade project exemplified by the HSA. The contestation of the FTAA initiative by hemispheric social movement coalitions is as much a part of the process as is its intergovernmental dimension.

Much has been written on the challenge to neo-liberal globalisation posed by the emerging transnational forms of counter-hegemonic forces and resistance. Neo-Gramscian critiques offer powerful analyses of the potential long-term transformations of capitalism, and the potentially transformative force of such new forms of resistance in their pursuit for more egalitarian and just forms of globalisation (Cox and Schechter, 2002; Falk, 1995; Gill, 2003; Gills, 2001;

Harvey, 2005).

However, it is not enough to recognise that a reconfiguration of social forces with the potential to transform social reality is taking place. It is also necessary to encourage further reflection on the ways in which this transformation can actually be achieved. While valuable, these perspectives are less helpful when it comes to exploring the more immediate challenges and opportunities that coalitions like the HSA face in their efforts to bring about concrete alternatives (Drainville, 1994; Morton, 2001: 255). There is a great need to theorise the agency of counter-hegemonic forces.

In order to analyse the challenges and opportunities encountered by the HSA in its pursuit of counter-hegemonic alternatives to the FTAA project, this thesis draws on political process approach of social movement theory (Oberschall, 1973; Tarrow 1994; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; McAdam *et al.*, 2001). This approach does not replace neo-Gramscian critiques of counter-hegemonic forces. The value added by a political process theory is its research interest in understanding the conditions that facilitate and hinder the rise of social movements and their degree of success in bringing about social change. The long terms significance of social movement struggles in terms of the pursuit of deeper forms of democracy, social and environmental justice are rightly identified by a neo-Gramscian analysis, but the political process theory is better equipped to investigate issues of social movement strategy. In this regard, both approaches can benefit from each other.

The political process approach is a middle-range theory. It is indeterminate about the reasons that drive social forces to contest each other. Class struggle is the fundamental origin of conflict from a Marxist perspective, while the struggle for the emancipation of women from oppressive patriarchal structures underpins a feminist perspective on conflict. Regardless of what may drive conflict, the main interest of a political process perspective is to explore the ways in which social forces pursue their interests irrespectively of the nature of their claims.

In this regard, the study of contentious politics from this perspective can address organised class interests expressed by the struggle of trade union organisations over a different distribution of the benefits of production, or of the environmental movements pressing for new legislation to prevent the dumping of industrial waste in rivers. What is common to these examples is that, in order to be successful, both trade unions and environmental groups will attempt to augment their relative power vis-à-vis their contending forces by interacting with the favourable conditions created by a given political context.

The political process theory approaches questions of strategy in terms of the capacity of the social movements to generate and control resources (material and/or political) for mobilisation. Opportunities to access and command such resources involve: the creation of a sense of solidarity among prospective allied forces; the opening of spaces of political participation where the interests

of marginalised social groups can be effectively incorporated in decision-making processes; confidence that their struggles will yield concrete results; and the articulation of a coherent discourse to ingrain a sense of political purpose, direction and collective identity. It is on the basis of these elements that the actions of social movements should be ultimately assessed.

This theoretical approach stresses the analytical importance of opportunities available in the political context of social movements for the understanding of the choice and success of their strategies. Namely, this view of social movements emphasises their relational and interdependent nature with their respective political contexts. No political actors can be understood in isolation from the larger power struggles in which they are immersed, since their identities and possibilities are mutually constituted by virtue of their partaking in a process of political confrontation with political elites and institutions associated with a continuity of the status quo. The analysis of political conflict therefore becomes central in order to understand the ways in which social movements emerge and gain influence. Conflict not only permeates the interactions of social movements with ruling elites, but also the relations among the social forces and individuals that take part in social movement politics.

In the case of the complex political dynamics of the FTAA process, conflict takes place between two opposing forces: the HSA efforts to protect and expand the social rights of the most vulnerable sectors in the pursuit of more participatory forms of democracy and sustainable development, and the

attempts of governments and corporate elites to introduce a set of trade rules and disciplines in the continent that will only benefit a reduced number of economic sectors at the expense of large social and environmental costs.

While changes in the political context of the Americas lead to shifts in the strategies of the HSA, there is no determinism dictating the relation between structure and agency. The actions of social movements can also transform the prevailing conditions of the political context, therein contributing to open further political opportunities for mobilisation and thus making some strategies of resistance more viable than others. Moreover, the interaction of social movements with changes in the political context is mediated by the kinds of inter-subjective interpretations held by particular movements at different times. This combines the traditional emphasis of this theory on the rationalist explanations of social movement actions with a hermeneutical approach that stresses the importance of meanings and shared understandings.

Methodology

An assessment of the challenges and opportunities of the HSA in constructing alternatives to the FTAA can only be appraised when considering the extent to which the actions of the HSA have contributed to increase their *access* and *control* of the key political resources upon which the possibility of building alternatives is ultimately dependant.

The analysis identifies four political resources that have been central to the emergence and relative success of the HSA in building political alternatives to the FTAA. The conceptualisation of these resources is derived from the political process theory of social movements.

The first of these resources concerns the *autonomy* of the HSA as a transnational force in its capacity to produce a hemispheric consensus among a broad range of social actors concerning a vision of development and integration alternative to the FTAA project. The extent to which the HSA engages many sectors in a debate on alternatives to the FTAA while securing internal cohesion in the coalition is regarded as a favourable condition for the pursuit of alternatives to the FTAA. On the contrary, the loss of control of this resource due to the loss of political momentum and leadership within the HSA is indicative of a relative decline of the transformative potential of the HSA to act as a transnational force to foster new bases of consensus against neo-liberal politics.

The second resource involves the *legitimacy* of the HSA as a force of democratisation in the continent. The capacity of the HSA to act as the representative of the marginalised peoples of the Americas is dependent on the perception that the HSA exposes the exclusionary nature of the FTAA process and presses for the incorporation therein of other agendas and interests. In the absence of this legitimacy, the HSA would be regarded as nothing more than

the expression of a narrowly defined set of interests without any connection to the advancement of more egalitarian forms of development.

The third resource is related to the capacity of the HSA to generate and sustain high levels of *optimism* that their struggle will successfully lead to the halting of the FTAA process and the undermining of neo-liberalism in the region. This resource is associated with the HSA imperative to maintain momentum in the mobilisation of social forces throughout the continent throughout extended periods of time.

Finally, the fourth political resource is the discursive construction of a critique of neo-liberalism through the creation of interpretive *frames* on the FTAA. The normative meaning and political significance of this trade project, as well as the possibility of envisioning its alternatives, are largely dependent on how the HSA understands the FTAA. The extent to which the HSA was able to access, expand and control these political resources will be addressed in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Evidence indicates that the availability of such resources is both objective and thus external to the HSA, and inter-subjective and so internal to the coalition. The theoretical approach that is developed for this thesis assumes that there is an indivisible relation between objective and inter-subjective dimensions of social reality. This view is critical of a positivist ontology, which allows for a separation between object and subject.

Objective changes in the external political environment of the HSA can only affect the choices of actions undertaken by this coalition insofar as such changes are interpreted by the HSA in ways that are consistent with collectively held expectations. The generation of social expectations invariably involves the dimension of inter-subjective meanings that provide the HSA with its sense of historicised self-awareness.

In this respect, evidence of the access and control of the HSA of political resources for the construction of alternatives to the FTAA points changes in the rearrangement of political forces in the Americas that are beyond the immediate control of the HSA (objective conditions) and also the prevailing interpretations that the HSA has about the nature of FTAA process and its place in it (inter-subjective conditions).

The methodological approach employed for this project is participatory action research. The main characteristic of this methodological approach is that the relevant parties participate in the process of knowledge production - in this case, members of the HSA. They are involved in examining what they experience as problematic action with the purpose of changing and improving it. Participatory action research is not research which is hoped will be followed by action. It is action which is researched, transformed and re-researched within the research process (Freire, 1970; Wadsworth, 1998). The nature of this method demands that fieldwork to gather information is conducted

continuously throughout the entire duration of the research process and not simply at the beginning as in more conventional approaches. Main problems and assumptions guiding the research process were identified in the early interactions with HSA activists. They were later revised in light of changes in the political context and their awareness by the HSA and once again reintroduced as guiding assumptions in subsequent interactions with the HSA. As a cyclical process, this was repeated many times throughout the entire duration of the research process. The objectives of this research project were presented to the HSA as a first step of a longer-term engagement with this coalition centered on examining the role of social movement coalitions in trade politics in the Americas. HSA activists agreed to participate in the generation of data for this thesis as they understood that their collaboration had direct benefits for their own political work. It is often the case in such coalitions that there is little time to reflect on their own experiences, victories and shortcomings. Activists in social movements are in most cases immersed in the everyday demands of their work. This leaves few opportunities to reflect and develop a much needed historical perspective of their own work. It is in this respect that this research project, which deals with the challenges and opportunities faced by the HSA in building alternatives to neo-liberalism in the region, was regarded by HSA activists as a necessary exercise for the improvement of their own strategies of mobilisation and coalition building. The links between research, participation and action becomes explicit.

The method of participatory action research rests on the trust that was

developed with the many activists of the HSA throughout time. Without this trust access to information (sometimes confidential) would not have been made available. More importantly, trust was essential to be able to engage key members of the HSA in the systematisation of their experiences, challenges and opportunities that led to the production of this thesis in ways that they could engage with this process as a means of contributing and enhancing their own political work. In other words, it was clearly explained from the start that this project was not concerned with 'extracting' information from them for the purposes of academic research. The emphasis was always to work closely with them about their own experiences. In several occasions some activists solicited copies of my work on the HSA. These were kindly circulated among them for feedback and comments. In retrospect I believe that this approach to research was the only one that is viable in order to learn and understand the intricacies of complex politics of coalition building.

The main tools employed in the research methodology included the review of the scarce academic literature available on the HSA, analyses of public statements, internal documents and memos issued by the HSA, semi-structured interviews with leading HSA activists and direct observation of their main public demonstrations and internal coordination meetings. The defining characteristic of the HSA as a broad coalition made up of a wide range of social actors from across the Americas raises the methodological issue of what constitutes the appropriate criterion to determine the representativity and validity of interviews as reliable sources of information. To address this concern, the

criterion adopted for this project's interviews take into account the degree of commitment and involvement of the activist to the HSA and the influence of each interviewee (from each member organisation) in setting the internal agenda and debates within the coalition.

Firstly, the selection of interviewees prioritised those who have been involved in the HSA for the longest time. This has been important in terms of reconstructing the development of the HSA since its origins, drawing from the historical perspectives and experiences of its leading activists. Interviews with newer members of the HSA have been less useful in terms of building a sense of historical awareness. Secondly, the interview process focused on the main activists from social organisations that have been playing a central role within the HSA. The HSA is not a monolithic organisation with a single voice or position. Neither is it permeable to all the political views that exist within this already broad-based coalition. This research project engages with the inherent tensions between, on the one hand, the identification of common bases of consensus among the HSA members and, on the other hand, the plurality of agendas and perspectives that animate the internal political dynamics of broad coalitions like the HSA. In this respect, the interviews of leading activists in the HSA did not seek to find fixed positions which may allegedly 'represent' the overall view of the HSA on issues of trade integration, strategy, etc. On the contrary, the aim has been to identify the terms of the debate within the HSA (its boundaries) regarding these issues. In other words, it cannot be said that any of each individual interview represents the HSA as a whole, but represents only

identifiable positions within the internal debate of the coalition which gives its structure, limits and possibilities. The interview process was carried out throughout the entire research project, starting in January 2004 and up to July 2006. This has permitted the identification of changes and continuities in the internal debates in the HSA regarding their involvements with the FTAA process.

Interviews and observation were carried out in HSA events such as the Third and Fourth Hemispheric Summits of Struggle against the FTAA held in Havana, Cuba (in January 2004 and April 2005, respectively); the Third Summit of the Peoples organised in Mar del Plata, Argentina (November 2005); the European Social Forum in London, U.K. (October 2004); and the HSA event Linking Alternatives 2: Social Encounter Latin America, Europe and the Caribbean, in the context of the EU-Latin America Summit in Vienna, Austria (May 2006). In different ways these venues have provided with valuable opportunities to gather information for the research project of this thesis, however the Hemispheric Summits of Struggle against the FTAA and the Summit of the Peoples in Mar del Plata were the most important venues. This has to do with the fact that these events have been the main organised gatherings in the Americas taking place during the time frame of this research dealing specifically with building resistance to the FTAA project and with the construction of a hemispheric bottom-up consensus on alternatives to neo-liberal integration. The high political profile and significance of these events ensured that most of the social organisations and networks critical of the FTAA

project were present. This was particularly the case Summit of the Peoples in Mar del Plata - the event organised by the HSA parallel to the official Summit of the Americas in which Heads of State from the hemisphere gathered to move forward the FTAA project among other issues that featured in the summit's agenda. The large turn out of these events, mobilising activists and organisations from the entire continent, facilitated the availability of interviewees from the HSA core organisations and from more marginal ones as well.

In addition to these FTAA centred gatherings, other meetings organised by the HSA also provided valuable opportunities for interviews even if not dealing specifically with the FTAA or if taking place in the Americas. The origin of the HSA has been the opposition of the neo-liberal agenda of integration contained in the FTAA project. However, the HSA has also enlarged its range of topics and processes incorporating the the EU-Latin America relations and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) process. Likewise, since the start the HSA has also been involved in the World Social Forum (WSF) process and in its regional variants. Though being non-FTAA specific, such other meetings and events organised by the HSA were attended in most cases by the same group of leading activists that are involved (or have been at some point) in the mobilisation against the FTAA process. In this respect they also served as valuable opportunities to interview these activists. Furthermore, additional interviews were also conducted at the offices of the Réseau Québécois sur l'Intégration Continentale (RQIC) in Montreal, Canada, and via telephone

whenever this form of communication was more convenient.

In addition to the interviews, these venues also provided conditions for valuable direct observation of important HSA political activities. Two kinds of activities were particularly relevant. First, observation of the HSA Hemispheric Council meetings that are held in large hemispheric gatherings where all its members are able to attend. The Hemispheric Council meetings constitute the higher instance of political articulation of the HSA and only a limited number of delegates from each member organisation are allowed to attend in order to ensure that the greatest number of organisations can be represented. The main political issues concerning the strategy and actions of the HSA are discussed in such occasions behind closed doors. I was able to observe several such meetings at the Hemispheric Summits of Struggle against the FTAA in Havana and at the Summit of the Peoples in Mar del Plata. Observing the internal debates of the HSA was vital to understand the main issues of concern faced by the coalition, its bases of shared consensus and divisive issues.

Second, public demonstrations held as closing activities to the large hemispheric gatherings (mainly the Summit of the Peoples in Mar del Plata) also provided a good opportunity to observe the ways in which the HSA portrays itself publicly as the main hemispheric coordinator of struggles of resistance to the FTAA. This is important in so far as the 'internationalism' of this movement coalition is considered a central pillar of its continental strategy. The HSA takes great consideration that such kinds of events do not end up

being purely 'localised' in the specifics of domestic politics while losing their hemispheric dimension and significance. Observing the politics of public spectacle of the HSA has been a necessary complement to the equally important emphasis given to the internal political dynamics of the coalition. In both cases, direct observation was carefully conducted in a way that my presence would not alter the unique dynamics of these activities - particularly in the case of the HSA Hemispheric Council meetings.

The advantage of a participatory action research method is that it allows access into the internal debates and political dynamics of coalitions that would never be exposed publicly or even addressed formally within the coalition. The ethnographic quality of this method facilitates the development of the intimate knowledge required to make sense of the essentially fragmentary experience of the HSA. There is no one single history of the HSA but a shared narrative made up of various histories, perceptions and expectations. However, since none of these knowledges have been documented or systematised, research of the HSA depends necessarily on a method that highlights the involvement of the researcher and the activists in a joined effort of analysis and continual assessment.

The disadvantage of this kind of methodology has to do with the difficulty of detecting subtle changes in the perceptions and debates within the coalition. Activists are not necessarily unambiguous in their views and positions, many of which can often change or alternate with other views without necessarily being

explicit about it. In this respect, the possibility of detecting changes and continuities becomes more difficult when researching political processes that have taken place in short periods of time - unless, of course, it concerns a specific point of break such as a social revolution, crisis or others. The adoption of a long time frame for the research process to some extent facilitates the awareness of small changes of views and tendencies.

Contribution

The original contribution of this work to scholarly debate is threefold. Firstly, this research adds to the scarce empirical studies that are available on the HSA coalition (Doucet, 2004; Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003; Marchand, 2005; Massicotte, 2004; Prévost, 2003; Smith, 2004). It is only lately that scholarly research has begun to analyse how increasingly influential transnational social movement coalitions shape international political processes (Florini, 2000; Cohen and Rai, 2000: 7-8; Cook, 1998; Meyer, 2003; Riker and Sikkink 2002: 18; Tarrow and McAdam, 2005: 121).

In many ways, the HSA provides a unique and pioneering experience of counter-hegemonic resistance to neo-liberalism in the Americas. The broad base of support of this coalition covering such varied issue areas in several countries cannot be found elsewhere. There are simply no other networks on globalisation in the world comparable to the HSA (Anner and Evans, 2004).

What makes this coalition interesting is that it has served as a laboratory in which to explore the main challenges and opportunities faced by progressive sectors and movements seeking to build alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation by engaging in strategies of coordination and coalition that are built across borders. Systematic studies of multi-sectoral coalitions like the HSA do not exist (Veltmeyer, 2004: 1, 23, 34). In this sense the experience of the HSA in the Americas can illuminate and inspire a new generation of global social activism. This thesis aims to stimulate much-needed reflection on the role of transnational campaigns against free trade agreements as meeting points for the generation of political alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation.

Secondly, the thesis adds to earlier initiatives to encourage academic dialogue between social movement theory and IR/IPE theoretical approaches (Khagram and Sikkink, 2002; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Smith *et al.*, 1997). This kind of encounter opens new research avenues to address the complex dynamics of world politics, moving beyond the reductionism of state-centric methodologies that have characterised both research traditions.

Chapter structure

The thesis adopts the following chapter structure. Chapter 1 provides an historical overview of the official FTAA process, from its initial stages at the First Summit of the Americas in Miami in 1994 to its virtual breakdown at the

Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata in 2005. The FTAA agenda and the formal structure of the FTAA negotiations are introduced to highlight the main particularities of this integration process.

Chapter 2 presents a review on the existing academic and policy literature on the FTAA process. It is claimed that the main theoretical approaches to the FTAA process – identified with classical and neo-realist, neo-liberal and critical traditions – overlook the role that counter-hegemonic coalitions like the HSA have in this integration process. In different ways, these literatures fail to adequately expose the extent to which the FTAA process is also driven by the resistance of transnational social forces in their efforts to contest the institutionalisation of a corporate-led model of regional governance. The analysis of the role of the HSA in the pursuit of alternative forms of development requires an approach that can bring to light the centrality of this conflict as a constitutive driving force shaping the nature of the FTAA process.

Chapter 3 introduces the political process approach to social movement theory to fill the gaps left by the existing literature on the FTAA process. It discusses the origin of this theoretical tradition that centres on recapturing the agency of social movements from the structuralism that anteceded its emergence in the 1970s. Furthermore, it also reformulates the state-centric assumptions of this theory's methodology in order to analyse transnational social movement coalitions like the HSA that operate across border political spaces. The notion of political opportunity structure is introduced as a concept to address the HSA

relation with its political context of the Americas. The subsequent chapters focus on the different political opportunities provided by this hemispheric political context associated with the challenges and opportunities of the HSA in its construction of alternatives to the FTAA.

Chapter 4 explores the political opportunity for the construction of alternatives to the FTAA project created by the formation of hemispheric coalitions of a broad range of social forces critical to neo-liberalism. It is claimed that the prospects of constructing an alternative to the FTAA project can be jeopardised by the risk of the HSA losing its autonomy in the face of allied Left-of-centre governments in Latin America.

Chapter 5 addresses the political opportunity created for the HSA by its participation in the hemispheric mechanisms for civil society consultation established as part of the official FTAA process. It is argued that the official FTAA process has been insulated from the demands of many civil society organisations aiming to engage in a political debate with public officials on the implications of trade liberalisation for the prospects of sustainable development in the region. Instead, the negotiation process was tainted with a lack of transparency and provided no real conditions for public accountability and for the involvement of civil society in the definition of the FTAA agenda. This resulted in a radicalisation of civil society sectors throughout the Americas, which enabled the HSA to increase its legitimacy by exposing the undemocratic and exclusionary nature of the FTAA process and agenda.

Chapter 6 concentrates on the efforts of the HSA to expose the signs of a decline of the neo-liberal consensus in order to foster confidence and optimism that the establishment of the FTAA project could be effectively prevented. This sense of optimism permitted the HSA to sustain the mobilisation of critical sectors involved in the continental campaign against the FTAA while this process was still underway.

Chapter 7 analyses the HSA's discursive construction of the FTAA project as an antagonistic 'other'. To do so, the chapter focuses on three distinct interpretative FTAA frames that are employed by the HSA. Their implications for the building of alternatives to neo-liberalism are carefully analysed. It is argued that the framing strategy was only useful for the mobilisation of opposition to the FTAA. Moreover, it limited the process of fostering a deeper understanding of an alternative approach to development. The FTAA was framed in ways that could not move beyond the short-term effectiveness of a populist rhetorical denunciation of American Imperialism.

Finally, the conclusion recapitulates the main arguments of the thesis, and discusses the theoretical, empirical and normative contributions of this work to the study of transnational counter-hegemonic forces. It also provides a reflection of the benefits and limitations of a political process approach to the study of transnational social movement coalitions like the HSA that may be of interest to other research projects and transnational social movements. Further

research agendas are also suggested.

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the FTAA Process

This chapter provides an overview of the evolution of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) process from its beginnings at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994 to the Mar del Plata Summit of 2005. This sets the ground for a later review of the scholarly and policy literature on the FTAA in the following chapter.

Although the FTAA project constitutes the latest and most ambitious integration initiative ever pursued in the Western Hemisphere, regionalism has been part of the political economy of the Americas during most of the twentieth century. The first section of this chapter will provide a brief account of the main experiences of sub-regional integration since the 1940s leading to the revival of *new* forms regionalism in the 1990s, of which the FTAA represents its latest and most unique expression. The second section presents the history of the FTAA process and agenda. The emphasis is placed on describing the progressive institutionalisation of this hemispheric process. As a multi-actor process, the FTAA process is driven by interstate bargaining and also by business and civil society organisations and networks.

Regional integration initiatives in the Americas

Regionalism is not a new phenomenon in the Americas. The literature on this subject distinguishes between 'old' and 'new' forms of regionalism. The first describes the sub-regional integration initiatives in the Americas taking place at different times since the 1940s. The latter, the new wave of regionalism, refers to the revival of regional integration policies during the 1990s. Bélanger and Mace (1999) explain that there have been two contending paradigms of integration in the Americas that informed the successive initiatives of regional integration pursued since the 1940s: the Latin American and Pan-Americanism/Hemispheric paradigms.

The Latin American approach was based on the premise of a strategy of import-substitution industrialization (ISI), in the tradition of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The Central American Common Market (CACM), the Andean Pact (later CAN from 1996) and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) were established during the 1950s and 1960s in accordance with such a statist and developmental approach. The creation of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) in 1960 was a bold initiative based on a *laissez-faire* approach, which thereby deviated from the core concepts of the ECLAC.

These regional initiatives eventually failed to yield economic development. The combined effects of the oil crises of 1973-1974 and the resulting protectionist

measures adopted by industrialised countries (in the context of a worldwide economic stagnation) contributed to the debt crises that affected Latin American countries from the beginning of 1980s. According to Bélanger and Mace (1999: 5) these events 'reinforced the inward-looking attitudes, and put an end to the spirit of cooperation needed for the give-and-take approach that could ensure the success of regional integration'.

On the other hand, Pan-Americanism has been the second paradigm of integration associated with the promotion of continental integration on the basis of the idea of a 'Western Hemisphere'. As initiatives led by the United States, foundational milestones of this approach to integration are: the signing of the Rio Treaty on collective defence (1947), the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Bogotá (1948), and the later establishment of the Inter-American Development Bank (1959).

It has been argued that the emerging support of hemispheric integration was progressively undermined by the inconsistency of the United States' hemispheric policy towards Latin America, the U.S. unilateral interventions in the region and the absence from the hemispheric policy of a much-expected aid package (like the Marshall Plan). The diminishing consensus on the idea of hemispheric integration was later confirmed by the failure of the Alliance for Progress (1961) initiative by the United States, and by the little impact of the 1967 Meeting of American Chiefs of State at Punta del Este to bolster hemispheric integration (Bélanger and Mace, 1999: 5; Moss, 2001: 162-3).

Regionalism simply lacked the unambiguous and sustained support it required to succeed. This was explained by the fact that the United States prioritised the promotion of multilateralism (Bulmer-Thomas, 2001: 4). Towards the beginning of the 1980s, the old regionalism had reached its point of exhaustion:

(...) both paths toward regionalism (the Latin American and the Pan-American) had come to a dead end by the early 1980s as was the case with regionalism elsewhere in the Third World, Latin American and Caribbean integration schemes had become empty shells, barely surviving. Hemispheric regionalism, for its part, was almost nonexistent, as Latin American governments had lost all faith in the OAS (Bélanger and Mace, 1999: 6).

In spite of the degree of scepticism towards regionalism that existed by the middle of the 1980s (Bulmer-Thomas, 2001: 1), a series of international and regional transformations were underway to create the conditions for a renewed commitment to regionalism. Firstly, the end of the Cold War finished with the 'socialist' alternative, therein enshrining the North American-style capitalism as the only viable option for development and cementing neo-liberalism as the prevailing economic and political paradigm. Secondly, growing impatience with the slow progress of the GATT Uruguay Trade Round (1986-1993) contributed to the renewed interest in regional integration in the Americas (Bulmer-Thomas, 2001: 5; Echandi, 2001: 368; Tussie, 2003). Thirdly, the wave of democratisation in Latin America throughout the 1980s created the grounds for the affirmation of the Hemisphere as a community of shared democratic values. Capitalism and democracy became the tenets of an uncontested hegemony, with implications not only for regional developments in the Americas but for global political, economic and cultural processes.

New regionalism in Latin America was regarded as a means to overcome the problem of the debt crisis that affected most Latin American countries in the early 1980s, and as a means to avoid being left out of an emerging world order built around three blocs: the United States, Europe and East Asia (Bélanger and Mace, 1999: 7). Unlike past experiences of regionalism in Latin America, new regionalism was not designed to promote import substituting industrialisation policies. Rather, it was intended to 'prepare LAC [Latin American and Caribbean] countries for the challenge of globalisation and to encourage integration of the LAC economies into the world system of trade and payment' (Bulmer-Thomas, 2001: 1). More importantly, in contrast to the 1960s, sub-regional integration during the 1990s 'became the main venue for "locking in" hard-fought macro-economic stabilization gains and for the institutionalizing of new liberal trade and investment initiatives' (Wise, 2003: 18).

In this respect, reducing barriers to trade, controlling inflation, fiscal discipline and the stimulation of competition and foreign investment were central policies associated with the new policy framework of *open regionalism* (ECLAC, 2001: 191-201). The 1990s were characterised by this new approach to regional integration as this period witnessed the reactivation of CACM, CARICOM, the Andean Pact, and the creation of new blocs as the MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), the Group of Three (Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

The wave of new regionalism in North America is associated with the quest for a deeper liberalisation agenda at the regional level on the part of the United States. It has been argued that the United States embarked in regional liberalisation as a response to the slow progress achieved at the multilateral level and due to the fears resulting from the decline of the country's competitiveness (Wise, 2003: 17). The establishment of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) in 1989 and later the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada in 1994 were the first steps in this effort towards regionalism.

Undoubtedly, the most important initiative of new regionalism in the Americas is the current project to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). If constituted, the FTAA would extend from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, thereby representing, in a geographical sense, the world's largest experiment of economic integration (Estevadeordal, Goto and Saez, 2000: 2). Embracing a combined population of 800 million and a gross domestic product of \$9 trillion, the FTAA would represent the most ambitious integration schemes in modern history (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2001: 280). In the following section we will review the FTAA process since its origins.

Chronological overview of the FTAA process

The announcement of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) by the

President of the United States George Bush on June 27 1990 formally opened the possibility of a free trade agreement extending from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. The bases of the EAI were the promotion of investment, aid accompanied by debt reduction and the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade throughout the Americas. One of the reasons attributed to the formation of the EAI is the need of the United States to secure the Latin American market in order to curb its trade balance problem in the context of the uncertain negotiations of the Uruguay Round of GATT (Moss, 2001: 164; Bulmer-Thomas, 2001: 5).

Similarly, another factor is that the EAI constitutes an attempt on the part of the United States to strengthen its global influence in the context of an emerging post-Cold War order (Bélanger and Mace, 1999: 7). Further, it has also been claimed that the regional turn in the trade policy of the United States was 'somewhat accidental'. Namely, that the announcement of the EAI was not expected to translate into an exclusively hemispheric trade policy focus, as the policy priority of the United States remained at the GATT level (Fishlow, 1999a: 28; Fauriol and Weintraub, 2001: 140).

Regardless of what may have been the original intention behind the decision of the United States to engage with a regional approach to its trade policy, the subsequent events following the EAI marked the beginning of a new period of hemispheric relations in which integration became a central policy issue. The establishment in 1989 of the CUSFTA (Canada-United States Free Trade

Agreement), and NAFTA in 1994 constitutes the first concrete step towards the establishment of a regional initiative in accordance with the Pan-American approach to regional integration led by the United States.

The development of the FTAA project has been tied to the Summit of the Americas process (Summitry). The Summitry consists of an institutionalised set of meetings at the highest level of governmental decision-making in the Western Hemisphere created with the purpose of discussing common issues and seeking solutions to economic, social and political problems shared by all the countries in the Americas. It is at these summits that 'experiences are accumulated, a common language is forged and mandates for collective action are programmed, systematizing the new theoretical and practical references in hemispheric relations' (Summits of the Americas website, n/d). Their importance resides in their high public exposure, which is central to showing the committed attitude of the participating states to hemispheric cooperation. As Richard Feinberg (1998: 3-4) maintains, 'Summitry in the Americas is still in its infancy, but it has already become the predominant institution driving the relations between the United States and its neighbors'.

Soon after the establishment of NAFTA, the United States government invited the heads of state and government of 34 countries in the Americas (with the exception of Cuba) to participate in the First Summit of the Americas held in Miami in December 1994. Latin American leaders warmly received this invitation even when the purpose and content of the meeting remained unclear

(with the exception of NAFTA, the Clinton administration had not seemed to have Latin America as a high priority of its foreign policy) (Moss, 2001: 164). Latin American countries were particularly interested in the trade dimension of this event (Phillips, 2003: 335), even if the summit agenda proposed a 'multidimensional integration process involving issues in many areas of hemispheric cooperation' (Bélanger and Mace, 1999: 7). Not limited to trade issues alone, the agenda comprised a hemispheric commitment to advance on issues such as democracy, human rights, civil society participation, capital market liberalisation, education, health, and sustainable development, and the combat of corruption, narcotics and money laundry. If the FTAA was merely one initiative out of twenty-three (Fishlow, 1999a: 29), it nonetheless became the bold centrepiece of the Miami Summit (Moss, 1998: 1; Serbín, 2003: 87).

At the Miami Summit of December 1994, all countries committed to reaching a hemispheric free trade agreement that was balanced, comprehensive, and consistent with World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements. There was commitment to both agree on the FTAA by a *single undertaking* through the implementation of a target date of 2005, and to achieve substantial progress toward building the FTAA by 2000. No consensus was reached for a blueprint or precise plan on how to achieve this goal. However, governments agreed on a timetable for annual trade ministerial meetings intended to review the items discussed at the Summit, therein maintaining the momentum generated at Miami. The governments signed a declaration of principles entitled Partnership for the Development and Prosperity of the Americas and a plan of action

(Summit of the Americas, 1994). The Summit Implementation and Review Group (SIRG) was created in 1995 by the initiative of the United States' government in order to coordinate and review the implementation of the mandates contained in the Miami Action Plan. The responsibility of coordinating the work of SIRG rests with the government that hosts the Summit.

The First Trade Ministerial Meeting took place during the following year at Denver, United States, on 30 June 1995. The purpose of this meeting was to prepare for the FTAA negotiations: 'We agreed to begin immediately at a work program to prepare for the initiation of negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in which barriers to trade and investment will be progressively eliminated. Negotiations will be concluded no later than 2005' (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 1995). Working Groups were established in order to collect information such as existing laws and regulations, tariff and non-tariff barriers, applicable effects of trade agreements entered into by each member country and recommendations for the negotiations (Moss, 2001: 167). The areas covered by these groups were: (1) Market Access; (2) Customs Procedures and Rules of Origin; (3) Investment; (4) Standards and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs); (5) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS); (6) Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties; and (7) Smaller Economies. Similarly, it was also agreed that four new groups would be added at the next Ministerial Meeting: (8) Government Procurement; (9) Intellectual Property Rights; (10) Services; and (11) Competition Policy.

A Tripartite Committee integrated by the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was created to assist governments in compiling inventories of laws and regulations, preparing studies and papers in the negotiating areas.

Trade Ministers met for the second time in Cartagena, Colombia, on 21 March 1996. On this occasion they assessed the technical work carried out by the seven Working Groups, and created the four additional groups whose incorporation had been delayed due to the reticence of Latin American governments to support the United States' initiative for their immediate inclusion (Moss, 2001: 168). The Vice-Ministers of Trade were assigned to supervise, evaluate and coordinate the progress of the Working Groups, and finally make recommendations at the next ministerial meeting as part of an effort to speed up the preparatory work prior to the launching of the official negotiations. Most importantly, at Cartagena the ministers discussed the possibility of making the FTAA compatible with existing bilateral and sub-regional agreements. Finally, it was also agreed to incorporate another Working Group at the next Ministerial Meeting on Dispute Settlement Procedures (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 1996).

The Americas Business Forum (ABF) was organised prior to the Cartagena Ministerial Meeting (1200 members of the business community participated in

this event). Originally created by the representatives from the private sector after the Denver Ministerial Meeting (1995), the ABF became a permanent presence in all-subsequent ministerial meetings and was given official status by the hemispheric governments. Its main activities include: influencing the terms of reference of the negotiating committees; providing technical analyses and information on the strategic objectives and aspirations of the private sector; disseminating information on the process; and the establishment of the Business Network for Hemispheric Integration to foster links between the business sector and various organisations throughout the Americas (SELA, 2000: 30). Acting as an effective lobbying instrument, contributions and recommendations from the private sector were passed on to the Trade ministers. In contrast to the ABF, the initiative of the main trade union organisations from the continent to include a Labour Forum as part of the FTAA process was never received sympathetically, thus producing no results. This contributed to the search of the labour movement for alternative strategies of engagement with the FTAA process.

On 16 May 1997 ministers met again at the Third Trade Ministerial Meeting at Belo Horizonte, Brazil. At this meeting, they agreed to recommend that negotiations start at the Second Summit of the Americas to take place in Santiago, Chile, in March 1998. However, they did not reach any agreement on the format and procedure of the negotiations—objectives, approaches, structure and venue. Instead, they committed to advance this issue by aiming to reach an agreement by the next Trade Ministerial Meeting during the following year.

There was also a decision to create a temporary FTAA Administrative Secretariat to provide logistical and administrative support to the negotiations. The Secretariat would be based in different cities (to be decided), and it would *not* be granted any supranational authority — there was no willingness among member states to delegate any sovereignty. A Ministerial Joint Declaration contained all these points (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 1997).

The Fourth Ministerial Meeting was held at San José, Costa Rica, on 19 March 1998. This meeting was particularly important since it was the last opportunity before the next Summit of the Americas to lay out the foundations for the negotiations. Reflecting a sense of optimism with the hemispheric process, the trade Ministers signed the Declaration of San José in which they outlined the general principles and objectives of the FTAA negotiations, detailing the specific objectives by issue area, the structure, organisation and administrative aspects of the negotiations (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 1998). At this point, the idea that had been espoused by the United States that the FTAA could become an enlargement of NAFTA was finally ruled out in favour of a bargaining structure that allowed MERCOSUR to negotiate as a bloc (the 4+1 scheme). This negotiating scheme would later be rejected by the United States in 2005 in favour of an FTAA multilateral negotiation ('U.S. rejects 4+1 agreement', 2005). With the negotiation structure already in place, the Ministers forwarded a recommendation for the official negotiations to begin at the Santiago Summit.

The FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of

Civil Society (CGR) was created at the Jan José meeting in order to receive input from civil society to be presented for consideration by the Ministers. This committee does not participate in the negotiations; its role is merely consultative. The rationale behind the creation of the CGR is to increase the transparency of the negotiation process and to facilitate the constructive participation of the different sectors of society

The Second Summit of the Americas was held in Santiago, Chile, in April 1998. As recommended by the trade ministers in San José, the Heads of State and Government of the FTAA participating countries formally announced the beginning of the negotiations and agreed on the official structure of the negotiation process. The central points of the negotiation structure were the establishment of a pro-tempore FTAA Chairmanship, a Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and a FTAA Administrative Secretariat, and three non-negotiating committees and consultative groups.

Table 1: FTAA Chairmanship

Period	Chair	Vice-Chair
1 May 1998 – 31 October 1999	Canada	Argentina
1 November 1999 – 30 April 2001	Argentina	Ecuador
1 May 2001 – 31 October 2002	Ecuador	Chile
	Co-Chair	
1 November 2002 – 31 December 2004	Brazil	United States

The function of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC), at the level of Vice-Ministers, is to review the process, to guide the work of nine Negotiating Groups (that would replace the Working Groups) and other committees and

groups, and to decide on the overall architecture of the agreement and institutional issues. It was agreed that the TNC would meet as required at rotating sites throughout the hemisphere, no less than twice a year. Reporting to the TNC, the FTAA Administrative Secretariat was created to provide administrative and logistical support to the negotiations (official archives, translation and interpretation services). It was decided that it would be physically located at the same places assigned for the Negotiating Groups.

Some important modifications were included in the list of new Negotiating Groups, primarily the incorporation of a group on Agriculture. Similarly, three non-negotiating consultative groups and committees were also established: the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies, the Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society, and the Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce. The final list of nine Negotiating Groups, including chairs and vice chairs, therefore included:

Table 2: FTAA Negotiating Groups

	Chair	Vice Chair
Market Access*	Colombia	Bolivia
Investment	Costa Rica	Dominican Republic
Services	Nicaragua	Barbados
Government Procurement	United States	Honduras
Dispute Settlement	Chile	Uruguay - Paraguay
Agriculture	Argentina	El Salvador
Intellectual Property Rights	Venezuela	Ecuador
Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties	Brazil	Chile
Competition Policy	Peru	Trinidad & Tobago

(*) Covering tariffs, non-tariff measures, customs procedures, safeguards, rules

of origin, and standards and technical barriers to trade.

The following Non-Negotiating Committees were additionally established:

- 1 Consultative Group on Smaller Economies
- 2 Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society
- 3 Joint Government-Private Sector Committee of Experts on Electronic Commerce

It was agreed that the Negotiating Groups would meet at the following places:

Table 3: FTAA Negotiating Groups Venue

Period	Place
1 May 1998 – 28 February 2001	Miami, United States
1 March 2001 – 28 February 2003	Panama City, Panama
1 March 2003 – 31 December 2004	Puebla, Mexico

In spite of the substantial advances reached by the ministerial meetings and Working Groups in the definition of a negotiation agenda during the preparatory phase since the First Summit at Miami, the FTAA process was hindered by the lack of domestic political support in the United States and Brazil. Feinberg claims that ‘the greatest challenge facing inter-American summitry is the cultivation of domestic political constituencies’. The Santiago Summit emphasised its social and political agenda as a means of addressing such a political imperative (Feinberg, 1998).

This agenda addressed issues related to democracy such as the improvement of education; the strengthening of democracy and human rights, the promotion of transparency, the alleviation of poverty and discrimination, and the fight against

corruption, crime and drug trafficking. The prevalence of such 'non-trade' issues evidences the understanding that trade and economic growth are central to the improvement of the economies of the region, but that they do not occur in a vacuum. Deeply entrenched social problems in the hemisphere must also be addressed (Moss, 1998: 2). In spite of the downward revisions in estimates of growth rates resulting from the effects of the Asian crisis on the different economies throughout the hemisphere, and the absence of the Fast Track legislation by the United States, the Santiago Summit reflected an underlying sense of optimism (Moss, 1998: 2).

The Fifth Ministerial meeting was held in Toronto, Canada, in November 1999. Since the launch of the negotiation phase, the negotiators in building a common ground made 'considerable progress.' It is also noteworthy that during this phase, sub-regional groups such as the CAN, CARICOM, and MERCOSUR presented their positions jointly, after intense consultation among their members (Salazar-Xirinachs 2001: 285). Based on the solid momentum that had been maintained, Ministers instructed the negotiating groups in a Toronto Ministerial Declaration to prepare a draft text of their respective chapters, to be presented at the Sixth Ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires in 2001. Other important decisions reached in Toronto were the approval of a series of Business Facilitation Measures (related to customs procedures and transparency) to promote hemispheric trade, and the beginnings of discussions on general on general institutional aspects of the overall infrastructure of the FTAA agreement. The central focus therefore became the development of a

draft text; a considerably ambitious objective to move the negotiation process forward (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 1999).

At the Sixth Ministerial Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in April 2001, Ministers received the bracketed draft text of the FTAA agreement from the Negotiating Groups, and were able to make recommendations to the next Summit of the Americas. This meeting produced little substantial advancement. What was agreed was a timetable for the negotiations over tariff barriers, but there was no consensus on major issues such as anti-dumping legislation, agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers – all core elements of any trade agreement (Tussie, 2001).

It is important to note that the Buenos Aires meeting took place in the aftermath of the failure of the third WTO Ministerial Meeting at Seattle in December 1999. At Seattle, civil society organisations had successfully managed to stage a solid resistance to the WTO agenda and procedures by questioning the legitimacy of the multilateral institution. With such events as a background, trade ministers in Buenos Aires made an unprecedented move to make the FTAA process more transparent by agreeing to make the FTAA draft text publicly available. Finally, a Technical Committee of Institutional Issues was also established to consider the overall architecture of the FTAA agreement. These points were assembled at the Ministerial Declaration (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 2001).

The Third Summit of the Americas took place in Québec City, Canada, on the 20–22 April 2001. The draft text was finally made available to the public after the summit when it was posted in the Official FTAA website on 3 July 2001. It was agreed that negotiations would be completed by January 2005, to be able to implement the FTAA agreement before December 2005.

A central development in the FTAA process was the approval of a democracy clause whereby ‘any unconstitutional alteration or interruption of the democratic order in a state of the hemisphere constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the participation of that state’s government in the Summit of the Americas process.’ As explained by Feinberg and Rosenberg (2001: 2), this clause ‘puts new teeth into the capacity of the region’s democracies to deter and, if necessary, reverse threats to democratic governance. It also gives private sectors an additional incentive to support constitutional rule’. However, it remained to be seen whether the final accord would restate this commitment to a democracy clause, and what criteria will be employed to define democracy and the sanctions applicable to states that detract from this commitment. Nonetheless, according to these authors, ‘Québec’s democracy clause is a milestone in the hemisphere’s commitment to the collective defence of democracy. The Summit called for the drafting of a “democracy charter” to codify the region’s several democracy commitments’ (Feinberg and Rosenberg, 2001: 2). These commitments were included in the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action (Summit of the Americas, 2001a).

The Seventh Ministerial Meeting took place in Quito, Ecuador, on 1 November 2002. At this event, the ministers confirmed the schedule for the exchange of initial market access offers, agreed deadlines for producing new drafts of the texts, and disclosed the second draft of the FTAA Agreement in the FTAA official website. A TNC document on Guidelines or Directives for the Treatment of the Differences in the Levels of Development and Size of the Economies was also made available. More importantly, the Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP) was established as a means of strengthening the capacities of the less developed and smaller economies in the region to participate in the negotiations and implement their trade commitments. The HCP was designed with the assistance of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies, who were also charged with the supervision of the program. Finally, the ministers instructed the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society to foster a process of increased and sustained two-way communication with civil society to improve its consultation and outreach practices (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 2002).

The Eighth Ministerial Meeting was organized in Miami, United States, on 20 November 2003. The negotiation process had become stagnant at this point. The recent failure of the WTO Ministerial Meeting at Cancún, Mexico, earlier in September had created a very difficult climate for reaching consensus on trade liberalisation. This had raised the stakes for the outcomes of the Miami Meeting. FTAA negotiations stumbled over the reticence of the United States to commit to the liberalisation of its agricultural subsidies and antidumping

measures, and of some Latin American countries (particularly those of MERCOSUR) to agree on rules in the areas of government procurements, intellectual property rights, investments and services. In both cases, the United States and MERCOSUR were reluctant to give concessions in these sensitive areas in the context of an FTAA agreement, preferring in turn to negotiate these issues at the WTO. To overcome this stalemate, the ministers agreed at Miami to adopt the Brazilian initiative to compromise on a limited FTAA agreement (also commonly referred as 'FTAA-light' or 'FTAA à la carte'). As Engler (2003: 1) puts it, the FTAA-Lite 'puts a sunshine spin on an impasse'.

This limited version of the agreements has two levels. On the one hand, it establishes a common set of rights and obligations applicable to all countries; on the other hand, it allows each country to choose in which of the nine areas of the negotiations they want to pursue additional tariff liberalisation and trade rules. The FTAA-light would no longer be a multilateral agreement, but rather a plurilateral one. The single undertaking principle – that *nothing is agreed until everything is agreed* – was abandoned. The ministers released the third draft of the chapters of the FTAA agreement. Finally, the ministers agreed that the next Ministerial Meeting would take place in Brazil in 2004 (FTAA Trade Ministerial, 2003).

The trade negotiators continued working towards securing a minimum consensus for a now scaled-down FTAA agenda. A series of extraordinary meetings were scheduled to salvage the loss of momentum of the negotiation

process. No progress was reached in an additional Summit of the Americas held in Monterrey in January 2004, in the subsequent Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting of February 2004 in Puebla, Mexico, or at the 'informal' meetings called in Buenos Aires on 31 March and on 1 April 2004 to rectify the February TNC deadlock (Public Citizen, 2004). The Trade Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place in Brazil was cancelled.

The Fourth Summit of the Americas was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, on the 4-5 November 2005 with the theme of 'Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance'. Many governments hoped that this summit would provide them with the opportunity to overcome the diplomatic deadlock that had resulted in the indefinite postponement of the Ninth Ministerial Meeting of 2004. The Mar del Plata summit instead exposed the lack of consensus that existed in the Hemisphere about the content of the FTAA agenda, and the divided positions regarding the commitment to continue with that process. In the Declaration of the summit, the FTAA project is mentioned in two separate paragraphs (A and B) that identify the contrasting views on this issue, and the failure in reaching an agreement. Point 19 of the Declaration states:

Recognizing the contribution that economic integration can make to the achievement of the Summit objectives of creating jobs to fight poverty and strengthening democratic governance:

A. Some member states maintain that we take into account the difficulties that the process of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations has encountered, and we recognize the significant contribution that the processes of economic integration and trade liberalization in the Americas can and should

make to the achievement of the Summit objectives to create jobs to fight poverty and strengthen democratic governance. Therefore, we remain committed to the achievement of a balanced and comprehensive FTAA Agreement that aims at expanding trade flows and, at the global level, trade free from subsidies and trade-distorting practices, with concrete and substantive benefits for all, taking into account the differences in the size and the levels of development of the participating economies and the special needs and special and differential treatment of the smaller and vulnerable economies. We will actively participate to ensure a significant outcome of the Doha Round that will reflect the measures and proposals mentioned in the previous paragraph. We shall continue to promote the established practices and activities in the FTAA process that provide transparency and encourage participation of civil society.

We instruct our officials responsible for trade negotiations to resume their meetings, during 2006, to examine the difficulties in the FTAA process, in order to overcome them and advance the negotiations within the framework adopted in Miami in November 2003. We also instruct our representatives in the institutions of the Tripartite Committee to continue allocating the resources necessary to support the FTAA Administrative Secretariat.

B. Other member states maintain that the necessary conditions are not yet in place for achieving a balanced and equitable free trade agreement with effective access to markets free from subsidies and trade-distorting practices, and that takes into account the needs and sensitivities of all partners, as well as the differences in the levels of development and size of the economies.

In view of the above, we have agreed to explore both positions in light of the outcomes of the next World Trade Organization ministerial meeting. To that end, the Government of Colombia will undertake consultations with a view to a meeting of the officials responsible for trade negotiations (Summit of the Americas, 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the development of the FTAA process. Particular attention has been paid to outlining the institutionalisation of this intergovernmental initiative since its origins in 1994. Business and civil society organisations were also identified as increasingly influential actors in the FTAA process. I have focused on the way in which governments have sought to

incorporate the contributions of these non-state actors into the FTAA institutional process through the creation of consultation mechanisms. Having outlined the central features of the FTAA process, the following chapter reviews the ways in which the FTAA process is understood by the different strands of literature that have examined this hemispheric initiative.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding the FTAA Process

Following the overview of the central milestones of the FTAA process introduced in the previous chapter, in the current chapter the literature committed to understanding the FTAA process will be reviewed. The production of knowledge is an inherently political endeavour. It involves setting up methodological classifications that selectively incorporate and exclude various elements of a social reality in the making of legitimate academic discourse. Similarly, the production of knowledge invariably conveys specific normative propositions that are inseparable from the allegedly 'neutral description' of a given phenomenon under consideration. A critical review of the literature on the FTAA process is therefore concerned with identifying the extent to which the prevailing approaches to the study of the FTAA process address the emerging transnationalisation of civil society activism throughout the Americas mobilised around the FTAA project.

The chapter is divided into three sections that cover the main theoretical approaches employed for the study of FTAA process, as identified in the scholarly and policy literature. Each section begins with a general introduction to the central tenets of that particular theoretical approach, and the leading authors working in that tradition. Additionally, the sections address the core

beliefs, assumptions and concerns raised by the theories with particular reference to the FTAA process. Finally, a critique of the strengths and shortcomings of each theoretical view for the understanding of the FTAA process will be provided. Following this arrangement, the first section discusses the neo-realist and neo-mercantilist tradition. The second section focuses on the approach to integration of neo-liberal institutionalism and, lastly, the third section concentrates on the critical approaches identified with the Marxist and social democratic traditions. Finally, the conclusion will propose a theoretical framework for the study of transnational coalitions in the Americas, which will be the main subject of the following chapter.

The central claim of this chapter is that the ways in which the FTAA process has been studied discourages a deep reflection on the search for political alternatives to neo-liberalism in the Americas. Firstly, because the existing literature on the FTAA process has not engaged seriously with the challenges posed by counter-hegemonic forces in the definition of trade integration and development policies. Secondly, because this literature does not address the ongoing debate on what kind of integration and development policies should be pursued in the region. A reflection on the role of counter-hegemonic actors like the Hemispheric Social Alliance in the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism thus demands an understanding of the FTAA process as a site of contestation in which the HSA is an organically constituent dimension of this hemispheric process.

Neo-realism and neo-mercantilism

World politics from a realist and mercantilist perspective is conceived as inherently unstable and driven by the strive for state power. The writings of Thucydides (460 – 406 BC), Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) are considered foundational landmarks to a realist approach to politics traditionally concerned with the conduct of leaders in political affairs in response to the imperative of ensuring the survival of the state. Classical realists have been generally interested in questions of war and military security. Additionally, since the seventeenth and eighteenth century, mercantilists have stressed the importance of the economic wealth of a country to its power and security in the international system (Viner, 1948; List, 1966; Hamilton, 1991; Heckscher, 1994). Mercantilists regard state intervention in the economy as a necessary measure to ensure the competitiveness required for success in the balance of power game with rival states. In order to survive, states will try to ensure ‘self-sufficiency in key strategic industries and commodities and by using trade protectionism (tariffs and other limits on exports and imports), subsidies, and selective investments in the domestic economy’ (Woods, 2001: 285).

Mercantilism shares the core elements of a realist understanding of politics. In particular, the commitment to the principles of: *statism*, *survival* and *self-help* (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005: 172-79). Statism refers to the ideology that

sovereign states are the most desirable form of political organisation and, subsequently, the primary and unitary actors of the international system. Ensuring the survival of the state constitutes the supreme national interest. To ensure survival, states behave as egoist rational actors seeking to maximise power by securing relative advantages over other states. Self-help is ultimately the only reliable means to guarantee survival of the state, provided there is no world government capable of maintaining international security and order. Consequently, in an anarchic international system characterised by lack of order, states engage in balance of power politics to increase and retain state power. Rather than being a single theory, realism and mercantilism engulf a way of thinking about politics characterized by the analysis of state power as a universal and transhistorical dimension of politics.

A structural neo-realist reformulation (Waltz, 1979) of realist thinking was introduced in the early 1980s as a response to the pressures derived from the adoption of behaviouralism in the IR discipline to adopt a rigorous (positivist) methodology (Mouritzen, 1997; Woever, 1997: 11-12, 17). The notion of the international *structure* becomes the central analytical feature of this novel and influential variant of realism. Shifts in the power arrangement of the international structure create opportunities for states to increase their relative gains and independence vis-à-vis other states in the system. Namely, the choices of foreign policy available to a given state can only be understood from that state's relational position in the international structure of power.

Structural neo-realism has provided the ground for the development of theories seeking to explain the difficult prospects of inter-state cooperation in an anarchic system in terms of the changes taking place at the level of the international structure of power. Strong states in the international system have a greater autonomy to pursue their policies, whereas weaker states must align their policy preferences to the hegemonic ones in order to ensure their protection and benefits. In this respect, hegemonic states have a key role in creating the incentives for the formation and compliance of weak states in international regimes. This has been the central claim of the hegemonic stability theory (Kindleberger, 1974; Krasner, 1976; Snidal, 1985; Cowhey and Long, 1983; Gilpin, 1987).

The end of the Cold War was followed by a shift in the balance of power that underpinned the international system since the aftermath of World War II. Academic and political debates since the early 1990s tried to make sense of the nature of the emerging international order that resulted from this sudden rearrangement of power relations. This had direct implications for the kinds of foreign policy options pursued by governments seeking to re-define their international relations in light of the characteristics of the new system of power.

On the one hand lay the view that the emerging international system was conceived as an increasing unipolar order based on the hegemonic leadership of the United States. From this perspective, small countries could only 'realistically' consider investing in securing a close political alignment with the

United States as a strategy to redefine their role in the world. The converse view was that the new international system tended towards a multi-polar order in which the other powers such as the European Union, South East Asia, China and perhaps even MERCOSUR could also play a preponderant role along with the United States.

This debate over the meaning of the international order in the post-Cold War period set the framework for the analysis of the FTAA process in the Americas. From the perspective of neo-realism/neo-mercantilism, hemispheric relations in the 1990s became the expression of a competition between the United States and Brazil to increase their geo-political influence in the region. The relatively greater power of these two countries in the inter-American system meant that the prospects of reaching consensus among the 34 countries in the hemisphere to create an FTAA was largely dependent on the leadership of these two countries (Phillips, 2003: 332). The FTAA process therefore became seen as driven by this inter-state competition.

Reflecting on the significance of trade integration policies vis-à-vis the redefinition of the U.S. national interest during the post-Cold War period, the literature provides analyses of foreign policy and recommendations concerning the United States' policy towards the region (Bélanger, 1999; Fishlow, 1999b; Roett, 1999; Smith, 1999b, Ayerbe, 2003). Moreover, analyses of the role of Brazil in the region highlight the historical continuity of a seemingly uninterrupted and proud call for regional leadership (Albuquerque, 2001;

Danese, 2001; Hirst, 2001; Soares de Lima, 1994, 1999). The literature on the FTAA has paid less attention to the role of middle powers in the hemispheric process (Bélanger and Mace, 1999).

MERCOSUR is regarded by this literature as a defensive response of its member states to the advancement of a U.S. strategy of hegemony in the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Carranza 2004a, 2004b; Vizentini, 2004). In this regard, MERCOSUR has instrumental value in increasing the bargaining power of its member states in the negotiation of the FTAA with the United States and NAFTA (Carranza, 2000; Motta Veiga, 2001). Furthermore, this regional bloc is also an element of a broader strategy of its member states to improve their insertion into the global economy (Hurrell, 2005; Motta Veiga, 2001; Rozenwurcel, 2001: 20) in the making of a multipolar system (Vizentini, 2004). Carranza (2000: 19) argues that 'MERCOSUR fits nicely in the neorealist logic of geo-economics: economic regionalism as a defensive strategy in an increasingly competitive post-Cold War neo-mercantilist environment'. Supporting this view, Bernal-Meza (1999: 11) claims that 'MERCOSUR became for Brazil an instrument of *realpolitik*'.

While there is agreement that MERCOSUR constitutes a foreign policy instrument to increase the balance of power of its member states in the hemispheric and international arenas, there is less agreement on how to use this sub-regional bloc for that purpose. In particular, the place of MERCOSUR in the FTAA process has led to a heated debate. This involves those who feared

that the FTAA project would undermine MERCOSUR by eroding the economic advantages of having instruments of protection as the Common External Tariff, and those who see both projects as potentially compatible, provided that the agreement favours clearly defined national/MERCOSUR objectives.

The first position opposes the participation of MERCOSUR in the FTAA negotiation process (Guimarães Pinheiro, 1998, 2004; Jaguaribe, 1998; Vizontini, 2004: 19). The second one encourages the strategic engagement of MERCOSUR in the hemispheric process, as long as this does not preclude the pursuit of relations with the European Union and other emerging powers (Lampreia and Seabra da Cruz Junior, 2005; 'Brasil defiende', 2004). Brazil has sought to delay the FTAA negotiations to gain time to consolidate a common MERCOSUR position, and to work towards the formation of a South American Free Trade Area (Carranza, 2000). The success of this larger project would surely strengthen the position of the Southern Cone countries in the negotiations of the FTAA with the United States.

Nevertheless, this objective also faces the challenge of the United States' strategy of negotiating bilateral free trade agreements (BFTAs) with individual countries in the region with the promise of access to the North American market (the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement, and a series of bilateral agreements between the United States and Peru, Colombia and Ecuador).

Strengths of neo-realism/neo-mercantilism

Perhaps the most salient contribution of a neo-realist/neo-mercantilist approach to the understanding of the FTAA process is the focus on the central role of states in the negotiation of a framework for economic liberalisation in the Americas. The diplomatic gridlock over what sectors will be subject to liberalisation, the terms of implementation of the agreement, and the thorny issues of protectionist practices associated with non-tariff barriers have direct implications for the future political economy of the region. Despite the recurrent views advocating minimal intervention of the state in the economic matters, this approach to the FTAA process reveals the crucial role of states in protecting selected sectors of their economies despite their rhetorical commitment to market liberalisation.

Another strong point of this perspective is its awareness of the tensions that emerge from the competition of the United States and Brazil governments over the leadership of the hemisphere process. This is valuable to understanding the political struggle underlying the transformation of a new paradigm of hemispheric relations in which the East-West confrontation is no longer a defining principle. It also sheds light on the diplomatic obstacles to the attainment of a common agenda of liberalisation facing the U.S. and Brazil governments, which resulted in the gridlock of the FTAA negotiation process in 2003.

Shortcomings of neo-realism/neo-mercantilism

This perspective on the FTAA process defines the realm of politics as the expression of inter-state competition, mainly between the U.S. and Brazil. Governments are implicitly taken to embody the pursuit of clearly defined national interests. This overlooks the complex political dynamics within countries involved in setting the official agenda for the FTAA negotiations, and the overall position of governments regarding foreign relations. Whether these dynamics are the result of the pressure exerted by lobbying groups from the private sector, trade unions or social movements, this perspective on the FTAA does not account for the often-contested nature of the 'national interest'. The orientation of a government's foreign policy and trade policy in particular cannot be reduced solely to changes in the international system. Domestic factors are also central. This has important normative implications regarding issues of democratic sovereignty. An abstracted notion of 'national interest' can often silence the underlying struggles within countries for deeper and more significant forms of democratic control. It is problematic to assume that democratic representation is uncontested, particularly in a region characterised by systems of 'low intensity' democracy, and also by recurrent governability crises that constantly challenge the legitimacy and authority of their governments.

Another shortcoming of this perspective is the analytical separation that it establishes between the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres of politics. This separation rests on a legalistic conception of territorial national sovereignty. This view is being challenged by the increasingly dense flow of transnational interactions that permeate national borders (flows of information, economic, symbolic and cultural exchanges, and others) (Scholte, 2000), rendering the separation between domestic and international spheres increasingly more problematic. The intensification of information exchange and communications has opened spheres of interactions where political values and loyalties can converge and collide independently from the formal control of national state borders. The state-centric assumption of neo-realism/neo-mercantilism does not foster a reflection on this transnational dimension of politics.

To conclude, a neo-realist/neo-mercantilist approach to the FTAA has made a valuable contribution to understanding the role of state/bloc power in negotiating the framework for hemispheric integration in accordance with contending interests embedded in competing views of trade, development and integration. Nevertheless, by focusing merely on the inter-state level of this hemispheric process, this literature abstracts the complex political dynamics involved in this process to a power game between the governments of powerful states. The FTAA process is thus regarded as dominated by two big players, where their balancing and bargaining practices attain collective agency. There is no room for other expressions of political conflict in defining the dynamics of the FTAA process.

Neo-liberal institutionalism

Neo-liberal institutionalism is a recent development of liberal thought with roots in the functional integration scholarship of the 1940s and the 1950s, studies of regional integration in the 1960s, and complex interdependence and transnationalism in the 1970s and 1980s (Lamy, 2001). The prevailing concern of this variant of liberalism is to find ways to foster inter-state cooperation in the context of an anarchic and competitive international system (Lamy, 2001: 184). Economic liberalisation occupies a central place in the agenda of cooperative international relations, provided there is an implicit assumption that the removal of barriers to trade will lead to an increase in economic growth with a positive effect on international peace. States compete in the world economy, but there is always room for harmony of interests. As Axelrod and Keohane (1985: 226) claim, 'cooperation can only take place in situations that contain a mixture of conflicting and complementary interests'.

Despite their different views on world politics, neo-liberal institutionalism shares with neo-realism the assumption that states are key political actors in international relations. Even when neo-liberalism incorporates non-state actors as analytically significant, states retain an unquestioned primacy in setting the rules of the international system. The main difference between two such approaches concerns their corresponding notions of *gain* at the core of

explanations of state behaviour. Neo-realism explains the competitive behaviour of countries in terms of their pursuit of *relative gains* in their bargaining relation with other countries. Instead, neo-liberal institutional accounts highlight the importance of *absolute gains*. This may seem to be a nuanced difference, but this distinction is analytically central in order to defend the claim that countries can effectively overcome the structural instability of an anarchic international system through international cooperation. Inter-state cooperation takes place on the basis of mutual benefit. It is not important if one country obtains lesser benefits for its relation with another country, in so far as it is able to improve its condition in this way.

Another revealing contrast with neo-realism relates to the view of the formation of national interest and foreign policy. Contrary to the belief that the structure of international power determines policy preference, the formation of national interest in neo-liberal institutional accounts is subject to the interactions of international and domestic factors. As Rosamond (2000: 125) explains, 'neoliberals are as interested in the formation of state preferences as they are in the bargaining processes that take place between states. Such theories of preference formation almost inevitably begin to factor in processes of domestic politics'. The work of Robert Putnam (1993) has been influential in providing a methodological approach that integrates the inter-related dynamics between domestic and international factors in explanations of state diplomacy. The notion of state power is fragmented into various 'issue areas' in which states are believed to have differing degrees of influence and competence (Keohane,

1980). Foreign policy is thus regarded as reflecting differentiated objectives and strategies in correspondence with the specific engagement of these issue areas.

Neo-liberal institutionalism assigns great importance to international institutions for the management of issue areas where states have mutual interests. Whether it relates to economic, financial, security or environmental problems, institutions allow the possibility of resolving problems of collective action in issue areas where international cooperation can yield greater benefits than adopting uncoordinated initiatives by individual states. International institutions can facilitate cooperation provided they circulate information among their member states, enabling mutual trust and the reduction of uncertainty (Little, 2002: 82; Keohane, 1984).

The existence of clear provisions to determine and even punish free-riding behaviour of putative deviant members is important to ensure the proper functioning of institutions (Keohane 1984: 77; Axelrod and Keohane, 1985: 234-238). Transparency on the rules and procedures is therefore intricately associated with the capacity of institutions to generate trust among their members.

In addition to shaping the foreign policy of states, institutions can also be influential in setting foreign policy agendas. The accumulation of experience and the dissemination of relevant information can affect the identification and solution of specific problems. Similarly, they can encourage cooperation at

local, national, and international levels and often initiate the building of coalitions between state and non-state actors (Lamy, 2001: 192). In this respect, 'creating, maintaining, and further empowering these institutions is the future of foreign policy for neo-liberal institutionalists' (Lamy, 2001: 191-92).

Most of the literature on the FTAA process from the perspective of neo-liberal institutionalism had been produced by a group of trade policy specialists, and academic and intergovernmental research institutions who are formally and informally tied to the FTAA institutional structure. The contributions of organisations of the Inter-American institutions that are part of the FTAA process, such as the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and trade research networks such as the NetAmericas, Latin American Trade Network (LATN), FOCAL, CEIM, and the Institute for the Americas have been particularly salient. Collectively, they constitute a 'knowledge network' on the FTAA process. In general terms, this literature is interested in creating and improving hemispheric institutions as a means of resolving problems of collective action (mainly inter-state), and promoting democracy and a market economy throughout the Americas.

Overall, the literature on the FTAA process from a neo-liberal institutional perspective is identified with the promotion of hemispheric trade and democracy in the region. Different research agendas on the FTAA from this perspective share a common belief that hemispheric integration can improve the

economic, political and social conditions of the region. However, it also recognised that there are protectionist forces that could prevent this integration process from taking place. The reason for such ingrained obstructionism is concerned with the lack of knowledge about the FTAA process and institutions, and the lack of support among important sectors of civil society who question the legitimacy of this process. It is believed that if the benefits of trade liberalisation are properly explained, the opposition to this project will invariably disappear; its benefits will become clear to all. This perspective on the FTAA process can thus be characterised as ‘problem-solving’ (Cox, 1987). It responds to three main requirements.

First, to mitigate the entrenched protectionist opposition to the FTAA process, the literature has presented a defence of the virtues of hemispheric trade in generating prosperity in the Americas (Naím, 1994; Council of the Americas, 2001). Again, the assumption here is that by clarifying some of the negative and common misconceptions about trade it is possible to overcome the protectionist forces that interfere with the FTAA initiative (Naím, 1994).

Second, increasing the public visibility of the FTAA process has been equally important in relation to its acceptance and effective continuity. In this respect, the literature has produced detailed descriptions of the complex negotiation process (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2001; Schott, 2001, 2002; Ricard-Guay, 2003; Rivas-Campo and Benke, 2003). Similarly, it has also paid close attention to the political evolution of this process by developing periodical assessments of the

successes and failures of the Summit of the Americas, follow-ups of the progress achieved, and recommendations for their improvement (Bouzas and Svarzman, 2001; Feinberg and Rosenberg, 2001; Feinberg, 1997; Moss and Lande, 1998; Lande, 1998; North-South Center 1999; Cooper, 2001; Fauriol and Weintraub, 2001; Salazar-Xirinachs, 2001; Leadership Council, 1998; 1999; 2001; Summits of the Americas Secretariat, 2001).

Third, considering that in many countries there is no broad support for establishing free trade policies, civil society participation in the FTAA process is regarded as necessary to build popular support for inter-American cooperation (Feinberg, 1998), and to ensure the democratic legitimacy that eventual hemispheric agreements (Albán, 2002: 1; Peña, 2003: 7; SELA, 2000). Interest in civil society results from the increasingly important political role acquired by civil society organisations in the FTAA negotiations (Wrobel, 1999: 201; SELA, 2000; Serbin, 2003; Tussie and Botto, 2003). Making the engagement between civil society and government actors more constructive is a central concern of this section of the literature (FOCAL, 2000: 1). Furthermore, the consultation with civil society is understood as contributing to the democratic credentials of the hemispheric process.

The literature dealing with civil society participation in the FTAA process has concentrated on the experiences of consultation at the domestic and hemispheric levels. At the level of domestic politics this is addressed in discussions concerning the role of pressure groups in trade policy processes

(IADB, 2002; Compa, 1998; Bustos, 2002; Barrios, 2003; Lortie and Bédard, 2002). The debate over the approval of a fast track mandate/trade promotion authority by the U.S. Congress has received a great deal of attention, considering this bill as of central importance to the prospect of advancing the FTAA negotiations (Barfield, 1998; Krause, 2003; Chaloult and Fernández; 2001). Civil society participation at the hemispheric level has been addressed in relation to the Summit of the Americas process, Ministerial Meetings and the FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CGR) (Feinberg, 1998; Feinberg and Rosenberg, 1999; Albán, 2002; FOCAL, 2000; Shamsie, 2000; Jácome, 2001; Cole, 2002; Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003; Sarrasin, 2003).

Evaluating the extent to which civil society organisations have been successful in having their demands addressed in such institutional venues has been key to determining the democracy and inclusiveness of these institutions (Shamsie, 2000). Approaches to civil society participation involving both the domestic and hemispheric levels have drawn on Putnam's two-level game model to stress the interrelated dynamics between civil society pressure at the domestic level and the evolution of the FTAA international negotiations (Tussie and Labaqui, 2002). Moreover, others have provided detailed analyses of the formation of transnational networks of civil society organisations in the Americas as a product of state initiatives to delegate some of their political functions to civil society organisations (Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003).

As a concluding remark on this section, the neo-liberal institutional research agenda of the FTAA process is concerned with the possibility of advancing hemispheric integration. Issues of institutional design are central to international cooperation. Similarly, the continuity of institutional arrangements is dependent on the degree of legitimacy and support received. In this regard, civil society actors have been invited to legitimate the FTAA process.

Strengths of neo-liberal institutionalism

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of a neo-liberal institutionalist perspective on the FTAA process is its commitment to a relatively more pluralist understanding of hemispheric politics. This reveals the diversity of actors and interests involved in the definition of international economic relations. Stressing the changing nature of policy-making processes with the emergence of a 'complex diplomacy' shows the extent to which non-state actors (civil society organisations and corporate groups) have become influential in policy discussions around the negotiation of the FTAA. This approach illuminates the 'black-box' of state decision-making.

The broadening of the trade agenda represents another strength of this theoretical approach to the FTAA. The understanding of state power in terms of issue areas where governments engage in linked but separate negotiation processes undermines the totalising view of power associated with realist and

mercantilist accounts of the FTAA process. Issue-based demands from civil society actors enrich the public debate on free trade agreements.

Shortcomings of neo-liberal institutionalism

This theoretical approach to the FTAA process, even if pluralistic, is still too narrow to reflect the complex political dynamics generated in the continent by this trade integration initiative. Most of the civil society activism that has taken place in the Americas on the FTAA process has not been directly mediated through formal institutional mechanisms. Rather, as the latter period of the HSA shows, most social movements and some NGOs (perhaps less the trade unions) have pursued other avenues to influence their governments on the FTAA process. The neo-liberal institutionalist treatment of civil society has been narrowly limited to sectors that are far from being representative of the complex and more politicised range of social actors mobilised around the FTAA.

Despite the analytical importance of non-state actors in this theoretical perspective, accounts of the FTAA process are predominantly state-centric. This is corroborated by the comparatively abundant production of policy recommendations and assessments of the various multilateral venues to inform government officials involved in the hemispheric process. Likewise, a recurrent concern with the priority of the state even permeates the accounts of the

formation of networks of civil society organisations. State-centric interpretations of the FTAA process misconstrue the relative political autonomy attained by the collective efforts of transnational civil society networks. They also obstruct any possibility of thinking of civil society as an active agent capable of interacting with and transforming the inter-state political process in the Americas. Instead, civil society is stripped of any sense of agency reducing it to a passive reaction to the interplay of state policies.

Similarly, this perspective has failed to address the shifting debate on the meaning of development and trade integration. There has been a move among many scholarly researchers towards a more critical view of market liberalisation policies, resulting from the devastating effects of their implementation during the 1990s (especially, though not exclusively, in Latin America). In focusing on the institutional dimension of the hemispheric process, the involvement of non-state actors in this debate include only those sectors that largely agree with many of the assumptions on which the FTAA project is based – the ‘insider’ social organisations (Smith and Korzeniewics, 2003). Furthermore, in focusing on such social actors, this theoretical perspective does not adequately address the resistance that the FTAA process has generated amongst the most critical sectors of civil society – such as the HSA.

To conclude, it was argued that the strength of the neo-liberal institutional approach to the FTAA process rests on its portrayal of the trade policy process as driven by the interplay between a multiplicity of actors at the domestic and

international levels. Accounts of the evolution of the negotiating process cannot therefore ignore the influence these actors are having on the hemispheric process. Similarly, the centrality of institutional matters associated with the building of consensus to pursue the FTAA agenda constitutes a valuable starting point from which to think about future forms of multi-level governance in the Americas.

Nevertheless, the efforts to gain support for the hemispheric process by creating consultation mechanisms with civil society have fallen short of improving the problems of democratic deficit and the lack of legitimacy of this process. This is verified by the prevalent emphasis of this literature on the exploration of civil society participation within the significantly small group of social organisations that have been involved in consultation processes. Such a narrow focus invariably overlooks the activities of large segments of civil society that have remained largely at the margins of the FTAA institutions. This can only contradict a commitment to making the FTAA process more democratic and inclusive of social demands.

Critical approaches

Critical perspectives are identified with the theoretical and political debates on the critique of capitalism following Karl Marx (1818-83). Stemming from this legacy, the first attempt to develop a comprehensive critique of the world

economy came from Lenin's theory of imperialism. According to this theory, imperialism had installed a system by which advanced countries at the *core* exploited less developed countries at the *periphery* by exporting capital, creating industries and extracting natural resources (Lenin, 1995). These views were further developed by the Latin American dependency school which stressed the unequal and declining terms of trade of the world economy which condemn peripheral countries to a state of structural dependency (Prebisch 1963, 1964; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979; Frank, 1979). Furthermore, these developments in turn led to the formulation of the world-system theory, considered the most renowned critique of world capitalism in this tradition (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980 and 1989).

Critiques of imperialism share with mercantilist approaches to world politics the view that the state can act as an instrument of oppression and domination of weaker countries (through colonialism, for example). Their main difference, however, is connected with the explicit association between class interests and the state institutions and policy identified by Marxist critics. Mercantilists are not concerned with the exploitative relations of production legalised by the state within its society and through its international relations. A central concern that arises from structural critiques to capitalism is the possibility that dependent (neo-colonial) states could have autonomy from an exploitative international system dominated by the imperial powers. Similarly, as Lenin pointed out, when national bourgeoisies 'compensate' local working classes to secure their support for the exploitation of other workers in foreign countries, the prospects

of international labour solidarity representing common class interests becomes problematic.

Another influential contribution to the tradition of Marxist critical approaches to capitalism comes from Gramsci's development of the idea of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). As a notion of power, hegemony combines the practices of coercion and consent of the dominant groups/classes in society to legitimate exploitative social relations with subordinate groups. The creation and contestation of hegemony takes place in the institutions of civil society with relative autonomy from the state. This view contrasts with what may be referred to as orthodox variants of Marxism that have been criticised for relying exclusively on structural explanations, while disregarding the importance of the superstructure (ideology, institutions, values, culture, etc.) in creating the conditions for revolution. The main concern for Gramsci was therefore to understand why revolution had not taken place in developed economies as predicted by Marx. This was attributed to the role of hegemony in preventing social revolutions.

Neo-Gramscian scholars have further extended these ideas — firstly conceived in the context of the interwar period in Italy — to analyze the current capitalist world order (Cox, 1987; Gill and Law, 1989; Gill 1993; Cox and Sinclair, 1996). The notion of 'new constitutionalism' has been particularly influential in this reformulation of the Gramscian tradition. 'New constitutionalism' refers to the political project of introducing institutional reforms to 'lock in' the power

gains of capital by increasing constitutional rights to private property at the expense of subordinating democracy to the pursuit of profit. This process nonetheless lacks hegemonic support and is thus open to the challenge of forces resistant to neo-liberalism struggling to prevent the encroachments on democracy (Gill, 2002). From this perspective, the present world order is regarded in terms of a contestation between private corporate interests trying to cement a neo-liberal hegemony and counter-hegemonic forces defying what is regarded as the undermining of public rights.

Resistance to hegemony can take place outside formal political institutions (demonstrations, civil disobedience, etc.) but also within them. The fruitlessness or likeliness of achieving a socialist revolution through participation in liberal democratic institutions has divided Marxist thinkers since the early twentieth century into adopting revolutionary armed struggles or social democratic strategies. Participatory democracy has been one of the social democratic responses to the inherent tensions between capitalism and democracy.

Through the creation of participatory forms of democracy, it would be possible to resolve the problem of democratic deficit in governance structures, ensuring equality and inclusiveness irrespective of social hierarchies. A central concern here is to determine to what extent participation serves to improve the conditions of disadvantaged sectors of society, or whether it merely serves as a means of obtaining their consent in order to legitimate policies and legislation,

contrary to the advancement of public interests. Namely, formal participation could be regarded as a practice for the creation of hegemony.

Following the failure of the neo-liberal reform programs in the 1990s to deliver equitable economic growth and development, voices critical of the FTAA process gained significant political influence in the shaping of new public understandings of free trade and market liberalisation. The criticisms of the FTAA have tended to concentrate on the denunciation of the economic, social and environmental implications of this project, on the formulation of alternative forms of integration to it, and on the analyses of the nature of the social actors in the Americas and the strategies adopted to oppose the FTAA.

In spite of the differences among the various existing critical traditions, they all regard the FTAA as a neo-liberal project that runs contrary to the principles of egalitarianism, social justice, democracy and sustainable development. Apart from some individual contributions to a critical literature on the FTAA from committed academics, the bulk of this literature comes from institutions such as the Social Observatory of Latin Americas in the Latin American Social Sciences Council (CLACSO), member organisations of the HSA, the Observatory of the Americas of the University of Québec at Montréal, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Institute for Policy Studies, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, OXFAM, the Interhemispheric Resource Center (IRC), amongst others.

In this criticism, firstly, the FTAA project has been accused of being an instrument of American imperialism to subjugate Southern countries by reducing them to a state of dependent neo-colonialism. This assessment suggests that the capital liberalisation propounded by this agreement will depend on the exploitation of the working class and the annihilation of the national industries of less developed countries (CUT, 2003; Borón, 2002, Petras, 2002). Nevertheless, this process of colonial carving-up of the continent has heightened class warfare towards an anti-imperialist struggle for social-economic transformation (Petras, 2004).

Similarly, others have stressed the lack of legitimacy and undemocratic nature of the FTAA process. Participation mechanisms such as the FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CGR), and the consultation process coordinated before the Americas Summits are not considered to provide real opportunities for civil society to influence the definition of the FTAA agenda (Wiesebron, 2004; Prévost, 2003: 124). Furthermore, they are rejected as being instruments of political cooptation of the more critical positions (Benessaieh, 1999). Others have even questioned the legitimacy of the national political systems and governments that participate in the FTAA process (Serbin, 2003: 99).

The lack of transparency of the FTAA process is another element contributing to its democratic deficit. Decisions are taken secretly by negotiators behind closed doors, in many cases even without the supervision of national

parliaments (Wiesebron, 2004). Such secretive and exclusionary practices support the denunciations that the FTAA only represents corporate interests (Sampson, 2003), which translate into widespread discontent and the mobilization of citizen movements (Carlsen, 2003: 2; Hansen-Kuhn, 2003; Sampson 2003: 1).

The FTAA project will institutionalise a new form of governance in the Americas. This means that the FTAA is not just concerned with the liberalisation of trade and services. What is also at stake is the establishment of an infrastructure of rules and disciplines to regulate international and domestic social processes to the benefit of corporate capital and to the detriment of democracy, the rule of law and the capacity of the state to promote equitable development (Barenberg and Evans, 2004; Brunelle, 2004b). Replicating and even deepening the foundational model of NAFTA, this form of governance would represent an 'economic constitution' for the Americas.

The FTAA chapter on investment rules (in line with Chapter 11 from NAFTA) is perhaps the most contentious provision of this agreement considering the unbalanced rights it grants to corporate interests to the detriment of democratic sovereignty (Anderson and Arruda, 2002; Barlow and Clarke, n.d.; Hillebrand, 2003; Brunelle, 2004b; Lee, 2004). The rules on investment protection contemplated in this chapter are aimed at securing a stable and safe environment for investments by discouraging governments (at the national, provincial or municipal levels) from modifying their legislation in ways that

may directly or indirectly affect their investment expectations.

Nevertheless, as the experience of NAFTA demonstrates, reform of legislation may need to be introduced to ensure the protection of public interests like health or the environment. Additionally, the investor-state dispute mechanism (ISDM) included in this provision would entitle companies to take legal action directly against governments to demand hefty monetary compensations for alleged expropriation. No public access to oral hearings is contemplated in these arbitration systems. Safeguarding investor's security comes at the cost of more uncertainty to governments and citizens concerned with public interest (Lee, 2004: 46).

Secondly, in addition to denouncing the implications of the FTAA project, there have been several initiatives to formulate concrete alternative approaches to hemispheric integration. Such alternatives recognise that the establishment of an FTAA will accentuate the problems of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation that already affect most of the continent. Alternative approaches to integration instead propose sustainable forms of development that contradict the market-led approach of the FTAA project (HSA, 2002a; Oxfam, 2003; Gallagher and Blanco, 2003; IISD, 2004; Barlow and Clarke, n.d.). Characterised by a strong social dimension to integration, alternative approaches to integration advocate the incorporation of social clauses in the areas of labour (Collingsworth, 2001; Godio, 2004), the environment (IISD, 2002), human rights (Bronson and Lamarche, 2001) and gender (Castrillo, Pey,

Trautmann and Espino, 2003).

Critical positions have been trying to include labour protection (and other social clauses) in the core of FTAA agreement (Hansen-Kuhn, 1996) rather than taking the negotiation to the International Labour Organisation (Carnegie Endowment, 2001). Similarly, they reject the inclusion of labour and environmental protection as side agreements to the FTAA. As the experience of NAFTA reveals, side agreements are difficult to enforce (Lee, 2004: 47). Another issue pressed by critics of the FTAA is that the FTAA should affirm previously recognised accords such as the International Labor Organisation conventions, the United Nations convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and the Inter-American convention on human rights (Hansen-Kuhn, 1996).

Thirdly, apart from the critiques and alternatives produced by some civil society sectors to the FTAA, there has been some effort in the literature to understand the actors that are engaged in opposing the FTAA. Some of the central concerns driving this research are derived from the need to understand the emergence of new forms of resistance to neo-liberalism, exemplified by the creation of broad counter-hegemonic North-South coalitions between labour movements and social movements such as the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) (Anner and Evans, 2004; Chaloult and Fernández, 2001; Drainville, 1999; Prévost, 2003; Sampson, 2004; Smith, 2004). The relations between such developments at the hemispheric level with global processes like the WSF have

also been discussed (Brunelle, 2002). Fewer authors have nevertheless specifically addressed the complex processes of coalition building where diverse sectors and identities come together in joint collective strategies to challenge the hegemony of neo-liberal globalisation/regionalisation in the Americas (Massicotte, 2004; Evans, 2005).

Strengths of critical approaches

An important advantage of critical approaches is their political commitment to demand the democratisation of the hemispheric process. This involves a greater participation of civil society in the negotiation process, but also the reformulation of current neo-liberal approaches to integration in order to ensure a socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and democratic form of development in the Americas. Related to this, the formulation of alternative policy options to the FTAA project is in itself the most valuable contribution to the promotion of a debate that raises the ethical implications of trade politics. Moreover, this debate exposes the problematic nature of uncritically accepted distinctions between public and private spheres that often serve to safeguard corporate benefits at the expense of public costs.

This literature has also made a crucial contribution to our understanding of the ongoing struggle throughout a continent in search of new forms of expression of dissent and political representation in the face of a generalised trend towards

the erosion of credibility in formal democratic institutions (UNDP, 2004). This continuing endeavour against an exclusionary FTAA project presents the possibility of reinventing the meaning and roles of an emerging new citizenship.

Shortcomings of critical approaches

Accounts of the development of counter-hegemonic forces opposing the FTAA process are crucial to understanding the political dynamics that characterise hemispheric relations in the current post-neoliberal period. Unfortunately, few analyses have been produced on this subject. Recent experiences of transnational multi-sectoral coalitions between labour unions, social movements and NGOs (of which the HSA is a prime example) still need to be more thoroughly addressed by this literature.

Critical accounts of the FTAA process concentrate primarily on the denunciation of the dangers posed by this trade integration project to the most vulnerable social sectors of the continent. This denunciation is carried out by some academic sectors (often marginal from mainstream academic discourse), NGOs working on development issues, some trade union organisations. These critiques to the FTAA aim to raise awareness of the risks involved in this proposed project in order to build opposition to it. In this regard, they are a necessary condition for the creation of alternative forms of development and regional integration.

However, these accounts often treat the FTAA process as something 'external' to the social forces that oppose and resist it. As a result, these social forces are never portrayed as being an integral part of this process, driving its complex political dynamics and not merely reacting to it. Consequently, this literature does not encourage a scholarly and political reflection on how social movements emerge in the first place, resulting from their strategic interventions in terms of alliance formation, consensus building, mobilisation, denunciation, and communication, among others. This partly results from the limited chances available to activists for reflection and systematisation on their experiences. As a consequence, critical accounts of the FTAA assume that counter-hegemonic forces are already there without exploring the tight inter-relations between the FTAA process and the formation of new counter-hegemonic subjects. Similarly, this literature is limited to exploring the challenges and opportunities encountered by transnational coalitions like the HSA in their construction of political alternatives to neo-liberalism.

Conclusion

The review of the literature on the FTAA process shows that the priorities and assumptions of neo-realist/neo-mercantilist, neo-liberal institutionalist and critical theoretical approaches discourage a deep reflection on the search for political alternatives to neo-liberalism in the Americas.

The complex political dynamics of hemispheric relations that underlie the FTAA process are not captured in state-centric perspectives that concentrate mainly on the inter-governmental dimension of regional integration. When there have been attempts to engage with this complexity by incorporating the role of non-state actors, this has been done in a restrictive manner that ultimately fails to reveal the shifting political climate and organised mobilisation led by the more critical sectors of civil society. The emphasis on 'improving' the institutional infrastructure of the FTAA process to encourage the democratic participation of broader sectors of society reveals its instrumental purpose of minimising and neutralising opposition to trade integration.

Likewise, critical approaches to the FTAA tend to emphasise the negative consequences of this project without reflecting on the role of civil society in the creation of alternatives. The three theoretical approaches to the FTAA process present views on the meaning of this project from distinct policy positions.

Despite their differences, these theoretical traditions share a common neglect of the role of counter-hegemonic forces like the HSA in the FTAA process. What is needed is a theoretical perspective that enables reflection on the opposing and mutually constituting dynamics of trade liberalisation and counter-hegemonic formation. Only after the forces of resistance to the FTAA are seen as an integral dimension of this hemispheric process can there be the possibility of

reflecting on the challenges and opportunities faced by counter-hegemonic coalitions like the HSA in the building of political alternatives to neo-liberalism in the Americas. The next chapter develops a theoretical perspective that allows closer movement towards this objective.

CHAPTER 3

A political process approach

The purpose of this research is to assess to what extent the HSA has contributed to the construction of political alternatives to the neo-liberal view of development identified in the FTAA project. It was argued in the previous chapter that the academic and policy literature produced on the FTAA project is inadequate to understand the important role that the HSA plays in this hemispheric process. This chapter proposes a theoretical framework for the analysis of the HSA as a key social force affecting the dynamics of the FTAA process. The first section of the chapter discusses the origin and contribution of the *political process* version of the resource mobilisation theory for the study of social movements. The second section highlights the importance for mobilisation of the access to and control of social movements to political and material resources. The third section introduces the concept of political opportunity structure to define the dimensions of the political environment that affect positively or negatively the emergence and success of social movements. This concept is central to the political process tradition of social movement theory. The fourth section identifies the specific political opportunity factors present in the context of the Western Hemisphere associated with the rise and mobilisation of the Hemispheric Social Alliance.

Recapturing the agency of social movements

The *political process* tradition of social movement theory is a later variant of the resource mobilisation (RM) theory that developed in the United States during the 1970s as an attempt to understand the rise and actions of the civil rights and anti-war movements. The study of movements before the emergence of RM theory was dominated by the classical collective behaviour theory with a research agenda centred on explaining the emergence of fascism and Nazism in Europe, which had so tragically resulted in World War II (Tarrow, 1994: 82).

According to the core assumptions of the classical collective behaviour theory, collective action was regarded as an unpredictable and non-institutional phenomenon, resulting as a reaction to societal stress or breakdown and leading to a generalised state of social alienation. Discontent and psychological anxiety were taken to be the causes that drive individuals to partake in collective behaviour acts (Buechler, 2000: 20-21). Accordingly, social movements were defined as ‘dysfunctional, irrational, and inherently undesirable, and those who joined them as disconnected from intermediate associations that would link them with more productive, and less disruptive, social pursuits’ (Meyer, 2004b: 126) – this view was epitomised by the work of William Kornhauser (1959) on mass society.

This view of social movements was inherently conservative. It reflected – and

in turn contributed to reproduce – the prevailing political climate of the McCarthyism period characterised by a preoccupation with issues of social order and control (Buechler, 2000: 30-57). The rise of the civil rights and anti-war movements seemed at odds with the view that social movements resulted from the coming together of socially dislocated and distressed individuals. This could not possibly happen in what was regarded as an affluent and ‘healthy’ democratic society like the United States (Meyer, 2004b: 127). In failing to acknowledge the political dimension of the emerging social movements, the classical collective behaviour theory discouraged the possibility of questioning the social and political assumptions of its period, even when confronted with the rise of new social actors who challenged some aspects of the prevailing status quo.

Furthermore, the prevailing approach to social movements at the time was incapable of conceiving of social movements as purposeful social actors. Contrary to their initial intuitions, social movement researchers realised that collective initiatives such as public protests were sometimes leading to concessions from governments. This suggested that rather than being manifestations of mass hysteria, protests were in fact rational political resources employed by groups for whom conventional means of political expression were not available (Meyer, 2004b: 127). Increasingly, it became apparent that protests were not erratic outbreaks of an irrational mob, but rather acts of defiance to authority and prevailing social values through rational means.

The resource mobilisation (RM) theory came out in the attempt to assert the rational agency and political quality of the new social movements from the stultifying contrives of the classical collective behaviour tradition. Research focused on explaining *how* social movements organise, accumulate resources, coordinate collective action and make strategic choices (Gamson, 1990; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). In highlighting the rationality of social movements, RM questioned the 'premises of anomie and political disconnection' (Meyer, 2004b: 127) that had guided previous studies in this area.

According to Canel (1997: 19):

By focusing on resource management, tactics and strategy, it [RM] calls attention to the importance of strategic-instrumental action. It examines a level of social action where the actors' decisions affect the outcomes of conflicts and influence the future and the effectiveness of SMs [social movements].

The RM research agenda eventually branched off into two distinct variants: the *entrepreneurial* version (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; 1977) and the *political process* version (Oberschall, 1973; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982). Here we are concerned with the second of these traditions.

Just like the earlier RM perspectives, the *political process* approach reaffirmed the analytical importance of rational agency, the organisational arrangement and the resource control capacity of social movements in accounts for their emergence and acquired degree of political success. However, the political process version criticised what it regarded as a static view of social movements

that was implicit in RM approaches (McAdam *et al.*, 2001; Tarrow 1994).

It was claimed that 'early resource mobilization models exaggerate the centrality of deliberate strategic decisions to social movements' to the extent of downplaying 'the contingency, emotionality, plasticity, and interactive character of movement politics' (McAdam *et al.*, 2001: 15). Knowing how movements organise and access resources would only take us to a certain point. In order to understand social movements they have to be approached as part of a dynamics of interaction with its contending forces in society.

Likewise, the political process perspective considered that it was not enough to simply recognise the rationality, strategies, organisations and resources of social movements. What was lacking was a reflection on the political sources of the grievances of social movements. This was not addressed by the entrepreneurial version of RM. This variant considered that grievances were only secondary when explaining the rise and actions of social movements. The suitability of their organisational arrangement for the access to and control of resources was what ultimately made the difference. The political process variant regarded this view as limiting since it did not take into consideration the political context and content of social movement struggles. In this regard, it can be said that whereas RM 'provided something of a corrective to collective behavior, emphasizing the intentionality and rationality of protesters', it also neglected 'the political factors that provided grievances, resources, and openings to challengers' (Meyer, 2004a: 49). In light of these criticisms, the

distinctive contribution of the political process approach was the emphasis placed on the interactions of social movements with their political context.

Attempts to understand the agency and formation of social movements had to take into account the possibilities and restrictions of the external environment in which movements operate. Initial concerns about how social movements secure and mobilise political resources were thus readdressed to take into account the opportunities and limitations presented by the political context. Meyer (2004a: 50) claims that the 'essential emphasis of the PPT [political process tradition], as it developed in the 1970s and 1980s, is that activists don't choose goals, strategies, and tactics in a vacuum. Rather, the political context, conceptualized fairly broadly, sets the grievances around which activists mobilize, advantaging some claims and disadvantaging others'.

Furthermore,

[The] PPT correctly turns analysts' attention to the world outside social movements, but not to the exclusion of strategy and tactics. Indeed, if we are to develop a good understanding of the process by which activists make choices about strategies and tactics, and the wisdom of these choices, we need to understand the weight that external factors play in those calculations. Meaningful understanding of agency can only come with attention to structure. Political process emphasizes the connections between challengers and those they challenge, particularly in more conventional politics and political institutions, in order to understand what they do and what impact they have (eg., Soule, 1997) (Meyer, 2004a: 54).

Such emphasis on the constitutive relation between movements and their context permitted political process analysts to move away 'from their confreres by stressing dynamism, strategic interaction, and response to the political

environment' (McAdam *et al.*, 2001: 16).

The interactions between social movements and political context express the conflict between forces struggling to challenge existing structures of authority, and political elites seeking to maintain the stability and continuity of a given social order. One implication of asserting the analytical primacy of conflict — as the site for social reproduction through sustained interactions between challengers and authorities — is that political actors cannot be understood in isolation from the power struggles in which they are immersed. Their identities and possibilities are mutually constituted by virtue of their partaking in a process of political confrontation with their adversaries. Likewise, conflict permeates not only the interactions of social movements with ruling elites, but also the relations among the social forces and individuals that take part in social movement politics. The analysis of political conflict becomes central to understand the ways in which social movements emerge and gain influence and a sense of collective identity.

The importance of resources for mobilisation

Resource mobilisation theory explores the relation between *access* to and *control* of resources and social movement mobilisation. There are plenty of examples of sources of grievances that could potentially lead people and/or sectors of society to act together for the pursuit of collective interests. However,

the extent to which such movements will succeed is always conditional upon their capacity to acquire and employ resources for collectively defined purposes. Foweraker (1995: 16) explains that RM theory 'begins with the premise that social discontent is universal but collective action is not. It is inherently difficult to organize a social movement, and the main problem is mobilizing sufficient resources to maintain and expand the movement'.

There is no agreement within the theory over what constitutes 'resources' (Jenkins, 1983: 533). One way to approach this is to distinguish between material and non-material resources. The first often include money, organisational facilities, personnel, communications infrastructure, links with other social organisations with shared political agendas and access to the media, amongst others. The second comprise legitimacy, loyalty, authority, moral commitment, solidarity and others. Social movement mobilisation therein refers to the process by which a group gathers resources and places them under their collective control for the purpose of advancing its interests through collective action (Canel, 1997: 14).

The formation and initiatives undertaken by the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) are also tied to its availability and control of strategic resources, even if the HSA is not a social movement *per se* but a transnational social movement coalition. Following the earlier distinction between different kinds of resources, material resources that have been important in the HSA include its flexible organisational structure which comprises an Executive Secretariat, an Operative

Coordination body, a Hemispheric Council and a number of issue-specific Committees. Also, the personnel and research expertise provided mostly by the large trade union organisations that partake in this coalition and also by the development NGOs has been extremely valuable, particularly the United Workers Federation (CUT) in Brazil and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) in the United States.

Material resources cannot be assumed to be equally available among all the member organisations of the HSA. Asymmetries in levels of resource endowment are prevalent with trade unions and some development NGOs, particularly from the North, relying on more stable and reliable access to resources in contrast to less formally organised and poorer grassroots movements. In this regard, the HSA should not be approached as an organisation that is capable of centralising and controlling a pool of material resources for its activities. Even when some resources are available to be allocated for joint HSA activities, most of the reliance on material resources is conditional to the specific positions of each of the HSA members in their respective countries. Differentiated access to this type of resource has facilitated or limited the kinds of activities that the respective local HSA chapters have been able to coordinate.

Political or non-material resources have played a much greater part in the development of and influence acquired by the HSA at the hemispheric level. These political resources include, first, the HSA *Alternative for the Americas*

policy documents, which contain the bases of consensus of a broad multi-sectoral and hemispheric coalition on an alternative vision of development and integration opposed to the FTAA project (HSA, 1998; 2002a). Second, the legitimacy of the HSA as a democratisation force in the continent to counteract the exclusionary nature of the FTAA process. Third, the capability of the HSA to generate expectations that the FTAA process can be halted as a means of maintaining high levels of mobilisation of opposition throughout the continent. Fourth, the discursive construction of FTAA frames around which to advance a critique of this proposed agreement was also a key political resource that permitted the hemispheric articulation of this coalition. These non-material resources have been central in the articulation of the HSA as a multi-sectoral transnational coalition. The extent to which the HSA was able to fully control these political resources will be addressed in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

An analysis of the HSA from a resource-based perspective is therefore concerned with the initiatives undertaken by this coalition to *create* and *control* a series of strategic political resources with the aim of pursuing the construction of alternatives to the FTAA project. A political process approach emphasises the path-dependency and contingency of such actions that results from the interaction of the HSA with its shifting political context.

Political opportunity structure

There are many sources of grievance in society that could potentially lead to the formation of social movements with sufficient political power to successfully challenge the prevailing social order and authority. However, it is only in very few cases that such grievances will actually translate into forces of social transformation of any considerable significance. The contribution of a RM theory is to show that the kinds of organisations and resources available to social movements are important to an understanding of their success. Furthermore, the political process variant of this theory accepts that organisations and resources are analytically important but equally claims that these cannot be understood independently of the political struggles guiding the relation of social movements to their political environment.

Considering the vast range of movements that could emerge and acquire political influence, the notion of political opportunity structures is helpful 'to understand why movements do not appear only in direct response to the level of supporters' grievances. For it is political opportunities that translate the potential for movement into mobilization, then even groups with mild grievances and few internal resources may appear in movement, while those with deep grievances and dense resources – but lacking opportunities – may not' (Tarrow, 1994: 17-18).

Tarrow (1994: 18) defines political opportunity structure as:

[C]onsistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent or national – dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action. The concept of political opportunity emphasizes resources *external* to the group – unlike money or power – that can be taken advantage of even by weak or disorganized challengers. Social movements form when ordinary citizens, sometimes encouraged by leaders, respond to changes in opportunities that lower the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies and show where elites and authorities are vulnerable.

This concept – central to the political process tradition of social movement theory - has led to considerable definitional confusion and imprecision in the literature (Gamson and Meyer, 1996; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004: 6; Meyer, 2004b: 126). Koopermans (2004) disaggregates this concept in an attempt to clarify its meaning.

Firstly, the notion of ‘opportunity’ ‘generally refers to constraints, possibilities and threats that originate outside the mobilizing group, but affects its chance of mobilizing and/or of realizing its collective interests’. Furthermore, it also refers to ‘options for action, which may be either available or not’, since opportunity ‘also contains a notion of uncertain outcomes’ (Koopermans, 2004: 64). This means that there is always a ‘chance that certain options will bring about desired outcomes and the risk that they will have undesired outcomes’ (2004: 64). Building on these clarifications, the author argues that the ‘opportunity thesis then amounts to the claim that people choose those options for collective action that are (a) available and (b) are expected to result in a favorable outcome’ (2004: 64-65). In other words, opportunities are the options for actions that are potentially available to social movements and which are

expected to be successful.

Secondly, Koopermans distinguishes between what the literature considers 'political' opportunities from other sorts of opportunities that are not necessarily political. Since the political process tradition has focused primarily on the interactions between social movements with state institutions and actors, its understanding of the political is circumscribed to the sphere of such interactions. Consequently, political process research has tended to concentrate mainly on 'citizenship movements' involved in the struggle for the provision of collective goods, or the removal of collective bads by external authorities (Koopermans, 2004: 66). In defining the realm of the 'political' restrictively in terms of the demand for public rights within the context of the nation-state, other kinds of social movements are invariably neglected from the dynamics of social change.

This is the case of counter-cultural movements dedicated to changing cultural codes and promoting new lifestyles and identities. As their strategies do not necessarily have state institutions or actors as their main target, they cannot be easily captured by the interest-based notion of politics, which is associated with narrowly-defined conceptions of political struggle rooted in institutional frameworks. In subverting established social meanings and conventional thinking, cultural movements question the normalisation (or naturalisation) of social conventions and values, associated with the legitimisation of authority structures. This is a political act, even if different from, for example, the

practice of lobbying in congress or the mobilisation of public protest against the privatisation of public services.

Koopmans tries to justify the exclusion of other kinds of social movements from the notion of political opportunity by arguing that as counter-culture movements 'produce their own collective benefits; they will have a greater degree of autonomy from their political environment and thus be less adequately explained by political opportunities' (2004: 66). It is also the case that movements who reject the traditional forms of political action associated with the struggle to take the power of the state as a means by which to obtain their objectives. One example of this is the Zapatista movement in Mexico which advocates a strategy of changing the world without taking (state) power.

Thirdly, political opportunities can have 'structural' qualities when social movements think that they 'cannot be influenced, at least not in the foreseeable future, by collective action' (Koopmans, 2004: 67). Since this tradition of social movement research assumes the rationality of social movements, explanations of their agency must assume the premise that political actors react to the opportunities available to them in a given political context by seeking to maximize the results of their interventions. The notion of 'structures' evokes the idea that there are certain conditions in the external political context that social movements are not capable of changing and which will remain relatively stable throughout time. If something is structural, it can be said that it bears the quality of enduring time; moreover, that it can be assumed that it will remain

constant in the foreseeable future. In rational accounts of agency, structures are analytically valuable because political actors assume their relative stability when assessing the most suitable form of intervention in the political context.

In other words, political opportunity structures concern the stable external incentives that affect the choices made by social movements when developing forms of organisation and strategies in the pursuit of their political objectives. Taken as given within a political environment, political opportunity structures can also be expanded by the struggle and engagement of social movements with authorities. Thus, they must be treated as stable while deciding what strategy to implement, even if the consequences of the adoption of that strategy can contribute to create further incentives for other movements to seek their objectives by other means.

There is a risk of seeing political opportunity structures as a series of incentives that determine the rise and success of social movements. This view would reduce social movements to the condition of mechanical responses to changes in the political context which may facilitate or inhibit their actions. Whatever political opportunity factors may be involved in providing incentives for social movement mobilisation, their sources are not located exclusively in the political context. Social movements must be able to interpret changes in the political environment in order to understand them as opportunities (Gamson and Meyer, 1996). Namely, external changes in the political environment *per se* do not account for particular actions or decisions that social movements may

undertake or adopt – which may affect their chances of acquiring political influence. External changes are a necessary, yet insufficient in isolation, condition for the existence of meaningful incentives for mobilisation.

There is an ongoing debate as to the limitations of this rationalist approach to adequately address the cultural dimension of social movements (Goodwin and Jasper, 2004). What is suggested here is that the recognition of this cultural dimension can enable us to move away from the structural deterministic tendency implied in the notion of political opportunity structure. Gamson and Meyer (1996: 279) suggest that '[o]ppportunity has a strong cultural component and we miss something important when we limit our attention to variance in political institutions and the relationships among political actors'.

It is not enough to claim that social movements can only be studied in relation to the political opportunities that define their environment. It is also necessary to show how their relation to that context is expressed. The political process tradition provides abundant examples of how external changes 'explain' social movement developments. However, the other side of this equation has received lesser attention. The claim that changes in the political opportunity structure are always mediated by historicised and ideologically informed knowledge restores political agency to social movements. This is the case because social movements articulate ideological positions or discourse in relation to their struggles, objectives and political contexts. Only after incorporating the discursive-ideological dimension can the claim that incentives for mobilisation

associated with changes in the political opportunity become (politically) meaningful.

Political opportunity factors: the Americas as a transnational political space

It was established that the political opportunity structure is analytically important because it affects the strategic choices of social movements. But what are the political opportunity factors or incentives that affect the decisions of social movements to take action in the pursuit of their political objectives?

Tarrow proposes that 'the most salient changes in opportunity structure result from the opening up of access to power, from shifts in ruling alignments, from the availability of influential allies and from cleavages within and among elites' (Tarrow, 1994: 18). Furthermore, in addition to these factors, inter-subjective cultural meanings embedded in society also constitute an important factor in political opportunity. Tarrow discusses the importance of the cultural symbols as resources that social movements employ to ensure that their claims resonate with accepted beliefs in society. While this is certainly the case, beliefs are not just analytically important as the resources available to movements. They are elements that are part of the external political context which can affect the movement's choices of strategy. Accordingly, they should be treated as part of political opportunity structures.

Khagram and Sikkink (2000) argue that most 'political opportunity theorists specify the mechanisms of opportunity in local, regional or national terms (...). But there is no inherent reason why opportunity structure must be limited to national or local politics'. The following sub-sections propose the use of the notion of political opportunity structure to address a transnational political space as defined by the HSA continental resistance to the FTAA agenda.

Alignments with other political actors

The alignments of social movements with other political actors or sectors of the electorate are also relevant sources of political opportunity. By creating alignments, movements can increase their relative power vis-à-vis the authorities, improve their chances of attaining their political goals and expand their range of choices of action. However, to succeed they also need to ensure a sufficiently stable basis of consensus to maintain their unity of action and purpose.

Research has tended to concentrate on the alignment of social movements with political actors, which make up the institutional framework of the nation-state. These include political parties, government coalitions and trade union organisations —depending on what theory of the state is assumed. However, the emergence of new social forces that emerged as a rejection of traditional

institutional politics has expanded the range of possible kinds of alignments available to social movements.

Market liberalisation and state reform implemented in the region since the 1970s, and accentuated since the 1990s, transformed the corporatist system of state-society relations in Latin America (Garretón, 1999). This transformation of state-society relations meant that trade union organisations lost a significant degree of the political influence and representational capacity that they once had (Chalmers et. al., 1998; Oxhorn, 1998). In the midst of this relative decline of the labour movement, new and heterogeneous social movements arose from the “margins” of established society, acquiring considerable influence in the dynamics of national politics. This is the case of the urban movements of unemployed workers, such as the Piquetero movement of Argentina. Other examples throughout Latin America of movements that have emerged in search of social inclusion, or have gained greater political influence, include the rural (Edelman, 2003) and indigenous movements (Houghton and Bell, 2004; Quijano, 2005). The emergence of these movements displaced the left parties and the union movements as the main form of social transformation (Zibechi, 2005a: 13-14).

An important characteristic of these new movements is their demand for greater autonomy from the state in light of the exclusionary consequences of economic liberalisation (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Calderón *et al.*, 1992: 24; Seoane and Taddei, 2002: 111). Disenchanted with traditional politics, movements

have a 'clear awareness of the limits of the parties'. This has led them to develop 'their own agenda and their own programs', rather than purely reacting to states or parties as they had done in the past (Zibechi: 2005b: 3). It has been claimed that possibly 'one of the most noticeable new things is the growing self-esteem of the movements, which now feel capable of drawing their own courses and establishing their own programs without waiting for political parties to take on work that only organized society can carry out. In this way, the Latin American social movements are preparing more extensive and substantial offensives that can once again modify the regional scenario in the coming years' (4).

The multiplication of social actors evidences the crisis of representation of social interests and likewise the search for new forms of interest organisation. The formation of broad-based multi-sectoral coalitions has become the prime example of this search for new ways to articulate social demands amid a political context characterised by a proliferation of social actors. These emerging coalitions bring together 'old' movements like the trade unions and 'new' movements and political actors associated with traditional institutional politics such as parties and governments coalitions.

The scope of action of these new broad coalitions is not restricted to the context of national politics. They have also extended their linkages across state borders in the formation of transnational multi-sectoral coalitions. Transnationalism has increased their autonomy and added a certain independent logic of its own that

escapes the effective control of a single state or a coalition of states (Vayrynen, 2001: 237). Tarrow (1994: 195-6) claims that '[t]he national social movement grew out of the efforts of states to consolidate power, integrate their peripheries and standardize discourse among groups of citizens and between them and their rulers', however, '[i]f movements are becoming transnational, they may be freeing themselves of state structures and thence of the constraining influence of state-mediated contention'.

The social space for the transnational interactions of social movements is therefore becoming increasingly irreducible in terms of the effective control of the territorially bounded systems of political organisation and imagination embedded in the nation-state. According to Melucci (1995: 52) the 'social space of movements has become a distinct area of the system and no longer coincides either with the traditional forms of organisation of solidarity or with the conventional channels of political representation. The area of movements is now a "sector" or a "subsystem" of the social arena'. These kinds of alignments across borders have opened the possibility for reflection on the issues of organisation, strategies, agendas and identity independently of their direct interactions with political parties and states institutions.

The possibility of establishing political alignments with other social actors within and beyond the national context expands the range of options for action (strategies, tactics) available to social movements. In addition to the alignment with political parties and trade unions, contemporary social movements in Latin

America are also engaging in joint initiatives of collective action with a variety of new social forces that were not part of the national political process until very recently. The formation of national and transnational coalitions among diverse numbers of actors has increased the potential political power of social movements through their capacity to set the political agenda and terms of the public debate – particularly in the areas of trade integration, unemployment, environmental issues, human rights and also public security. The complex dynamics of contemporary social movement politics in Latin America cannot be studied simply by focusing on institutional politics and political parties, even if these continue to play an important part in this process. Likewise, the boundaries of social movement interactions are not restricted to the borders of the nation-state. Transnational alignments increasingly complement and redefine the national and sub-national localities of social movements.

Chapter 4 explores the political opportunities available to the HSA in its attempt to build a basis of consensus for an alternative agenda of integration to the FTAA project by creating transnational alignments with other social networks and left-of-centre governments.

Access to political institutions

The political process tradition considers the access of social movements to power as the main political opportunity affecting their choices of strategy and

their degree of success. Social movements are less likely to adopt a more confrontational strategy of protest mobilisation when they count on institutional avenues for meaningful access routes through which to influence the political system.

Access to power primarily depends on the possibility of influencing the dynamics of formal political institutions. The recurrent image of 'institutional channels' conveys the idea of a polity-centric orientation to the strategies of social movements. This centrality on the polity has to do with the original development of the political process theory due to the formation of the nation-state institutions. The analytical salience of institutional arrangements as sources of political opportunities for social movements goes back to the foundational work of Eisenger (1973) and Tilly (1978).

Eisenger was interested in explaining the emergence of riots in U.S. cities during the 1960s, which were driven by race and poverty grievances. Tilly instead explored the role of revolutions in the development of the state in Europe. In both cases, the main explanatory factor associated with the rise of contentious forms of collective action by social movements is the degree of openness or closeness of the existing institutional arrangements for citizen participation — at the municipal level in the first case, and at the nation-state level in the second. The authors proposed that open institutional arrangements that offer the possibility of participation in the formal political process discourage social movements from adopting more disruptive strategies such as

riots or direct action tactics as a means of pursuing their political goals. This proposition is based on the assumption that social movements would rather avoid more costly forms of action, which could expose them to greater failure, when less costly options are available.

It does not follow from this claim that in the absence of institutional access social movements will necessarily engage in protest tactics. Authorities can break and repress the attempts of movements to organise resistance and thereby disrupt their efforts to develop the minimum organisational capacities required for mobilisation. Meyer (2004a: 50) explains that:

In order for organizers to mobilize protest, potential activists need to be convinced that this tactic is both necessary and potentially effective in getting them what they want from government. If government appears likely to respond to less disruptive means of participation, it will generally be hard to convince many people to take on the risks and difficulties of protesting. And if government makes protest even less attractive, perhaps by harshly repressing protesters or by offering no prospects of responding to dissent, protest mobilization is less likely. This all makes sense, as does the recognition that governments can make protest less likely by *either* offering less costly, often more institutional, means of participation or by repressing protest more aggressively.

That is, 'protests occur when there is a space of toleration by a polity and when claimants are neither sufficiently advantaged to obviate the need to use dramatic means to express their interests nor so completely repressed to prevent them from trying to get what they want' (Meyer, 2004b: 128).

The decision over what kinds of strategy social movements adopt as the result of changes in the degree of access to political institutions is not dependent only

on the objective characteristics of the external environment: for example, a new legislation that creates an institutional space to incorporate non-governmental actors within the policy-making arena, or conversely the greater criminalisation of protest due to the tightening of security laws. Not all social movements will understand their position in relation to political institutions in the same way.

Meyer (2004a: 50) claims that:

Obviously, some constituencies are more likely to respond to greater openness, which enables them to express political grievances through collective action. Others are more likely to resort to protest when the prospects of meaningful access through more conventional political participation are foreclosed. Provocation and exclusion are more significant in such cases.

The reason that this is the case is linked to the fact that the political significance of changes in the degree of institutional access is also dependent on the kinds of subjective expectations of social movements. This is not a minor point, as it affects what ultimately counts as 'open' or 'closed' institutional arrangements in the eyes of social movements.

Many social movements seek to influence political processes by participating in official mechanisms of consultation through civil society organisations, forums organised by government representatives, and other means of engagement in the definition and implementation of state policies. Others instead will be less inclined to participate in such consultations with public officials. There are different views as to what constitutes "meaningful participation" in these processes. In this, what counts as meaningful access depends on the nature of the political expectations held by different social groups, which result from

their past experience of interactions with state institutions and authorities.

In other words, the kinds of responses from social movements to changes in degrees of openness of political institutions cannot be attributed to the nature of such institutional conditions *per se*. Nor can they be exclusively attributed to the decisions and organisational capacity of social movements alone — as the resource mobilisation perspective originally emphasised. Instead, it is in the historicised interaction between political institutions and social movements that the actual meaning of an ‘open’ or ‘closed’ access to a polity is to be found.

Moving away from a strictly national focus on the relation of social movements to state institutions, there have been attempts to explore the transnational dimension of social movements that concentrates on the political opportunities created at the level of inter-governmental and trans-governmental organisations (Fisher, 2002; Joachim, 2003; Metzges, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Passy, 1999; Smith *et al.*, 1997; Smith, 1997; 1999a).

The incorporation of other decision-making institutional venues as potential points of access for social movements prompted the necessity to understand how the political opportunities at the domestic and international levels relate to each other. It has been argued that both institutional levels of opportunity become interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Ansell and di Palma, 2004; Bob, 2002; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse-Kappen, 1995; Sikkink, 2005; Tarrow, 2004).

The work of Keck and Sikkink (1998) on transnational advocacy networks is perhaps the most renowned study exploring the multi-level approach of this institutional dimension of political opportunities. The authors show how NGOs embarked on a strategy of lobbying international organisations to press their governments to change their human rights and environmental policies. In what they call a 'boomerang effect', these NGOs were capable of reaching back and influencing their governments through the leverage they gained at the international level. Others have conducted similar kinds of analyses focusing on the strategic choices of institutional venue made by labour organisations as part of a campaign against *maquiladoras* in Honduras (Armbruster-Sandoval, 2003), among others.

In the case of the FTAA process, institutional access concerns the official mechanisms of civil society consultation. Chapter 5 explores the participation of the HSA in these hemispheric official consultations to argue that its lack of access in the FTAA process permitted the HSA to accrue its legitimacy and launch a continental campaign against the FTAA.

Divisions of the elite

Another opportunity factor in the political context associated with the options available for social movements is the degree of cohesion of ruling elites. It is

assumed that when the coalition of elites is more stable and cohesive, their capacity to neutralise the attempts of social movements to challenge their authority will increase accordingly.

Cohesive elites can offset the influence of social movements by being able to secure the legitimacy and support of the general public regarding their proposed policies or actions, the removal of privileges such as institutional access, constitutional rights, material resources and public recognition and inhibit their actions by means of repression using the security forces and new legal instruments to criminalise their actions. This can directly undermine the power of social movements. When deciding the most adequate strategy of action, social movements will consider the extent to which ruling elites are cohesive enough to employ such means of intervention and deterrence.

Tarrow (1994) differentiates between the political opportunities created by 'cleavages within and among elites' and 'shifts in ruling alignments.' The reason for this distinction is that the latter refers to the standing of new governments following electoral processes. Government coalitions can be unstable due to a poor electoral result and therefore prone to being susceptible to the pressures of social movements. However, given its interest in exploring the transnational dimension of this political opportunity factor, this section treats them as part of a single opportunity.

In their struggle for social change, movements will try to exploit every apparent

division between the elites in order to expose their contradictions and weaknesses. Insofar as politics takes place in the realm of the public spectacle, showing the limitations of ruling elites can seriously damage their claim to authority as legitimate representatives of the people.

The ways in which social movements can challenge the authority of governments will depend on how governments obtain and reproduce their legitimacy. Naturally, this will differ depending on the nature of the political system, and on the values that predominate in a particular political culture. The public impact of civil society in Latin America as they denounced acts of governmental corruption, and a general lack of transparency in politics, during the 1990s could not have had the same impact in the 1970s at a time when many of these countries were under military dictatorship. The circumstances were obviously different, but the point here is that the deepening of democratic values of Latin America, following the experience of authoritarianism and state repression, decreased the degree of public tolerance of incidents that are now regarded as contrary to the advancement of democratic values. The margins of manoeuvre in which social movements can exploit situations politically, by pointing out divisions among the elites, are both the result of their actions and also of how the general public will ultimately respond to such accusations.

Assessing the strength of ruling elites is vital for social movements. Miscalculations may unnecessarily expose the movement to the efforts of governments to silence their claims or even repress their activities. Contrarily,

an offensive strategy formulated on a correct assessment of the adversaries' possibilities can ensure its success and also guarantee the future continuation of the social movement.

Conviction plays a central role here, for it is unlikely that there can be sustained mobilisation of people without the expectation that this is a politically justifiable option. In this regard, the weakening of ruling elites permits social movements to capitalise on their challenges to authority, but also to reinvent their own sense of purpose, direction and internal legitimacy. By exposing the divisions among the elites, social movements can sustain high levels of mobilisation. Boosting the confidence among the movement ranks that their struggle is yielding concrete results is absolutely necessary to maintain the sense of commitment and purpose, especially at the grassroots levels. This is commonly done by diminishing the perceived conditions of the adversaries to confront the pressure of social movements for change.

Long before there were organized movements, there were riots, rebellions and general turbulence. It is only by sustaining collective action against antagonists that a contentious episode becomes a social movement. Common purposes, collective identities and an identifiable challenge help movements to do this. But unless they can sustain this challenge against opponents, they will either evaporate into the kind of individualistic resentment that James Scott calls "resistance," harden into intellectual opposition or retreat into isolation. The social movements that have left the deepest mark on history have done so because they sustained collective action against better-equipped opponents (Tarrow, 1994: 5-6).

An exploration of the transnational dimension of elite cohesion concentrates on the networks of public officials, corporations and policy specialists that constitute a 'transnational capitalist elite' (Oberbeek, 2000; Robinson and

Harris, 2000; Sklair, 1997; Van del pijl, 1984). The transnational hemispheric dimension of this opportunity factor identifies the extent to which governmental and business elites are able to agree on a common platform of trade liberalisation in the FTAA process.

Chapter 6 discusses in great detail the tensions and divisions of the elites in their attempt to formulate a continental consensus on an FTAA agenda. Their lack of leadership and legitimacy opened a political opportunity for the HSA to sustain their continental mobilisation and therein avoid dispersion and lack of focus. The chapter shows the ways in which the HSA has politically exposed and exploited the obstacles and divisions encountered by the elites with regard to the creation of the FTAA.

Inter-subjective meanings

Inter-subjective meanings and beliefs embedded in political cultures also present social movements with political opportunities for action. The sharing of common interests is a necessary condition for the possibility of creating solidarity, which allows the collective mobilisation to advance its political aims.

Tarrow (1994: 5) explains that 'the most common denominator of social movements is (...) interest; but interest is no more than an objective category

imposed by the observer. It is participants' *recognition* of their common interests that translates the potential for movement into collective action' (emphasis added). However, the act of *recognising* common interests by political actors does not take place in a vacuum. The possibility of knowledge is always an act of engagement with prior knowledge — to recognise is an act of *encounter* with something that to some extent is already known, thus *re-cognize*. The kinds of inter-subjective meanings and beliefs rooted in society provide a layer of knowledge that is necessary for political action through the identification of common interests.

The view that the inter-subjective meanings that make up the political context of social movements can provide political opportunities for collective action is based on the social constructivist assumption that ideas are constitutive of social reality. Meaning of the world is created through the inter-subjective interactions of people. Philosopher Ian Hacking (2003: 48) refers to social constructivism as the 'various sociological, historical, and philosophical projects that aim at displaying or analyzing actual, historically situated, social interactions or causal routes that led to, or were involved in, the coming into being or establishing of some present entity or fact'. Central to this way of thinking is the idea that social reality is not necessary and inevitable, as there is nothing in nature that determines its development. Implicitly, there is the view that alternative realities are equally possible.

Social constructivism questions the positivist assumptions that permeate much

of current social science research which views the 'world' as already constituted independently from human perception or understanding. Through our senses we 'discover' the facts and laws that govern the regularities of an essentially objective and material world 'out there'. The task of science is thus to uncover the underlying logic of this natural world. Contrary to this view, social constructivism believes that there is no 'outside' world that can be known or grasped if claims to knowledge do not affirm the place of subjective ideas as constitutive of the social reality.

In ascertaining the intervention of humans in the constitution of social reality, constructivists criticise the assumptions of objectivity and materialism of positivists approaches. The 'neutrality' and 'distance' of the inquirer from the object of study is regarded as a mere fictional construct of positivism. Also, they place at the centre of analysis the role of ideas and interpretation. Interpretation of reality, on the bases of socially and historically contingent subjectivities, informs our knowledge about the world and guides our actions giving sense of our engagements with it. Politics, as the realm of collective actions in the struggle for power, is likewise dependent on the kinds of ideas present in a given context, and constructed through human interactions at the inter-subjective level.

Political action is therefore always an act of cultural interpretation which involves the engagement of prior forms of knowledge shared inter-subjectively among the actual or potential political actors. It can be said that such inter-

subjective meanings offer political opportunities to social movements when they can be invoked as the basis on which to justify and legitimate their claims in the identification or recognition of common interests. However, while these inter-subjective conditions are to some extent given as external factors of opportunity in the political context, social movements can also expand them, facilitating therein the mobilisation of a greater critical mass. Melucci (1995: 44) portrays collective action as a purposeful political artefact when he defines it as 'an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerned with the orientations of action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which action takes place.' Furthermore, Tarrow (1994: 189-190) claims that:

[s]olidarity has much to do with interest, but it produces a sustained movement only when consensus is built around common meanings and values. These meanings and values are partly inherited and partly constructed in the act of confronting opponents. They are also constituted by the interactions within movements. One of the main factors distinguishing successful movements from failures is their capacity to link inherited understandings to the imperative for activism.

Social movements expand the political opportunities associated with ingrained meanings available in a given context through their *framing* practices. The notion of 'frame' refers to the 'interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment' (Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). Through frames, social movements embed concrete protests in emotion-laden 'packages'

(Gamson, 1992), and at the same time justify and legitimate their activities and campaigns by appealing to injustice. Framing is therefore about the construction of stable interpretations of social reality as the bases of strategically chosen events and values, whereby particular normative understandings of reality are reflected, reproduced and transformed. To put it differently, framing is the practice of engineering knowledge and meaning for politically efficacious goals.

Social movements engage in frame alignment practices when they seek to establish linkages between individuals and the interpretative orientations of social movement organisations. The purpose is to make the interests, values and beliefs of the individual congruent with the activities, goals, and ideology of the organisation (Snow *et al.*, 1986: 464). Frame alignments can be constructed in accordance with four typified modalities: *frame bridging*, *frame amplification*, *frame extension*, and *frame transformation*. Each corresponds to the particular political requirements and challenges faced by social movements in mobilising new adherents in different contexts. However, as contexts are not unambiguously defined, social movements may employ more than one type of frame alignment at once (464-474).

Frames reflect and propose specific normative values. The discursive construction of a given situation as a problematic issue, or source of grievance, is always tied to some notion of justice. What counts as 'justice', however, cannot be reduced to a single universal list of elements or conditions that apply

across the board. Following the Ludwig Wittgenstein theory of 'language as games', the meaning of 'justice' can only be grasped when taking into consideration the ways in which this concept is *used* by a given linguistic community – hence the analogy of meaning as the rules of a game, as it is the *playing* of a game according to its rules that is what defines the game. The meaning of the concept is derived from its use and not from any defining quality or essence that may be 'captured' in the word. Interpretative frames therefore appeal to stable linguistic conventions regarding the employment of notions of justice. In so doing, frames reproduce moral distinctions between actions and situations that are deemed acceptable, or deplorable. Yet, insofar as the meaning of 'justice' is derived from the prevailing use of this notion, frames often reproduce already accepted moral categories that have been normalised within historicised linguistic structures.

The literature concerning social movement theory that discusses frames attributes their political effectiveness in the mobilisation of potential constituencies to their capacity to *resonate* within a given audience (Gamson *et al.*, 1982 in Snow *et al.*, 1986). *Resonance* takes place when a group of people can *recognise* a claim to justice that is in line with the ways in which the notion 'justice' has been used in the past to determine judgment. Resonance is an act of identification which requires the existence of prior understanding. In this sense we can say that frames reflect preconceived notions of justice, insofar as there is a similar use of this notion among social forces that partake in a common linguistic community. Recognition takes place when frames capture

symbolic resources that make up the inter-subjective structure of a given cultural context – which are always concerned with a historicized awareness of past experiences, embedded in socially specific realities. Encrypted in language and social practices, frames must appropriate such symbolic resources to ensure their intelligibility, acceptance and ultimately political value in facilitating collective action. In other words, the success of frames in mobilising constituencies is tied to their capacity to establish a hermeneutical dialogue between a meaningful past and the possibility of an envisioned alternative future.

Likewise, frames can also transform the accepted meaning(s) of ‘justice’ by employing this notion in ways which divert from established linguistic conventions. At this point the value of frames ceases to be merely instrumental, as the original identity of the social movement is transformed. McAdam (1982) refers to this as a moment of ‘cognitive liberation’ where social movements undergo a transformation of consciousness and people can begin to ‘define their situations as unjust and subject to change’ (18). At this point people who have been subject to some form of oppression begin to understand themselves as sharing a *common* experience and condition. New subjectivities and identities emerge as part of such a transformative awareness. The development of this process can be accompanied and even mediated by the interpretative interventions of key leaders in their efforts to structure particular meanings and values as part of a novel collective experience. Framing practices can therefore also play a vital role in the original formation of social movements by

contributing to cement the initial layers of an incipient collective identity for mobilisation. This has direct implications for political practice, since situations that were considered socially legitimate can be made subject to moral repudiation, and thus become sources of grievance and political mobilisation.

Moreover, frames also identify the sources of blame or responsibility: actors, institutions, practices, systems, and others. Whereas political frames potentially promote a self-critical assessment of the role of political actors or forces in contributing to a given problem, it is often the case that responsibility is only externalised. The attribution of responsibility acts as a means of differentiating between 'us' and 'others'. It is a discursive practice fundamentally associated with the construction of distinct political subjects.

The degree of self-reflexivity allowed in this identity construction can vary significantly. In cases of heterogeneous and broad transnational coalitions, the discursive construction of an 'other' and a 'self' through the attribution of responsibilities will allow a lesser permeability for a self-critical awareness. This is because these kinds of social actors are more vulnerable to tensions and differences that could easily undermine their often tenuous unity and cohesion. Externalising responsibility becomes the most effective way of preventing this as such differences can be overcome and solidarity ensured. The extent to which this is a good practice in the long run is surely a relevant issue of concern.

Frames also assign a direction to action – the bases on which to define a strategy. Clearly, the direction of action will depend on whether blame or responsibility is internalised or externalised. If there is room for internal attribution of responsibility, then the actions undertaken will also involve some form of change in the way that things had been done until that moment. This could involve changing the values that orient the priorities and practices of movements, criteria of membership, nature of coalitions, financial strategies, among others. In cases where blame is mostly externalised, action plans will be directed towards changing of external situations, conditions or actors: governments, policies, international institutions, and capitalism in the case of a revolutionary movement.

Framing grievances is a particularly important activity of transnational coalitions. By challenging hegemonic interpretations associated with the legitimisation and reproduction of practices of inequality and exploitation, social movements advance moral critiques to subvert the acceptance of established meanings. In their discussion of norms, Khagram *et al.* (2002: 12) claim that ‘we cannot understand transnational networks or coalitions unless we grasp that a significant amount of their activity is directed at changing understandings and interpretations of actors or, in other words, the creation, institutionalization, and monitoring of norms’.

Nevertheless, framing across transnational spaces faces the limitations of relying on a thinner cultural fabric of inter-subjective meanings from which to

draw cultural symbols, values and references in order to orient political action. Accordingly, there is a greater chance for misunderstanding, and tensions arising from competing interpretive frameworks within coalitions. As Sikkink (2002: 309) explains, 'networks, transnational coalitions, and movements are full of internal divisions and conflicts. Although networks may present a harmonious front to the external world, they often experience deep internal divisions'.

In light of this, it is often the case that transnational coalitions need to appeal to general themes and values that are largely shared among large social sectors to ensure unity, identity and sense of purpose. While this allows the construction of broad frames that can accommodate such variety of actors and cultures, critical reflection on issues of agenda development or strategic thinking is often sacrificed as a result.

Chapter 7 examines the political opportunities present in the Americas for the mobilisation of an opposition to the FTAA project by the HSA. In their efforts to construct hemispheric frames of alternative forms of integration, the HSA has relied on cultural resources such as anti-Americanism and anti-imperialist feelings widely held among the Latin American Left movements. This has facilitated the mobilisation of a continental opposition to the FTAA. It has also limited the possibilities of thinking about the FTAA as an expression of a global and transnational process of socio-economy transformation that goes beyond simplified dichotomies between Latin America and the United States;

between South and North.

Conclusion

This thesis critically examines the contribution of the HSA to the construction of political alternatives to the neo-liberal view of development contained in the FTAA agenda. This chapter introduced the central tenets of a political process approach to transnational social movement coalitions like the HSA in the Americas. It was argued that in order to understand the conditions under which social movements emerge and ultimately become politically influential, it is necessary to identify the opportunities created by a changing political context. Changes in the context can sometimes lead to changes in the expectations of social movements with direct implications as to the kinds of strategies that are adopted. Social movements not only seize opportunities for action but can also expand them further, therein encouraging other social forces to join together in challenging established authority.

The discussion noted that the main factors of political opportunity for social movements are: the possibility of forming alignments with other political actors, the degree of access to political institutions, the divisions/cohesion of the elites, and the presence of ingrained cultural understandings that provide the interpretative horizon of social movements. An analysis of the actions and strategies of the HSA can only be possible when considering the range of

options available to them in the pursuit of their political objectives.

The opportunity factors that were identified and discussed in this chapter provide the themes that are explored in the subsequent chapters dedicated to the empirical analysis of the HSA in its construction of alternatives to the FTAA project.

The following chapter concentrates on the political opportunities created by the HSA through the formation of transnational multi-sectoral coalitions of trade unions, NGOs, grassroots social movements and eventually Leftist governments throughout the Americas.

CHAPTER 4

The hemispheric alignment of multi-sectoral coalitions

[The] methodology for new political practice assigns increased importance to networking. By setting up constantly shifting alliances and coalitions, diversity is preserved and hegemony avoided. This new politics presumes no a priori answers; they need to be created. It recognizes the legitimacy (and vital democratic necessity) of conflicts and disputes. Democracy moves forwards through social struggles, provided that the opposing forces respect founding ethical principles of the other's rights and their own responsibilities; this means to recognise and respect other subjects, joining them in action, dialogue, and sharing (Grzybowski, 2006: 11).

The purpose of this research is to assess the contribution of the HSA to the construction of political alternatives to the neo-liberal agenda of integration proposed in the FTAA project. The previous chapter introduced the political process approach to social movement theory arguing that, in order to be able to assess the role of the HSA in constructing political alternatives to the FTAA project, it is necessary to concentrate on the options for collective action available in the hemispheric political opportunity structure. It is by identifying the opportunities and limitations created by changes in the political context in the Americas that the political significance of the strategies employed by the HSA to pursue alternative visions of development can be fully revealed. This chapter explores the political opportunities for the construction of alternatives to the FTAA project created by the formation of transnational alignments between social forces critical to neo-liberalism in the Americas.

The success of the HSA in building such alternatives depends both on their effective engagement with the grassroots sectors and on their ability to ensure that their autonomy is preserved when relating with allied states. The first section examines the early antecedents in the region of transnational alignment of multi-sectoral coalitions working on trade integration issues. These experiences became the building blocks of the formation of the HSA as a continental response to the FTAA process. The second section discusses the HSA alignment with the Cuban government in the framework of a Continental Campaign against the FTAA. The consequences of this alignment for the construction of alternatives to the FTAA project are highlighted. Finally, the third section explores the relations of the HSA with the Venezuelan government of Hugo Chávez and its implications for the autonomy of the HSA in the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism in the Americas. The conclusion reiterates the main points of the argument, and shows how they link to the political opportunities presented to the HSA by its exclusion from the official FTAA process that will be the subject of the following chapter.

Antecedents to the HSA

The experience generated by early initiatives of transnational collaboration between different social forces in the region was a vital contribution to the formation of the HSA as a response to the FTAA process.

In the context of the NAFTA process, trade union organisations, NGOs and social movements from the three negotiating countries established national umbrella networks and solid ties with partner networks from the other countries (Drainville, 2001: 25-25). This led to the formation of the Mexican Action Network on Free Trade (RMALC), the United States' Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART) and Common Frontiers and the Réseau Québécois sur l'Intégration Continentale (RQIC) from Canada and Québec respectively. Some of these transnational links built on earlier collaborations that started in the 1989 Canadian-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) (Foster, 2003).

Edelman (2003: 198) explains that while once 'U.S., Canadian, or Mexican actors stood opposed to each other in discussions of trade, environment, or migration, the social cleavages that NAFTA opened blurred domestic and foreign policy concerns in all three countries, generating new forms of contention that required transnational action and that increasingly divided or united people less along national lines than in relation to shared class, issue-based, or sectoral interests'. A combined preoccupation with the free trade model of development proposed in NAFTA permitted the mobilisation of the North American movements across sectors and nationalities. It also set forward a process by which multi-sectoral transnational coalitions began to seek convergence on a common view of trade and development.

Furthermore, other important experiences of transnational collaboration in the

region are the efforts of the labour movement in South America to articulate common positions to safeguard and advance the rights of workers within the new regional integration projects. These initiatives include the links developed in the Andean Consultative Labour Council since 1983 as part of the CAN process. Likewise, trade union coordination has also taken place in the South Cone Union Labour Council Coordination (CCSCS) since 1986, although with greater intensity since the establishment of MERCOSUR in 1991. Unlike the North American tri-national coalition, these labour initiatives initially did not pursue closer links with other social forces. Eventually, the involvement of these trade unions in the HSA would generate a closer connection with social actors.

These initiatives are antecedents to the HSA insofar as they provide a new approach to addressing the social demands of the most unprotected sectors of society by linking development concerns with trade integration debates in the formation of broad-based coalitions within and across national borders. Much of this initial momentum was later carried forward and expanded at the continental level with the formation of the HSA in the context of the FTAA process.

The creation of the HSA: towards a common hemispheric vision

After four years of preparatory work that began at the Miami Summit of the

Americas in 1994, the negotiating phase of the FTAA process was ready to be launched at the Santiago Summit of 1998 (see chapter 1 for details on the official FTAA process). The relentless advance of this trade integration project became an incentive for the unification of a wide range of unconnected and geographically dispersed social forces in the continent that saw in the FTAA the expansion of another wave of neo-liberal policies in the region. The initial steps of this hemispheric alignment of social forces took place at the III Trade Union Summit (Labour Forum), an event hosted by the Brazilian United Workers Federation (CUT) parallel to the FTAA Trade Ministerial Meeting of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in May 1997.

The organisation of this parallel Trade Union Summit was part of a strategy of the Inter-American Regional Labour Organisation (ORIT) (the regional branch of the International Confederations of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU) to bring about: official recognition of a Labour Forum as part of the FTAA process; the establishment of a Working Group on Labour Rights; the incorporation of a social dimension in new bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements; the recognition by the FTAA negotiating countries of core labour standards and the creation of compliance mechanisms; environmental protection mechanisms and agrarian reform to improve the quality of life of the rural population; a gradual negotiation process which allows each country to adopt transitional policies and better identify its opportunities and threats; access to information and mechanisms to control transnational corporations operating in the region. These demands reflect a firm determination of ORIT to fight for the democratisation

of the FTAA process, and the advance of broad-based development with social justice (ORIT/ICFTU, 1997).

The trade union organisations affiliated in ORIT understood that if there was any chance that such objectives could be met, this would involve the strengthening of ties between the trade union movements throughout the continent as well as broadening the bases of support by involving social forces (Brunelle, 2004a). The ORIT trade unions were the initial drive behind the formation of the HSA – particularly the AFL-CIO and CUT (Jakobsen, 2006; Petricovsky, 2005). According to Brunelle (2004a) from RQIC:

The labour movement has been the backbone of this initiative to create the HSA. The role of the AFL-CIO has been central in this process. This was also the case in Canada, and to a lesser degree in Mexico. In South America the Brazilian CUT was the most important actor, and also in Chile – even if more modestly.

Renato Martins (2004) from CUT argues that ‘ORIT promoted the creation of hemispheric alliances between labour organisations and social movements because this had already been done in the U.S., Canada and Brazil, although ORIT would never admit that there was a conscious regional policy on this issue’.

The move towards the strengthening of ties between the trade unions of the North and South was consistent with the efforts of the international trade union movement to overcome the divisions it inherited from the Cold War years (Chaloult and Fernández, 2001; Dagenais, 2005: 3; Munck, 2002). In the

Americas, this required transcending the suspicion of the Latin American labour movements towards the American organisations derived from the historical support of the AFL-CIO for the U.S. foreign policy in the region, and its hostility towards any form of radical and popular movement (Brunelle and Dugas, 2004: 284; Chaloult and Fernández, 2001). Furthermore, making alliances with the so-called 'anti-globalisation' movements became an increasingly strategic component of the renewed internationalism of the labour movement (ICFTU, 2004).

At Belo Horizonte, the main regional NGO networks working on the environment, human rights, gender, rural and indigenous issues were invited for the first time to participate in a Labour Forum. The goal was to work towards an 'effective complementarity between the perspectives and action strategies of the trade-union movement and those of other social movements' (Foro Nuestra América, 1997). It was agreed that their forces would be joined in the demand for an approach to hemispheric integration 'that promotes genuine development for all of the peoples of the hemisphere, one that recognizes and attempts to reduce the differences in levels of development, one that allows for integration of our economies based on democratically determined national development models, and one that is based on consensus. Strong national economies must be the basis for a strong hemisphere. We are proposing an agreement designed for sustainable development rather than for trade liberalization' (Foro Nuestra América, 1997).

The basic political alignments between trade unions, NGOs and social movements established at this meeting became the building blocks for the HSA (Jacobsen, 2006; Brunelle, 2004a; Martins, 2004). Likewise, ‘the common preoccupation with continental free trade also opened the way for new kinds of cross-sector collaboration, between agriculturalists and environmentalists, for example, and between NGOs and popular movements. More broadly, it contributed to transcending the parochial, identity-based political characteristic of the ‘new social movements’ of the previous two decades’ (Edelman, 2003: 199). These complex multi-sectoral dynamics converged in the HSA. According to Kjeld Jacobsen from CUT, ‘Belo Horizonte pointed the way forward towards a new direction for trade union intervention in trade agreements within the continent, based on the reinforcement of unity and integration with popular movements’ (2001: 376). The HSA was later constituted formally at a meeting in San José, Costa Rica, in March 1999, and a Secretariat was established in Mexico City under the direction of RMALC.

Table 4: Networks part of the initial nucleus of the HSA

Networks	Origin
Mexican Action Network on Free Trade – RMALC	Mexico
Alliance for Responsible Trade – ART	United States
Common Frontiers	Canada
Réseau Québécois sur l'Intégration Continentale – RQIC	Québec
Network for the Peoples Integration – REBRIP	Brazil
Chilean Alliance for a Just and Responsible Trade – ACJR	Chile
Civil Initiative for the Central American Integration – ICIC	Sub-regional
Inter-American Regional Labour Organisation – ORIT	Hemispheric
Latin American Congress of Rural Organisations – CLOC	Hemispheric

Building the HSA was not an easy task, however. There was no obvious ideological consensus between the different sectors that were part of the coalition (De la Cueva in Anner and Evans, 2004: 16-17; Martins, 2004). Tensions frequently arose between: reformist and radical sectors; divisions in the Latin American Left; different priorities of urban and rural organisations; conflicts between the hierarchical organisational culture of trade unions and the more horizontal and participatory approaches of social movements; and the mistrust of some organisations from the South towards NGOs from the North (Berrón, 2005; Foster: 2003, 137; Hansen-Kuhn, 2004; Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003: 69; Massicotte, 2004: 17; Shamsie, 2003: 34). In particular, there was tension between the rights-based approach of trade unions and some NGOs who advocated the inclusion of labour and environmental clauses into the FTAA agreement, and the 'anti-globalisation' movements that simply rejected the FTAA process (De la Cueva in Anner and Evans, 2004: 16-17; Jacobsen, 2006).

Efforts to reconcile some of these differences in a continental vision of development resulted in the first version of the HSA policy document *Alternatives for the Americas* (HSA, 1998). The document addresses the major topics on the official agenda of the FTAA negotiators (investment, finance, intellectual property rights, agriculture, market access and dispute resolution), as well as topics that are of extreme social importance but which governments have ignored (human rights, environment, labour, immigration, the role of the state, and energy). Issues concerning two other important groups - women and

indigenous peoples - have been incorporated throughout the document (the Women's Committee was established to ensure that women's issues play a critical role and be integrated into the work of the HSA).

Rather than being solely an economic doctrine, the *Alternatives for the Americas* is a working document designed to stimulate further debate and education on an alternative vision to neo-liberalism. It states that 'at this stage of the struggle, it is not enough to oppose, to resist and to criticize'. It is also important to 'build a proposal of our own and fight for it' (HSA, 1998). Emphasizing the collective nature of building consensus on this alternative agenda, the document states that 'only through free and open debate can a true consensus be reached around serious, viable proposals for a sustainable continent and the well-being of our peoples' (HSA, 1998: conclusion). This document was presented at the I Summit of the Peoples, a hemispheric event organised by the HSA as a parallel forum to the Santiago Summit of the Americas in 1998, and enriched by the inputs of the 2000 representatives of social organisations from the entire continent that participated in this event (Rojas Aravena and Pey, 2003: 222).

Underlying the spectacle of hemispheric unity and solidarity projected publicly at the Summit of the Peoples, and with the release of the *Alternative for the Americas* document, internal tensions began to expose some of the HSA's political limitations. These concerned the difficulty of overcoming the coalition's internal tensions, which risked undermining its cohesion and

leadership. Central to such tensions was a deep debate on the extent to which the HSA should continue to press for the incorporation of a social agenda to the FTAA agreement or simply reject the FTAA process as an act of imperialism. According to Jacobsen (2006), these two clearly distinct positions coexisted since the beginning of the HSA despite their constant tensions.

The first position was defended primarily by trade union organisations and many of the NGOs working on development issues. Here the rationale was that the HSA efforts should be focused on democratising the FTAA process and agenda by pressing for the incorporation of a strong social component to the agreement – mainly labour and environmental rights, amongst other measures (González, 2006). The HSA *Alternatives* document was considered to be a valuable contribution to the democratisation of regional governance (Anner and Evans, 2004).

Jacobsen (2006) explains that trade union organisations from the North and the South were united in their claim that the issue of labour rights was absent from the FTAA negotiations. However, there were nuanced differences between them. CUT was sceptical as to whether there was political space in the FTAA agenda to accommodate the kinds of social protections that would be required to make this agreement compatible with the development of the most poor sectors and countries in the region. The Canadian CTC was also sceptical about the possibility of reforming the FTAA (Katz, 2006). Comparatively, the AFL-CIO was the most supportive of all trade unions affiliated to ORIT of the view

that the FTAA could be sufficiently reformed with the incorporation of social clauses (Katz, 2006). This position was consistent with the ICFTU international policy on social clauses (Katz, 2006). The AFL-CIO also believed that if it was not possible to reform the FTAA, it had to be opposed. However, this had to be demonstrated (Jacobsen, 2006).

The second position decried that the FTAA is a form of imperialism and neo-colonialism that will invariably lead to the deepening of structural conditions of inequality and subordination, and therefore which must be simply rejected (González, 2006). The extent to which a largely reformist HSA was a force for real emancipation and social change was under question. In this, Drainville (2001: 26) claims that by pressing for the 'inclusion of environmental, labour and human rights clauses within trade agreements' and 'for poverty alleviation schemes and institutional reforms', the HSA has become functional to the advance of a new phase of capitalism in the region expressed in the FTAA project. According to this view, consensus reached by the HSA concerning the *Alternative* documents is nothing more than a 'dominant counter-discourse' of the FTAA that helps to legitimate and thus facilitate this trade integration project (27). Furthermore, he argues that in the 'age of governance, when global regulatory agencies are trying to move neoliberal regulation beyond coercion towards consensus, the attempt to create a responsible hemispheric civil society and the People's move from "Resisting" to "Proposing" should be seen as twined enterprises, both part of the making of a "hemispheric growth machine"' (27).

It is not easy to separate these two positions, partly because they become blurred at certain times. Avoiding such polarised views, Massicotte (2004: 2) is right to claim that the crude distinction commonly held between 'revolutionary' and 'reformist' movements in these debates 'does not do justice to the activists involved in various types of organizations and strategies.' The multiple objectives, strategies and tactics employed by such a diverse coalition pre-empt easy characterisations that may simplify the nature of the HSA. Furthermore, it is also the case that such contrasting characterisations are problematic because the HSA has never overcome these tensions. The pendulum that marks the political 'centre' of the coalition swings in different directions, many times due to external changes in the political conditions in the region.

Torres (2004) argues that the political momentum and leadership demonstrated by the HSA at the Santiago Summit of the Americas began to decrease in the aftermath of this event, increasingly exposing its unresolved internal differences and consequently affecting the vitality and direction of the coalition. In light of its declining leadership, the II Summit of the Peoples prior to the Québec Summit of the Americas of April 2001 presented the HSA with an opportunity to unite positions and recapture political energy.

Organised by the Canadian members of the HSA, the RQIC and Common Frontiers, the Summit of the Peoples attracted 3,500 delegates (Barlow, 2001) to a series of activities and workshops dealing with specific themes such as:

labour, women and globalisation, education, communications, human rights, agriculture, environment, parliamentarian forum, equitable distribution of wealth. As members of the HSA, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN) from Québec played an important role in the coordination of the event (Escribano, 2004; González, 2006; Katz, 2006). The final conclusions from these forums were incorporated in a newer version of the *Alternatives for the Americas* documents.

The Québec Summit demonstrated that a significant political change had taken in the public opinion regarding the acceptance of the FTAA project. Signalling a greater awareness of the implications of neo-liberalism, 60,000 people gathered at Québec to rally in opposition to the FTAA — this represented the largest crowd of people ever assembled in the history of this city (Drainville, 2001: 17). In charge of the organisation of the II Summit of the Peoples, Marcela Escribano from RQIC confessed that the large scale of the mobilisation at Québec City had taken her completely by surprise. She claims that of the 60,000 people that attended the Québec demonstrations, only 3,000 to 4,000 were activists (Escribano, 2004).

This massive response to the FTAA was explained by the political climate that the earlier protests at the WTO Ministerial Meeting of Seattle in November 1999 had helped to create. What came to be known as the ‘Battle of Seattle’ had contributed significantly to strengthening the growing ‘anti-globalization’ movement, proving to ‘groups based in Europe and the third world that, even in

the United States, corporate-sponsored globalization faced a substantial opposition' (Smith, 2004: 234). At Seattle it became clear that 'corporate-sponsored globalization and free-trade issues would face public scrutiny anywhere these issues were discussed'. This momentum was 'carried over into the opposition to the FTAA' (234).

This was combined with the failure of the sectors within the HSA that supported a reformist strategy – trade unions and some NGOs like the hosting RQIC (Marcoux, 2001; Martins, 2004) – aimed at the incorporation of social clauses into the FTAA agenda to deliver any significant progress. As discussed in detail in chapter 5, the mechanisms of consultation with civil society organisations established in the official FTAA process had not allowed the possibility that such organisations could influence the FTAA agenda. This revealed the undemocratic nature of the hemispheric process, and the impossibility of reforming its fundamentally exclusionary logic of integration (González, 2006).

Furthermore, by this time it had been demonstrated that the environmental and labour side of the agreements incorporated into NAFTA had been totally ineffective (Lavander, 2001) and difficult to enforce (Lee, 2004: 47). This undermined the credibility of such a reformist strategy, weakening as a result the defence and continuity of this strategy option.

Forming the backdrop to a public opinion that inclined towards a more radical

view of the FTAA, the HSA and its parallel Summit of the Peoples came to be regarded as the “official” opposition to the Summit of the Americas and the FTAA agenda (Marcoux, 2001). Torres (2004) claims that in light of the events at Québec the HSA stood out as comparatively conservative. This contributed to a shift in the internal balance of power in the HSA, prompting a redefinition of its strategy of engagement with the FTAA project (Torres, 2004).

Leaning towards its more ‘radical’ sectors, the HSA abandoned its original reformist conception and adopted instead an oppositional strategy that called for the absolute *rejection* of the FTAA project with the proclamation ‘No to the FTAA’. At this point, preventing the establishment of the FTAA became a necessary condition for the construction of political alternatives. In this respect, rejecting the FTAA and building alternatives were seen as necessarily compatible and complementary goals. That is, the construction of alternatives demanded the derailing of the FTAA process.

In taking a more hard line position on the FTAA process, the HSA was able to find a new centre of political gravitation relying on the formal and informal support of a public opinion that had become increasingly critical of ‘free trade’. In rejecting the FTAA project, the HSA largely overcame the internal tensions between ‘reformists’ and ‘radicals’ (Vieira, 2005) that had previously complicated the efforts of the coalition to define its goals and strategies. A ‘common vision’ concerning the idea that the FTAA could not be reformed finally emerged within the HSA (De la Cueva, 2004: 2). Escribano (2004)

explains that 'Québec constituted a turning point in the HSA. Here, the opposition to the FTAA was ratified. This was due to the political convergence that arose between the social movements; the political consensus to oppose the FTAA'. Renato Martins from CUT claims that 'it is only in at Québec where there was a consolidated position against the FTAA. Before this moment there were disputes and disagreements between the different social movements and also within themselves. One example of this is the Canadian network Common Frontiers. This organisation was not against the FTAA until Québec. Similarly, ORIT and CUT were not openly against it either. The overwhelming scale of the protests at Québec enabled the convergence of opposition to the FTAA' (Martins, 2004).

Moreover, the HSA also found a new common base from which to mobilise and articulate a much broader range of social sectors in the Americas for the construction of political alternatives to neo-liberalism. This was reflected in the expansion of its membership immediately following the Québec summit. New national HSA chapters were established at a coordination meeting held in Florianopolis, Brazil, during 26-28 October 2001. HSA chapters were created in Peru, Ecuador – under the representation of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) – and in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala under the unified representation of the Central American Popular Bloc (Jay, 2001a). Marking the beginning of a new phase in the struggle against neo-liberalism in the region, the HSA set out to expand their support bases within their respective countries, seeking the

alignment of trade unions, NGOs and social movements under broad multi-sectoral coalitions centred on the issue of the FTAA. At this point it could be said that albeit being 'only three years old, the HSA had emerged as the strongest force for confronting the FTAA' (Smith, 2004: 237). According to Torres (2004), if the HSA had not changed its strategy towards the FTAA it would have continued to lose political momentum to the point of becoming redundant as a vehicle of social change.

Power in numbers: the Continental Campaign against the FTAA

The most significant development in the HSA during the aftermath of the Québec summit was the launch of a *Continental Campaign against the FTAA* with the active support of the Cuban government.

The aims of the Campaign were to obstruct the FTAA, defend national sovereignty, change the economic model of external dependency, and construct an alternative social integration and sovereignty among the peoples of the Americas. All of this necessitated that the FTAA process was derailed. Opposition would be mobilised throughout the entire continent to force governments out of the FTAA negotiation process. The core mandates of the Campaign included a commitment to:

Raise awareness and reach the hearts and minds of our grassroots movements and populations about the danger the implementation of the FTAA poses for our

survival as independent peoples; carry out permanent grassroots work to guide and organize the population; create mass movements which transcend the interests of corporations and join forces against the economic model in question; carry out a large scale consultation in which the population will decide on the issue (the plebiscite in Brazil will be held in the week of 1st September 2002. In other countries it will be held in the period between October 2002 and March 2003); carry out demonstrations before and during government meetings on this issue; carry out economic battles against the transnational corporations that promote the FTAA; press for the holding of an official referendum on the FTAA in each country in the hemisphere (Continental Campaign Portal).

A Campaign operations secretariat was established in São Paulo, Brazil, under the auspices of REBRIP/CUT – the Brazilian chapter of the HSA. Likewise, the HSA Secretariat was also moved from its first location in Mexico City to the CUT offices in São Paulo. The formal launch of the campaign took place at the WSF at the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre on 4 February 2002 with an anti-FTAA march in which around 50,000 people participated (Continental Campaign Portal).

The incorporation of a much larger range of social actors mobilised under a common banner of a struggle against the FTAA, and the participation of a government in a hemispheric coalition of civil society organisations redefined the political context for the efforts of the HSA to build alternatives to the FTAA process.

The Continental Campaign created an opportunity to mobilise a much broader spectrum of grassroots popular movements that had remained distant and distrustful towards the HSA (Aguilar, 2004; Brunelle, 2002).

Aguilar (2004) from the Central American Popular Bloc argues that:

There were some organisations opposed to the FTAA that did not want to get close to the HSA because they had political differences with some of the members that integrate this network. Confronted by this situation we had the idea to create a specific organisation for the coordination of the Campaign that would allow us to bring together actors from the HSA with other social movement actors from outside the HSA. In this respect, the Campaign allowed us to take qualitative leap in our efforts to articulate an opposition to the FTAA throughout the continent. Especially, it allowed the incorporation of grass-roots movements that were sceptical towards some of the members of the HSA for being too close to the NGOs and their institutional approach to politics.

Edelman (2003) adds that the peasant movements were one example of a social sector that tended to remain distant from the HSA due to the presence of NGOs in this coalition and the associated problems regarding issues of representation.

Relations between NGOs and the peasant and farmer networks have frequently been tense. At times this has involved questions of representation — who may speak in the name of the peasantry — and on other occasions accountability to constituencies and to those who provide funds for network activities. The imposition of donor-driven agendas has contributed to the decline or demise of more than one civil society initiative (Edelman, 2003: 214).

Berrón from the HSA Secretariat explains that in the case of Brazil, the Campaign permitted the convergence of a diverse range of organisations that did not want to be part of the HSA such as the progressive sectors of the Catholic Church. The shared commitment to the derailment of the FTAA negotiations was able to bring together large and small trade union organisation, NGOs who were used to lobbying practices, religious institutions, peasant organisations and smaller social movements with influence in other local movements and political parties (Berrón in Echaide, 2006: 16). As Escribano (2004) from RQIC claims, ‘the FTAA was the only thing that

allowed Latin American peoples to unite’.

Many of the social organisations that joined the HSA in the Campaign were already participating in regional networks, some of whom were opposed to the FTAA since before the Campaign was created. The most important of these networks include:

- 1 *Cry of the Excluded*: founded in 1995 by the progressive elements of the Catholic Church in Brazil to challenge social inequalities, concentration of income and wealth, policies to privatize public services and structural adjustment policies imposed by multinational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- 2 *Jubilee South*: founded in 1999 in response to the need for a stronger and more cohesive Southern voice on issues of debt cancellation. A focus of Jubilee South is to redefine the way in which debt is discussed and understood. Instead of calling for debt “forgiveness”, which implies a charitable act, Jubilee South advocates that global South countries repudiate their debts, charging that the debt is largely illegitimate.
- 3 *Convergence of Movements of the Peoples of the Americas (COMPA)*: created in 1999 to serve as a space through which other movements and sectors can meet to share information and experiences, and unify strategies and campaigns,

around the six issue areas: indigenous peoples and lands (including sovereignty and biotechnology); women; the FTAA; rural development; peace and militarization; and the foreign debt (including questions of structural adjustment).

- 4 *Continental Latin American and Caribbean Students Organisation (OCLAE)*: created in 1966 to articulate the anti-imperialist struggles of the student movement throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting the mobilisation against neo-liberal and foreign debt policies with a particular emphasis on their impact on education and culture.
- 5 *The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)*: a network of research institutions created in 1967 to promote the development of social sciences research on the social problems of Latin American and Caribbean societies from a critical and pluralistic perspective.
- 6 *Latin American Information Agency (ALAI)*: a communications organisation created in 1977 with the commitment to struggle for the democratisation of communication as a basic prerequisite for a democratic society and social justice. ALAI was assigned the role of communicating information related to the campaign.

Cuba played a significant part in the colossal effort of mobilising such a varied array of social actors within the Campaign. As the host of a series of annual

encounters called the *Hemispheric Meetings of Struggle Against the FTAA* (from now on referred to as Hemispheric Meetings), Cuba became the main point of political articulation of the Campaign. Other venues included the WSF, the Americas Social Forum, Summit of the Peoples and parallel meetings to the official FTAA Ministerial meetings. However, unlike such other venues, the Hemispheric Meetings at Havana provided the best conditions for a sustained and focused interaction amongst the social forces that integrate the Campaign in order to define strategies to stop the FTAA process. The more open nature of other events like the WSF often diverted the attention from the central issue of the struggle against the FTAA (Escribano, 2004).

Having this event at Cuba ensures that many people will attend (unlike when similar events are organised elsewhere). Usually it is not easy for such a large group of activists to be able to spend a whole week together in a place without being disturbed or subject to any inconveniences. Cuba provides all the logistics, infrastructure and organisation for this event. This is quite unusual. Also, the attendance at the event is ensured by the direct financial assistance of the Cuban government. The costs of air-fair and accommodation of the activists are heavily subsidized by Cuba, making the attendance at the event very affordable. This applies mostly to keynote speakers and special guests (Escribano, 2004).

Additionally, the political role of the involvement of the Cuban government in the Campaign was also very important. Cuba is the only country of the hemisphere that had not been 'invited' to participate in the FTAA process due to the fact that its political system is not a liberal democracy. The *exclusion* of this country from the FTAA negotiations added powerful symbolism to a campaign that denounced the *exclusionary* consequences of neo-liberal policies for the interests of the poor and disenfranchised sectors of society (Escribano, 2005).

The alignment with the Cuban government also improved the visibility of the dangers posed by the FTAA to the most vulnerable social sectors of the continent in ways that the HSA would not have been able to attain before the Campaign was launched (De la Cueva, 2004: 2). Brunelle (2004a) from RQIC claims that the Hemispheric Meetings were very important because they added 'tremendous political visibility to what had taken place in Québec', giving 'much more importance to the HSA and the campaign against the FTAA in the 2002 World Social Forum. In the 2001 WSF many people had no idea what the FTAA was. In 2002 everything changed'.

Despite the political benefits derived from the alignment of the HSA with the Cuban government, this also introduced a new set of challenges to the HSA in terms of its efforts to build an alternative to FTAA project. The margins of manoeuvre experienced by the HSA in continuing to act as an interlocutor between dispersed social forces in the continent to facilitate a dialogue on alternatives became increasingly reduced. This was connected with the great influence and leadership demonstrated by the Cuban government in the Campaign. This would become more evident after the incorporation of the Venezuelan government into the Campaign.

Pieticovsky (2005) from REBRIP explains that 'Cuba does indeed complicate the coordination of the Campaign'. Not everyone in the HSA agreed with the regime of Castro in Cuba, or with some of the often more radical views of other

members of the Campaign (Brunelle, 2004a). Ivan González from ORIT argues that there was an important debate within ORIT about the incorporation of Cuba into the Campaign. A Cuban chapter of the HSA was created with representation from civil society organisations from that country – including the Cuban Trade Union (CTC) and the Martin Luther King Centre. However, it was not obvious how independent civil society organisations in that country were from the influence of government (González, 2006).

Although not everyone in the HSA was supportive of this decision, differences of opinion were tolerated for the sake of unity in the struggle against the FTAA (Petrovsky, 2005). This greater unity also brought about a lessening of the role of the HSA in the Campaign. This led some in the HSA to disagree with the view that the alignment with the Cuban government engendered any political benefits for the HSA and other social movements (Jacobsen, 2006).

As a result of this complex alignment between the HSA and the Cuban government, the agenda of resistance and alternatives to the FTAA in the context of the Campaign has been marked by a contestation for leadership (Berrón, 2005). As one activist suggested, the Campaign seemed like a schizophrenic animal suffering from a syndrome of multiple personalities. The increasing overlap between the roles of the Campaign and the HSA became an issue that would eventually have to be resolved (De la Cueva, 2004: 2).

The HSA as an instrument or and agent for social change? The challenge of participation with autonomy

There was consensus within the HSA that the coming to power of left-of-centre governments in Latin America from 2002 constituted a political opportunity to incorporate other government allies in the pursuit of regional alternatives to neo-liberalism (De la Cueva, 2004: 14; Hemispheric Council, 2002).

This new political scenario posed the HSA with the challenge of finding a way to articulate two related, yet distinct, political processes: one unfolding at the national level with the coming to power of left-of-centre governments, and the other at the hemispheric level with the new transnational alignments established in the sphere of the Continental Campaign.

It was certain that some form of collaboration between the HSA and new progressive governments in the region seemed vital in order to build political alternatives to the FTAA (De la Cueva, 2004: 14-15). Equally, some in the HSA also understood that the alignments with potentially allied governments should never compromise the autonomy and critical distance of a coalition predominantly comprised of civil society organisations. Reaching a consensus on the terms of engagement with allied progressive governments became a central concern within the HSA.

The sweeping victory of the candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the

Brazilian presidential elections of October 2002 is perhaps the most salient of such political developments (Lula da Silva assumed the presidency in January 2003). This was the first time the left Workers Party (PT) of Brazil won a national election with the support of the CUT, Latin America's largest trade union organisation. The great political weight of Brazil combined with the aspiration of its new government to influence the nature of the hemispheric agenda, raised expectations that the dominance of neo-liberal order in the Americas could be effectively challenged (Hemispheric Council, 2002; Hemispheric Meeting, 2002).

The electoral results in Ecuador and Bolivia provided further reassurance that, in combination with governments of a similar ideological persuasion, the opportunity to challenge the FTAA was better than ever. Lucio Gutiérrez, who won the presidential elections of Ecuador in November 2002 supported a leftist coalition of indigenous movements created in 2002 when he led a short-lived indigenous uprising in 2000 against the then President Jamil Mahuad for his acquiescence to free trade and structural adjustment initiatives which were devastating the poor (Houghton and Bell, 2004: 44; Hemispheric Meeting, 2002).

Meanwhile, Evo Morales, the candidate running for the Movement to Socialism party (MAS), obtained second place in the 2002 Bolivian presidential election. Supported by displaced cocoa growers, peasants and indigenous movements, the emergence of MAS provides evidence of the vitality of popular sectors

pressing for representation within a political and economic system that has historically marginalised them. The MAS party became the second political force in the country and the main opposition force in the Bolivian Congress. Similarly, the HSA closely followed the political developments that were taking place in Venezuela since the election of Hugo Chávez Frias in 1998. The possibility of an alignment with this government remains hitherto unpredictable due to the deep political crisis in that country.

Before the HSA could reach a consensus on how to relate to potential new governmental allies, the coalition was suddenly drawn into an increasingly closer alignment with the Venezuelan government. In late 2003, a leading HSA activist from the Mexican RMALC started to participate in a series of meetings with Venezuelan government officials. The purpose of these meetings was to work on the Venezuelan proposal for a South American integration project called the *Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas* (ALBA). The general principles for this regional integration project rest on the need to create a model of endogenous development with participatory forms of democracy (ALBA Portal) that can rival the market-based and exclusionary model proposed in the FTAA project.

Without prior consultation or acquiescence of other HSA members, the HSA *Alternatives for the Americas* (HSA, 1998; 2002a) documents were made available to be used as the policy framework for ALBA, and also to serve as the agenda for the official position of Venezuela in the FTAA negotiations (La

República de Venezuela ante el ALCA, 2003; Position of Venezuela, 2003). These documents enabled the Chávez government to make up for a lack of technical cadres. Until that point, ALBA had been only a statement of intent without any concrete basis. This early contact with Venezuela became the gateway for an HSA alignment with this government that became increasingly stronger.

The Venezuelan government became involved for the first time in the Continental Campaign against the FTAA at the III Hemispheric Meeting on 26-29 January 2004. A team of political advisors to the Venezuelan FTAA negotiators attended the meeting and came in contact with the main social forces in the continent gathered at Havana to coordinate strategies to derail the FTAA process. Both Cuba and thereafter Venezuela have been fostering close relations with the continental social movements as part of their foreign policies to advance an ALBA agenda in the region.

Unlike Cuba, Venezuela was a negotiating party in the FTAA process. The social movements accepted the incorporation of this government into the Campaign only because its position in the FTAA was publicly known for its (overplayed) anti-Americanism and critical view of neo-liberal policies. De la Cueva holds that regardless of the political perspective that one may have, the Venezuelan government is 'clearly independent from the dictates of Washington' (De la Cueva, 2004: 4; my translation). Booklets outlining the Venezuelan position on the FTAA negotiations were circulated among the

participants of this event – the contributions from the HSA *Alternatives* had already been incorporated into these documents.

Notwithstanding the attempts of the Venezuelan delegation to secure firm political support for ALBA in the event's Final Declaration, direct allusions to this project were carefully avoided due to a lack of consensus within the HSA (Hemispheric Meeting, 2004; Escribano, 2004). The influence of Venezuela in the Campaign would nonetheless be significantly altered in a short period of time.

Chávez obtained greater support for ALBA the following year at the IV Hemispheric Meeting of 27-30 April 2005 (Hemispheric Meeting, 2005a, b; HSA, 2005). The standing of his government in the Campaign was evidently improved in comparison to its more timid involvement in this even a year before. This was explained by a combination of some optimistic developments in Venezuela, and disappointing experiences in the rest of Latin America.

Firstly, a series of domestic victories for Chávez confirmed the long-contested legitimacy of his government as the expression of a 'Bolivarian Revolution'. He overcame an 'oil strike' orchestrated by the opposition that paralysed the economy, ratified the continuity of his government in a presidential recall referendum, and obtained an overwhelming triumph in the 2004 regional elections. Aided by the exorbitantly high price of oil – the country's main source of income – Chávez was also able to finance a series of social

programmes to bring health and education services to the most marginal sectors of the Venezuelan society. This was done in collaboration with the Cuban government, who provided medical doctors, health workers and teachers in exchange for oil at subsidised prices. This bilateral exchange was formalised in a cooperation agreement signed by the two countries on 14 December 2004, which laid the foundations for ALBA.

Secondly, the improved standing of the Venezuelan government in the Campaign was also the result of a sense of deep disappointment and frustration among the social movements. This resulted from the lack of progress of the new left-of-centre governments in the region during 2004 to move forward in the construction of political alternatives to neo-liberalism.

Unlike 2003, a year that was marked by social movement offensives and imperial defeats, this past year [2004] represents a pause that tended to restore equilibrium to the region's balance of power. The situation has become more complex and the social movements have not won big victories like those of the immediate past. The most notable exception is the resounding triumph won by the Bolivarian process in Venezuela, which resulted in the defeat and fragmentation of the opposition during the referendum to remove President Hugo Chavez from office. This victory was won thanks to mass participation by broad sectors of the population. The year 2004 closed with a feeling of frustration while dark clouds began gathering on the horizon. The recent illegitimatization of the neoliberal model has not given way to political alternatives, which has led governments in the most important South American countries, in particular Argentina and Brazil, to implement economic policies that are far from the faults of the neoliberal model, and therefore, on the contrary, have tended to reinforce that model (Zibechi, 2005b: 1).

As the influence of the Venezuelan government within the dynamics of the Continental Campaign grew stronger – aided by the Cuban government – so did the concern within the HSA that they would become an instrument of the

Chávez and Castro governments. This concern seemed to accentuate a trend that had started a few years earlier when the HSA began working closely with Cuba in the Campaign. It simply acquired greater proportions. In the effort to obtain categorical support for the ALBA project from the social movements in the Campaign as the alternative to the FTAA, the Venezuelan and Cuban governments were ready to alter the terms of the relationship they had carefully developed with the HSA since 2001 and earlier. Not only did the agenda for ALBA come from the HSA *Alternative for the Americas* documents, but they were also prepared to present themselves as legitimate embodiments of this political alternative – even when this could overshadow the HSA.

During the days of the IV Hemispheric Meeting of 2005, the hosting Cuban government held a simultaneous one-day event at a local Havana theatre where 1,000 delegates of social organisations from the continent who had travelled to participate in the Hemispheric Meeting were invited to attend. In this event, Presidents Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro launched the ALBA project invoking the solidarity of the peoples of the Americas in the construction of the ‘New Socialism of the XXI Century’. The event received coverage from the international media. Despite its political importance, or rather precisely because of it, the HSA had not been previously notified of the plans to hold this additional event at the theatre. Graciela Rodriguez (2005) from the HSA Women’s Committee claims that the content of the speech by Chávez was not even agreed with the HSA. They simply had not been consulted. Many in the HSA felt that they were being used to support ALBA without having a chance

to define the terms of engagement with these governments (Daza, 2005; Rodriguez, 2005). This was clearly contrary to the terms of relations that had prevailed in the Campaign, which were based on mutual trust, reciprocity and openness. Berrón (2006) claims that many in the HSA felt that had been 'bullied' in this Hemispheric Meeting by the Cuban and Venezuelan delegations.

Another revealing episode at the III Summit of the Peoples organised by the HSA prior to the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas, Argentina, in November 2005 evidenced the increasingly problematic standing of the HSA in the Continental Campaign. This was the first occasion where the HSA organised a Summit of the Peoples in a country whose government was largely regarded as an ally in the struggle against neo-liberalism. With the purpose of stressing the autonomy of the HSA the leadership of its allied governments in the region (notably, Chávez, Castro, but also to a lesser degree Kirchner, Lula da Silva and potentially the newly elected Tabaré Vazquez) it was decided that the hosting Argentine government was considered a progressive force in the continent and thus it would not be publicly criticised. Neither would it be publicly supported at the Summit of the Peoples (Berrón, 2006).

The Venezuelan government representatives disregarded previous agreements with the HSA organisers of the counter-summit concerning both the terms of the involvement of President Chávez in this event and the composition of the head of a massive rally to repudiate the presence of U.S. President George Bush

in Argentina. The original plan for this event did not envisage that Chávez would give a speech at a stadium where a rally of 40,000 people congregated for the closing event of the Summit of the Peoples (Berrón, 2005). Chávez wanted to occupy a central role in this event to show that the peoples of the Americas were behind his proposals to create a Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, ALBA. Lengthy last-minute negotiations were conducted between the HSA organisers and high profile governmental officials from Venezuela and Cuba, such as Freddy Balzán, the Venezuelan Ambassador to Argentina and Ricardo Alarcón, the president of the Cuban National Assembly. As a compromise, the HSA could only ensure that Blanca Chancoso, a leader of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, would read out the final declaration of the III Summit of the Peoples before president Chávez could deliver his speech. This was a way of preventing the whole event from being identified with the persona of Chávez – something that was made inevitable by his actual presence in this event.

The indigenous movements and peasant organisations were amongst those social sectors that were the most willing to vocalise their support to Chávez and ALBA (Daza, 2005). Chávez' position on land reform, food sovereignty and his commitment to the eradication of genetically modified crops provided a basis for the convergence of these movements (Houghton and Bell, 2004: 26; 'Parlamentarios y líderes indígenas', 2005; VC 2003; 2004; 'Via Campesina logra acuerdo', 2005).

Trade unions, human rights movements and many other organisations that are part of the HSA are generally more reluctant towards the centralisation of state power. This results from their experience of authoritarian politics and repressive military dictatorships in the 1970s, particularly in the Southern Cone countries (Foweraker, 1995: 28-29; Jacobsen, 2006). Chávez's authoritarian tendencies, his inexperience with civilian democracy and militaristic vision of politics (Gallardo, 2005; Wilpert, 2005: 25-27) were causes of great concern among the trade unions and regional NGOs that integrate the original core of the HSA. Ivan González from ORIT claims that 'trade union organisations that are part of ORIT are particularly worried about the authoritarian characteristics of the Venezuelan government' (2006).

Chávez's conflictual relation with the trade unions and civil society organisations from Venezuela (Ellner, 2005; Lucena, 2005; Provea, 2005; Weyland, 2001) led to a public condemnation from ORIT in 2001 who denounced the attempts of the government to violate the freedom of association of trade unions (ORIT/CIOSL, 2001). ORIT also expressed concern about the violation of human rights in that country following the repression by the security forces of protesters who expressed their discontent with the government at a public rally on 2 December 2001 in the context of a national civilian strike (*Paro Cívico Nacional*) (ORIT/CIOSL, 2002b).

The perception that the HSA's autonomy was being undermined by an uncritical engagement with the Venezuelan government soon became the most divisive

and controversial issue within the coalition (Berrón, 2005; Hellinger, 2005; Pietricovsky, 2005). Representing ORIT, González argues that ‘there is much unease within the trade union organisations concerning the Venezuelan government’s tendency to present itself as the alternative to neo-liberalism’ (2006). He adds that there is a feeling in the HSA that Chávez ‘descended on a process of social movement convergence that had taken years of slow progress to construct, and appropriated its banner at the last minute’ (González, 2006). Pietricovsky argues that in making ALBA the alternative to neo-liberalism ‘the HSA ends up in a political vacuum’ (2005). But ‘this is a governmental proposal and I do not accept being involved in a project that does not allow the possibility for social movements to have a critical position in the development of the project’ (2005).

There was also a sense that the HSA were impotent to compensate for the influence of Chávez in the Campaign. He simply had a much stronger correlation of forces (Reyes, 2005; Rodríguez, 2004; 2005). An HSA activist confessed that she felt that they had helped to create a ‘monster’ that had now taken absolute control. Even representatives of the Cuban chapter of the HSA expressed their worries about the consequences that this could have on the future of the coalition (Berrón, 2005). Furthermore, the initiative of Chávez to create the *Bolivarian Congresses* in 2004 to have his own meetings with different social forces from the continent to discuss the meaning of ALBA did little to reassure those who questioned the instrumental approach to civil society (Berrón, 2005).

Since in politics *means* and *ends* can never be separated, the challenge for the HSA remains to make the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism an inclusive and democratic process. This is not necessarily easy, as it is not obvious what constitutes a ‘democratic process’ when it involves a loosely connected coalition that combines such disparate social forces with distinct political expectations, rooted in different national and sectoral realities. Democracy is itself a contested notion, subject to disagreements and tensions within coalitions.

To ensure that the HSA can continue to play a role in the creation of alternatives, it needs to reinvent its basis of consensus by addressing the need to define its relation to potential allied governments – and its grassroots bases. As argued by Munck (2003: 508): ‘A progressive alternative to neoliberalism might be developed by critical intellectuals and articulated by leftist political parties but, arguably, without a mobilised civil society all this will not come to fruition. A cowed, disoriented and demobilised civil society will be a poor vehicle for progressive transformation of any kind’

Since the right to dissent is a constitutive practice of democratic values, it needs to be exercised accordingly to ensure that the engagement of the HSA with such governments is conducive to, and expansive of, democracy in the region. The unity of the HSA could be strengthened if the coalition strived towards a hemispheric consensus on a set of reference guidelines by which to make their

support to allied governments *conditional*. Finding ways to organise and to relate to the state, progressive governments and political parties constitutes one of the central challenges to contemporary social movements in Latin America (Zibechi, 2003). While opposition to the FTAA was the unifying banner for the HSA and Campaign cohesion was more easily reached. The construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism at a time when the threat of the FTAA project is no longer there remains to be the challenge. As Ivan González from ORIT puts it, 'it is always easier to be united in opposition to something, but it is much more difficult to stay united in the construction of something new' (2006).

The type of social movements that will prevail in the future will depend on how these issues are resolved. The challenges faced by the HSA in its politics of hemispheric coalition-building conveys the reality of many progressive sectors in the region struggling to reinvent a much-needed political view in order to bring forward a truly revolutionary democracy: an alternative to neo-liberalism.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed how changes in the political context in the Americas created the possibility of establishing alignments between social forces in the continent, which therein affected the conditions in which the HSA pursued the construction of alternatives to the neo-liberalism.

It was argued that the foundational alignments between trade unions, NGOs and

social movements across the continent permitted the formation of the HSA, providing the opportunity for different social sectors from the continent to engage in a consensus-building process in the search for a common view on development against the FTAA project. Though political differences associated with the broad representation of this coalition prevented absolute unity and direction, concrete results were obtained such as the production of the *Alternative for the Americas* documents. These policy documents constituted a valuable political resource to engage different sectors in a joint transnational dialogue on alternatives. Furthermore, it became a foundational first step in the construction of a hemispheric counter-hegemonic subject.

Changes in the political context in the hemisphere prompted the HSA to change its original approach to the FTAA process. Public opinion became increasingly critical towards the FTAA project and aware of its potential detrimental effects on the region's development. Likewise, the coming to power of left-of-centre governments in Latin America heralded a shift in the political climate away from the market liberalisation priorities that had guided the political economy of the region since the 1980s – or earlier as in the case of Chile. Additionally, the lack of progress of the HSA in its attempts to reform the FTAA agenda to include labour and environmental clauses was also an important factor associated with the HSA's adoption of a rejectionist and more confrontational strategy.

The rejection of the FTAA led to the mobilisation of a much broader range of

social actors coalescing in the Continental Campaign against the FTAA. The alignment with the Cuban government was pivotal for the articulation of this campaign. Furthermore, Cuba acted as the gateway through which the Venezuelan government could seek the support of the continental social forces that partook in the campaign for its Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, ALBA (Daza, 2005). The alignment with these governments constituted a political opportunity for the HSA to expand its advocacy work to many other social forces in the continent with whom it had not been able to reach in the past. However, these benefits were also overshadowed by the increasingly loose leadership and control of the HSA over the process of the construction of alternatives to the FTAA.

The HSA certainly celebrates the stalling of the FTAA project at the Mar del Plata Summit (see chapter 1 for a detailed account on the development of FTAA process). However, this political victory can be too easily and carelessly overstated if not accompanied by a reflection on the future role of the social forces in the still pending construction of alternatives to the FTAA. Given the coming to power of Left-of-centre governments in the region the matter of the HSA's autonomy became a central issue of concern. Reaching a consensus within the coalition on the terms of engagement with allied governments and political parties constitutes the key test for the HSA. Participation with autonomy becomes an important challenge in the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism.

The following chapter analyses how the HSA managed to legitimate an opposition to the FTAA process by revealing the undemocratic nature of this process. This created the political opportunity for the HSA to radicalise its position towards the FTAA increasing the democratic legitimacy of this coalition.

CHAPTER 5

Exposing the undemocratic nature of the FTAA process

‘In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act’ (George Orwell).

‘Politics would be a helluva good business if it weren't for the goddamned people’ (Richard M. Nixon).

The purpose of this research is to assess the extent to which the HSA has contributed to the construction of political alternatives to the neo-liberal view of development in the FTAA agenda. The previous chapter discussed the political opportunities created by the HSA by the establishment of broad transnational coalitions in the effort to create political alternatives to the FTAA project. It was argued that while this permitted a shift in the balance of power throughout the continent contrary to the FTAA process, it also introduced the challenge of ensuring that the autonomy of social movements is not undermined by the dynamics of allied governments in the region.

This chapter explores the degree of access available for the HSA to participate in the definition of the FTAA agenda. It is claimed that ‘trade issues’ were insulated from the numerous attempts of civil society organisations to have an open democratic debate on the social and environmental implications of a regional integration initiative that is restricted to a market liberalisation agenda. The HSA’s exclusion from any significant participation in the negotiation

process provided the coalition with a political opportunity through which to undermine the legitimacy of the FTAA process and agenda by denouncing their profoundly undemocratic and exclusionary nature. Similarly, this also contributed to increase the credibility of the HSA as a force of democratisation in the region.

The analysis concentrates on some of the key experiences of direct and indirect engagement of the HSA in the official mechanisms of regional consultation with civil society that are part of the FTAA process. These include the consultations coordinated by the Chilean, Canadian and Argentine governments as hosts to the Summits of the Americas, the FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CRG) and some FTAA Trade Ministerial Meetings. Consultations that were held prior to the formation of the HSA in 1997 such as those coordinated as part of the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994 are not included in the analysis. OAS participation instruments where trade issues occupy a marginal place in the consultation agenda are also not addressed. The last section of the chapter discusses the popular consultations on the FTAA launched jointly by the HSA and the coordinating committee of the Continental Campaign against the FTAA in many countries of the Americas.

The unfulfilled promise of democratic governance in the Americas

Inter-American relations during the post-Cold War period were characterised by a public commitment to the advancement and consolidation of economic liberalisation and democracy throughout the region. An optimistic feeling prevailed that by promoting the participation of civil society organisations in multilateral decision-making processes it would be possible to redress the problem of democratic deficit that threatened to further separate the distance between governments and citizen control and representation. Mandates of civil society participation, transparency and accountability were incorporated into the Summit of the Americas and the FTAA processes for this purpose.

The first Summit of the Americas in Miami (1994) marked the beginning to this new approach to hemispheric relations by stressing and promoting the importance of civil society participation in policy-making venues. The summit's declaration of principles announced that: 'To assure public engagement and commitment, we [signatory heads of states] invite the co-operation and participation of the private sector, labour, political parties, academic institutions and other non-governmental actors and organizations in both our national and regional efforts, thus strengthening the partnerships between governments and society' (Summit of the Americas, 1994). Host governments to the subsequent summits have sought to be regarded as leading the way in their commitment to democracy by honouring their commitment to civil society participation and consultation.

The FTAA process in particular generated highly innovative mechanisms of participation for civil society when compared to the other issues on the agenda of the Summit of the Americas (Botto, 2003). The FTAA process has been comparatively more transparent than previous trade negotiations. It is said that the FTAA process constitutes a 'break from a long historical tradition in which trade negotiations were, at least at the formal level, a decision-making arena reserved exclusively for governments without citizen accountability' (Botto, 2003: 249, my translation).

Notwithstanding the institutional innovation of civil society involvement introduced by the FTAA process, the degree and quality of this participation was minimal and largely deficient (Ricco *et al.*, 2006: 218-236). The FTAA negotiation process has been characterised by its limited transparency and scarce public information, making it a hermetic negotiation forum outside the awareness of the general public (221).

Many of the organisations that are part of the HSA have sought at different times to influence the FTAA process by participating in some of its mechanisms of consultation created by governments. However, their participation was only welcome and encouraged insofar as it did not complicate the ultimate objective of reaching an hemispheric agreement regarding the creation of a common market. Demands for a serious debate with government representatives on the distributional implications and impacts of trade

liberalisation on workers rights, indigenous populations, and economic sectors unable to compete in a continental market, the environment and democracy were systematically restricted in order to minimise their possible influence on the political dynamics of the hemispheric process.

Sosa Iglesias (2005: 264) observes how a secretive and undemocratic process of FTAA negotiations, which clearly excluded many sectors of civil society, contrasted with the democratisation of Latin America and with the official rhetoric of governments in support of broad citizen participation. Small-scale farming constitutes the source of subsistence for some of the poorest segments of society in many countries in Latin America. They are also one of the most under-represented sectors in the FTAA process. Why would these poor rural sectors support the FTAA project? It is clear that their interests have not been taken into account (Ortiz Guerrero, 2005: 320). It should not be surprising that if those that are potentially the most vulnerable to unequal trade competition in a liberalised hemispheric market had the opportunity to influence the FTAA process, the likeliness of reaching a political consensus for this trade project would surely be even less favourable. In this regard, it can be said that the FTAA was imposed on the most disenfranchised and vulnerable sectors (Ortiz Guerrero, 2005: 320). As González (2006) from ORIT claims, 'the FTAA process offered a language of democratic participation without really offering conditions for the protection or advancement of citizenship rights'.

Their participation in the official consultations permitted the HSA to explore

the actual limits of the rhetorical commitment of governments to a democratic and inclusive hemispheric process. It also allowed the HSA to overcome its initial tensions and adopt a rejectionist strategy towards the FTAA process. In this, a public debate on the FTAA was pursued outside the official FTAA process through popular consultations and educational activities organised in a number of countries in the region as part of the Continental Campaign against the FTAA. The claim that the strengthening of the HSA was facilitated by its exclusion from the FTAA was also advanced in the preliminary research on the HSA produced by Korzeniewics and Smith (2003).

The Santiago Summit of the Americas

The second Summit of the Americas of April 1998 in Santiago, Chile, became the first major initiative to engage civil society organisations from around the continent in the Summit process. Because this Summit served as the platform from which to launch the FTAA negotiations, as well as to address other issues in the summit's agenda, ensuring its transparency and democratic legitimacy was crucial to cement the notion that the FTAA project was compatible with the strengthening of democracy in the region. It was already known that the legitimacy of the official Summit would be contested to some degree, as the HSA was also planning to hold a parallel Summit of the Peoples, as decided at Belo Horizonte in 1997 at the meeting where the HSA was originally created (Foro Nuestra América, 1997).

In preparation for the Santiago Summit, the DIRECON Agency of the Chilean government delegated the coordination of a hemispheric consultation with civil society organisations to the local NGO Corporación Participa with the purpose of creating recommendations for the Summit. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided financial support for these consultations. Two meetings were held during 1997 where public authorities, representatives of 120 civil society organisations and academics from around the continent were invited to participate in order to exchange views and concerns (Participación Ciudadana, 1998; Rojas Aravena and Pey, 2003: 221). Corporación Participa was also in charge of promoting the newly created FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CRG) that had just been created at the IV FTAA ministerial meeting of San José, Costa Rica, in March 1998 (see chapter 1 for details). The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) also organised five regional consultations with civil society organisations in Canada prior to the Santiago Summit.

Despite efforts to ensure its democratic legitimacy, the Santiago Summit proved to be 'a great disappointment' for the participation of civil society (Shamsie, 2003: 26). The access of civil society organisations to the official meetings was restricted, and there were limited consultations during the pre-Summit agenda preparations (Cole, 2003: 6). These preparatory meetings acted as filters that prevented some recommendations from civil society from reaching the draft of

the Summit's Declaration and Plan of Action. Since government officials were present at the meetings, the emerging recommendations were already compromises – for example a recommendation aimed at including civil society participation in the FTAA process never passed the stage of the preparatory meetings (Seymoar, 1999: 404).

Critical sectors of civil society regarded the official consultations as a purely cosmetic façade devoid of a genuine political commitment to a constructive dialogue. FOCAL was heavily criticised by other Canadian civil society organisations for being an instrument of government, while simultaneously acting as 'representative' of the Canadian civil society (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 61). 'The contrast between the HSA's efforts to involve a full range of civil society groups and the way in which such groups (with the obvious exception of the Business Forum of the Americas) have been carefully kept at bay by the official FTAA process is stark' (Anner and Evans, 2004: 19 – Footnote 13). According to Shamsie (2003: 28):

Many argue that Santiago fell short on civil society participation. The access afforded civil society organisations was indeed limited, and opportunities for CSOs [civil society organisations] to inject their views into the agenda were few. Furthermore, there was no civil society representation on most national delegations, including the U.S. and Chilean ones. Both countries had included CSOs in their Miami Summit delegations. These shortcomings go some way to explaining why CSOs felt the need to stage an alternative summit alongside the official government meeting.

In line with these observations, Brunelle comments that RQIC – a member of HSA – participated in the consultations organised by Chile and the United

States for the Santiago Summit because they were important for obtaining information concerning what was going on in the official process. 'But the only effect these experiences had shown is that government representatives would just one more line addressing our point in the declaration— for example, that the FTAA agreement will promote gender equality. This is the only effect that we have there. In contrast, the input received at the Americas Business Forum is incorporated into the body of the agreement' (Brunelle, 2001).

Contrary to the intent of the Chilean government to build support and legitimacy for the Summit process, and for the FTAA as a major element of its agenda, the experience of the Santiago summit contributed instead to the polarisation of hemispheric civil society (Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003). Even if in the past most of the civil society organisations that participated in the consultations had already expressed willingness to work closely and successfully with governments (Shamsie, 2003: 27), existing differences between *insider* and *outsider* organisations became institutionalised (von Bulow, 2003: 87).

As an immediate consequence of this growing polarisation, the Chilean Network for a Peoples' Initiative (RECHIP), who had been in charge of the organisation of the HSA Summit of the Peoples, was divided over political visions of strategy. The Chilean Alliance for a Just and Responsible Trade (ACJR) was born out of this division as an attempt to overcome internal tensions. It became the Chilean chapter of the HSA. This was indicative of a

broader process of polarisation of civil society that had begun to take place throughout the entire continent.

The FTAA Trade Ministerial Meeting in Toronto

In line with the structure of the FTAA process, Trade Ministers were scheduled to meet in Toronto in November 1999 (see chapter 1 for details on the FTAA chronology). Like the United States and Chilean governments, the hosting Canadian government had also promoted the inclusion of civil society in the FTAA and Summit of the Americas processes.

In preparation for the Toronto meeting, the American organisation Esquel Group Foundation organised a consultation with U.S.-based civil society organisations ‘to develop a set of proposals for the meeting’ (Prévost, 2003: 123). Like the Chilean Corporación Participa, which had coordinated the consultations process prior to the Santiago Summit of the Americas, the Esquel Group was also working in close collaboration with government authorities in trying to ‘provide important legitimacy to potentially controversial political projects, like the FTAA’ (123). The HSA did not participate in this consultation, which was regarded as instrumental in the government’s attempts to secure support for the FTAA process (Katz, 2006).

Common Frontiers (HSA) organised its own Civil Society Forum parallel to the

Toronto FTAA Ministerial meeting. The Canadian government (institutionally and financially) sponsored this event as a gesture to acknowledge the increasingly pressing debates on trade integration fostered by HSA and other civil society and movement sectors outside the formal spheres of politics. Likewise, Common Frontiers also held a conference entitled 'Our America: Toward a Peoples' Vision of the Hemisphere' to which more than 40 social organisations who form part of the HSA from 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries attended.

Leading HSA activists also tried to engage in a dialogue with the government negotiators involved in the FTAA processes (Katz, 2006). There had not previously been better conditions to discuss the implications of trade liberalisation as proposed by the FTAA openly with the trade negotiations. The HSA finally had an opportunity to submit their views directly to public officials in a meeting with high-profile government representatives (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 63). The HSA also presented policy documents and recommendations to be considered by the government representatives – including 'Investment Finance and Debt in the Americas' (HSA, 1999a), 'Social Exclusion, Jobs and Poverty in the Americas' (HSA, 1999b), as well as the latest version of the *Alternatives for the Americas* document.

The response obtained from government representatives was nevertheless vague and insubstantial (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 63). Sheila Katz from the Common Frontiers and CLC explains that 'the HSA participants read out a

series of questions to the government representatives hoping to start a dialogue on the social and environmental implications of the FTAA project. Instead they replied in an evasive and diplomatic manner, without addressing any of our questions' (Katz, 2006). It became clear that the lack of institutional access to influence the terms of the FTAA agenda was not the only obstacle faced by the HSA. Even when institutional access could be secured, there was no political margin to conduct a debate on the issues that concerned the HSA.

The wording of the Final Declaration of the Trade Ministerial meeting refers to the contributions of the Americas Business Forum, yet it completely ignores the contributions put forward by the HSA and the Civil Society Forum (Katz, 2006; Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 63). The exclusion from the final declaration proved to the HSA that their efforts to influence the FTAA agenda had been futile (Katz, 2006). According to Jay (2001a) from ART, this omission was the final straw that led even the most moderate members of the HSA to radicalise their positions with regard to the FTAA process. Commenting on the exclusion of civil society contributions from the Toronto meeting, Prévost (2003: 124) comments:

Not surprisingly this incident only strengthened the "outsiders" belief that work within the system was co-opted and futile. Such exclusion is not surprising because government negotiators involved in trade discussions usually have the needed expertise and perceive the necessity of secrecy. They are well aware that there will be real winners and losers as the result of their deliberations and they do not wish the "losers", often represented by potentially powerful social movements, to interfere with their negotiations.

The FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society

The HSA Summit of the Peoples in Santiago demonstrated that governments needed to do much more to create institutional channels for the inclusion of civil society demands if they expected to generate consensus for the FTAA project. In a renewed effort to show commitment to a democratic FTAA process, the FTAA created the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CGR). The CGR had been created with the objective of facilitating and improving a dialogue between governments and civil society and also to increase the transparency and public support of the process (see chapter 1 for details).

In November 1998 the CGR launched an 'Open Invitation to Civil Society'. Civil society organisations from the continent were invited to submit their views and recommendations on the FTAA process via Internet for consideration by the Trade Ministers. The results of this first round of consultations were very scant. There were minimal contributions from civil society organisations, and most importantly no evidence that they had had any influence in the policy debates (FOCAL, 2000: 4; Ricco *et al.*, 2006: 223; SELA 2000: 13; Wiesebron, 2004: 81).

A second round of invitations was held in 2000, which also returned very meagre results with contributions from organisations mostly from the United

States and Chile (Korzeniewicz and Smith, 2003: 53; SELA, 2000: 6; Wiesebron, 2004: 81-81). The form of participation that this mechanism proposed was clearly restricted to the submission of recommendations to government officials. There was no possibility of a political dialogue of any kind because civil society organisations did not receive any sort of feedback from their submissions (Sampson, 2004: 56). The HSA issued a letter where it 'criticized the existing mechanism for civil society input, and the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society that serves as a kind of suggestion box' (Hansen-Kuhn, 2001: 5).

The CGR was ill conceived from the beginning to serve as an adequate vehicle for the inclusion of social demands in the official process. Its main deficiency is attributed to the lack of support of some Latin American governments. There was reticence towards establishing any kind of supranational initiative that could eventually complicate the executive branches' control of the negotiation process. Originally proposed by the Canadian Trade Ministry, the initiative to establish a CGR was supported by the United States, Argentina and other countries from the Caribbean, and was also vehemently resisted by Mexico, Peru and some of the Central American governments. As a compromise, it was finally agreed that the function of the CGR would only be to 'transmit' the views of the civil society organisations to the FTAA Trade Ministers (Tussie and Botto, 2003: 43).

Effectively, this meant that the Trade Ministers retained discretionary power to

filter out any submissions from civil society organisations that they considered ‘inappropriate’. Anything that could politicise, and hence potentially obstruct and delay, the goal of market liberalisation in the continent would count as an inappropriate submission. Governments specified that the CGR would only accept ‘trade-related matters’ that are presented in a ‘constructive’ manner. Issues such as human rights, gender, poverty, and others, which are commonly treated by some officials as ‘non-trade issues’, were thus not brought into the trade discussions (Shamsie, 2003: 16).

Hansen-Kuhn from ART comments that ‘unfortunately, this committee [CGR] was never intended to foster a two-way dialogue between government and civil society (...). It would serve as a kind of “mailbox” to receive comments that it would later summarise for the trade ministers’ (ART, 2003: 2). The activist also claims that:

HSA members decided to submit comments to the official Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CGR). ART submitted a proposal on how the governments could establish mechanisms for true participation by civil society (in contrast to the CGR’s ineffective mechanisms), as well as the second version of *Alternatives for the Americas*, which incorporated comments from the Santiago Peoples’ Summit. Members of the HSA also submitted a follow-up letter in September requesting written responses to our submissions to the CGR. No answers were received, and the CGR later summarized the seventy submissions it had received from individuals and organisations in the Americas in a five-page report that it delivered to the trade ministers at their meeting in November 1999 (ART, 2003).

Furthermore, Barlow and Clarke (n.d.: 34-35) also argue that:

Civil society organizations and mass popular movements are systematically excluded from negotiating process in (...) the FTAA (...) At the FTAA, when proposals initially made for effective consultation with non-governmental organizations and popular movements were rejected, a Committee of

Government Representatives on Civil Society was set up to convey the views of civil society to the Trade Negotiating Committee. But this committee has no mandate from civil society movements, let alone the mechanisms required to effectively present issues and proposals for action to the TNC.

In the absence of feedback from government officials concerning the submissions from civil society, it became increasingly clear that the real function of the CGR was 'to keep up the appearance of dialogue' (Barlow in Wiesebron, 2004: 82; ART, 2003). Several HSA members interpreted the failure of the CGR consultations as proof that participation in such official institutional channels was completely useless (González, 2006; Jacobsen, 2006; Katz, 2006). In a public declaration the HSA stated that:

The FTAA negotiations continue to be secret and undemocratic. The draft text not only does not incorporate the proposals of civil society, but it also contradicts their principles and contents. Despite the "formal" attempts to imbue the FTAA negotiations with "transparency and civil society participation" creating the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (CRG), this initiative has served as a "mailbox of recommendations" through which some "demands" may eventually reach the trade ministers. Its minimal structure is useless (HSA, 2003b).

Hansen-Kuhn explains that given 'the lack of any positive results from the CGR, the HSA also decided not to make further submissions to that committee, although some member organisations continue to do so on their own behalf' (ART, 2003: 3). Those civil society organisations that continued to participate in these consultations came to be regarded as agents of their respective governments (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 53).

Héctor de la Cueva (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 67; footnote 18) from RMALC comments that the HSA decided to oppose any dialogue and also to

oppose participation in what he considers 'simulated' consultations organised by government representatives. Furthermore, he argues that the HSA does not 'want to participate in the forums for the simulation of civil society participation. Instead, we should only try to influence where it is possible to influence, in governments that are receptive (De la Cueva, 2005).

Appeals were made to the FTAA Trade Ministers to change the CGR, so that it could 'truly provide a mechanism for ensuring that free trade in the Americas is built on principles of democracy, development and prosperity for all countries and all peoples of the Americas' (SICE, 1999). No reform of the CGR was ever made to address these demands for a more inclusive and democratic system of representation of social demands.

The Québec Summit of the Americas and its aftermath

The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Québec's Ministry of External Affairs sponsored a series of academic conferences and meetings with civil society organisations during the months prior to the Québec Summit of the Americas in April 2001. The HSA received institutional and financial support from these governments (\$ 300,000) for the organisation of the II Summit of the Peoples as a parallel activity to the official summit (Drainville, 2001: 17; Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 66). In terms of consultation with civil society organisations, the Canadian government

promoted two initiatives.

The first initiative was to engage civil society organisations in the preparation of the summit by involving them in the 'Special Committee on Inter-American Summit Management' (CEGCI). Civil society organisations were able to give input to the preparation of almost all the thematic areas of the Summit, with the only notorious exception of the FTAA! (Shamsie, 2003: 28). As on other occasions, the FTAA, the more controversial issue of the Summit agenda, was left out of this consultation process. The argument that is often used by governments to justify the separation between 'trade-related' and 'social' issues is that this way they can avoid further complicating trade negotiations, legislative approval and the implementation of the FTAA (SELA, 2000: 8).

The second initiative of consultation with civil society organisations in the Summit process was the 'Citizen Participation: From the Santiago Summit to the Québec City Summit' project, jointly supported by the Canadian and United States' governments. Relying on the experience gained in the organisation of previous consultation processes at the Santiago Summit, the coordination of this project was delegated to the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), Chile's *Corporación Participa*, and the United States' Esquel Group Foundation. Within a period of six months, these organisations conducted 18 national consultations, and 6 consultations with civil society hemispheric networks totalling 900 organisations, set up a website to receive views from civil society organisations, and produced 243 proposals on the thematic areas of

the Summit Action Plan. The HSA did not participate in consultations coordinated by FOCAL, an organisation that was regarded as an instrument of the government in generating social consensus for the FTAA (Foster, 2006; Katz, 2006).

The issue of trade was largely avoided in these consultations. The final report containing these proposals to be presented at the preparatory bodies of the Québec Summit (Summit of the Americas, 2001b) was drafted by Participa and Esquel, and released one month before the beginning of the Summit (Shamsie, 2003: 28-29). The report included a wide range of specific recommendations about civil society participation, gender issues, corruption, education, sustainable development, human rights, indigenous population issues, small enterprises and, albeit limited, trade issues. Again, the inclusion of trade issues in this report generated considerable controversy and resistance, and was only included due to the insistence of some of the social organisations that participated in this consultation process (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 67).

Government officials at Québec did not comment on the contributions presented by civil society resulting from the round of hemispheric consultations. This confirmed the growing perception among the HSA that they could not rely on these consultations as a means to generating a democratic debate on the implications of the FTAA (Katz, 2006). The most discouraging aspect of the summit 'was the continued lack of feedback, response, or even reference to, past CSO submissions' (Shamsie, 2003: 31).

In light of such unresponsiveness to the HSA's attempts to conduct a serious debate on trade, and moreover considering the deliberate exclusion of the issue of trade from the consultation agenda, the HSA pressed for a public face-to-face meeting with the region's heads of state. They demanded that the meeting had full coverage from the mass media (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 67-68). The purpose was to ensure that the policy issues that were being discussed secretly at the summit became subject to public accountability and debate in order to inform the population about the political, social and environmental implications of free trade agreements like the FTAA. The Canadian representatives at the summit declined this invitation to a public debate from the HSA, and instead offered to arrange a meeting behind closed doors within the security perimeter that protected the zone where the government officials were staying. Trade union representatives and members of the Canadian cabinet (including the Trade Minister) would be invited to participate (68).

The HSA could not accept those conditions. Agreeing to hold a meeting behind closed doors could have been interpreted as a sign that the HSA was betraying its commitment to an open and democratic FTAA process. Similarly, they would have been seen as being co-opted as part of the efforts of governments to build a consensus for the FTAA project. Most importantly, a secret meeting would defeat the point of opening the FTAA debate to the general public which is what the HSA desired (Foster, 2006). Ultimately, the meeting did take place in line with the conditions laid out by the Canadian government, but the HSA

did not participate (Shamsie, 2003: 34).

In the eyes of the HSA, it became clear that the FTAA process responded to a corporate agenda, and that it allowed no room for a democratic and socially inclusive model of integration (Hellinger, 2005). It was claimed that 'there was no evidence that the HSA had been able to incorporate its contributions to the official FTAA process' (Foster, 2006). The consultation process with civil society was therefore regarded as a 'sham' with 'little true participatory value' (Shamsie, 2003: 33). Aguilar (2004) from the Central American Popular Bloc claims that the experience of participation in the official consultations with civil society demonstrates that it does not produce any significant results. He comments that the HSA feared that by engaging in these consultations, they would contribute to the legitimisation of an FTAA process. There was no doubt that these were only 'simulations' of participation (Korzeniewics and Smith, 2003: 67).

Ironically, democracy was the theme of the Québec Summit. All signatory governments from the continent (excluding Cuba) agreed to an OAS Democratic Charter as a means to further consolidate and safeguard the stability of democratic regimes in the region. Nevertheless, such commitments to advance democracy in the continent obviously contrasted with the HSA's condemnation of the poor democratic content of the summit process. Their failed attempts to open a debate on trade were a testimony to the narrow parameters within which civil society participation in this process was allowed.

The impressive security perimeter set up in Québec to prevent protesters from reaching the area where the summit took place became known as the “wall of shame”: a symbol of the ‘exclusionary and undemocratic nature of the negotiations’ (ART, 2003).

As Maude Barlow from Common Frontiers claimed, ‘if our governments cared about democracy, they would have released the text to us months ago. [Also] they would be involved in real dialogue with our groups and would not have allowed corporations to buy their way into the inner circle during the Summit - a practice questioned even by the conservative press in Canada’ (Barlow, 2001). If governments ‘were really serious about promoting democracy, they would allow the citizens of the region to vote directly on the proposed FTAA deal through referenda’ (Shamsie, 2003: 33).

Subsequent invitations to participate in official consultations were declined or openly rejected. Ecuadorian representatives of the HSA rejected an invitation to take part in a meeting with the ministers at the FTAA Trade Ministerial meeting in Quito, Ecuador, in November 2002. Instead of agreeing to what they considered to be a simulation of participation and dialogue, they organised a protest march that headed towards the official meeting (Barlow and Clarke, n.d.: 23-24). A Declaration of the ‘Hemispheric Days of Resistance’ (27 October to 1 November 2001) was handed over to the governmental representatives, clearly outlining the position of the HSA on the FTAA project. Immediately thereafter, they vacated the room without engaging in dialogue

(Berrón, 2006). Hansen-Kuhn from ART notes that the ‘session was boisterous, with some 40 to 50 indigenous and other civil-society people expressing outright indignation at the phoney process of consultations and the high level of social exclusion in the FTAA process’ (ART, 2003: 5).

In a statement on the Declaration by Trade Ministers Meeting in Quito on the FTAA negotiations, the HSA stated:

The ministers continue to affirm the need for true transparency, as well as “two way” communications with civil society. In practice, however, their actions contradict those objectives (...). We also note a deficiency in the references to real channels of consultation with civil society in the negotiations process. In spite of the fact that some countries – due to constant efforts by social organisations demanding increased opportunities for participation – have held seminars and meetings with varying degrees of openness and transparency, up to now there is a lack of real spaces where civil society can present its agenda and question the official agenda. We do not need more exercises in propaganda on the supposed benefits of free trade; we need real dialogues on concrete proposals, their potential impacts on our economies, societies and environments, and concrete indications that there will be broad democratic consultations with our peoples on what has been negotiated by our governments. In response to the lack of information and real dialogue on the part of many governments in the region, we in civil society are carrying out a broad education campaign and public consultations in many countries (...) Many points in the ministerial declaration only serve to strengthen our conviction that the solution is not to add to or modify details of the FTAA but to continue with our continental campaign against the FTAA (HSA, 2002b).

Likewise, the HSA also decided not to take part in the ‘Dialogue with Civil Society’ initiative launched by the Argentine government in preparation for the the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas of 4-5 November 2005. Instead, the HSA held the Third Summit of the Peoples in parallel to the official summit (Summit of the Peoples, 2005b).

Liberating the text of the FTAA draft agreement.

From 2000, the HSA led a campaign to petition the governments of the Americas to release the draft of the FTAA negotiating text. In November 2000 the HSA delivered a letter to the FTAA Secretariat and to Trade Ministers in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, the United States and Canada demanding that the governments publish the FTAA text (ART, 2003; Sampson, 2004: 63). ART activist Karen Hansen-Kuhn argues that 'the HSA and other citizen organizations have been calling for greater transparency and participation in decision-making on trade accords' (2001: 5). It is such a commitment to democratise the FTAA process which led the 'more than 330 groups (all but 50 of whom were from outside the U.S.) [to send] a letter with those demands to the head of the FTAA Trade Negotiations Committee (5). This initiative was 'a critical first step is opening the FTAA process to a broader representation of social sectors' (5).

There was a compelling need to foster a debate in society about the potential implications of the FTAA in the region. The negotiating governments did not have a democratic mandate to make such decisions on behalf of their citizens. Neither had there been a public debate in the mass media or in the parliaments on the FTAA. The agenda-setting and negotiation process was being conducted almost exclusively by the executive branches of government. Oscar Ugarteche claimed that 'all the negotiations have gone on under the table' and that 'the

issue hasn't even been discussed by national legislatures. As members of civil society, we have the obligation to openly debate and analyze anything that is going to directly affect us' (Ugarteche in Ricco *et al.*, 2006: 233). Supported by a massive street demonstration by the major trade union organisations at the Buenos Aires Trade Ministerial Meeting in April 2001, trade ministers acceded to increase the transparency of the process by recommending to their governments the release of the draft text of the agreement to the public (Katz, 2006).

The text was finally released to the public in July 2001 after the Québec Summit of the Americas, presumably to minimise the foreseeable greater opposition that it would create amongst the HSA and other civil society organisations gathered for that occasion. Sheila Katz from Common Frontiers/CLC claims that 'there is no doubt that the liberation of the text of the FTAA draft agreement was a very important victory for the HSA' (Katz, 2006). Access to the text was the key issue in the struggle for transparency and democracy (Foster; 2006; Jacobsen, 2006).

Despite this success in making the FTAA process more transparent, public access to the draft agreement proved to be insufficient. The text was heavily bracketed concealing areas of disagreement between the governments and it was not specified which government supported the many conflicting positions on contested parts of the agreement. This meant that it was not possible for the HSA to hold the governments responsible for the positions that they adopted in

the negotiations. Shamsie (2003: 21) argues that ‘trade officials believed that these concessions conveyed a commitment to transparency and greater civil society participation’; however, civil society organisations ‘continued to denounce the secrecy surrounding the negotiations and the absence of a “true dialogue.”’

Furthermore, access to the draft agreement demonstrated that the HSA had not been able to influence the content of its agenda. This confirmed that there was no political reception for any of the recommendations and policy positions that it had been developing in the *Alternatives for the Americas* documents. Foster from ART comments that ‘despite the strength of the Québec city mobilisation in 2001 and the increased media attention to the arguments made by the Alliance [HSA] members, Alliance analysts could specify little shift in the framework or detail of key issues in negotiation’ (Foster, 2003: 139).

Escribano (2004) from RQIC comments:

The focal point of the opposition and criticism to the FTAA was the lack of legitimacy of the hemispheric process. That is, it was centred on the process and not on the content of the FTAA. The Canadian government disclosed the draft of the negotiation document soon after the beginning of the summit to respond to the pressure and demands of civil society. Public access to the content of the FTAA draft agreement confirmed what the HSA had long feared. Access to this content was therefore crucial for the emergence of a consensus among the social actors in the Americas to oppose the FTAA.

The legitimacy of the HSA as a democratising force was improved as a consequence. Kjeld Jacobsen from CUT holds that ‘if the HSA had not been

excluded from the negotiation process, it would have been more difficult for the coalition to build its legitimacy as a democratic force' (Jacobsen, 2006).

The other debate: organising popular consultations on the FTAA project

The experience of civil society participation in the FTAA consultations demonstrated the futility of this approach to foster a democratic debate on the implications of this trade integration project for the development of the region. As a product of its exclusion from the official FTAA negotiation process, the HSA gained legitimacy as the representative of the most marginalised sectors throughout the continent. This facilitated the creation of political conditions favourable to launch a *Campaign Against the FTAA*, increasing the number social forces in the continent with whom the HSA was aligned as discussed in chapter 4.

The Campaign had as one of its central activities the organisation of a hemispheric-wide popular consultation on the FTAA. In a public declaration, the HSA states:

We do not need more exercises in propaganda on the supposed benefits of free trade; we need real dialogues on concrete proposals, their potential impacts on our economies, societies and environments, and concrete indications that there will be broad democratic consultations with our peoples on what has been negotiated by our governments. In response to the lack of information and real dialogue on the part of many governments in the region, we in civil society are carrying out a broad education campaign and public consultations in many countries (HSA, 2002b).

The purpose of this was to generate the public debate that had not been allowed to take place within the formal institutions of the FTAA process. It also sought to provide information on the consequences of the FTAA, and to mobilise support behind forcing governments to hold official plebiscites on the FTAA as a condition for the eventual signing of the agreement. The idea behind this is that if such plebiscites were to take place, governments would not be able to rely on sufficient support to create the FTAA. A more ambitious objective of the popular consultations was to contribute to the derailment of the FTAA process by generating sufficient opposition to this agreement to be able to drive governments out of the negotiation process. Furthermore, the popular consultations were also intended to increase the legitimacy of the HSA (De la Cueva, 2004: 2).

The national coordinating bodies of the Continental Campaign organised a series of consultation initiatives between September 2002 and March 2003. There was flexibility to decide what kind of consultation initiative was the most appropriate for each country, considering the specific political conditions and infrastructure available. Aside from the relative success attained in each of the countries, these initiatives have been important within the HSA to see that it was actually possible to coordinate actions at a hemispheric level (Aguilar, 2004).

The most successful of these experiences was conducted in Brazil between 1

and 7 September 2002, where more than 10 million people in 3,894 municipalities from across the country voted in a popular plebiscite on the FTAA. The results of this consultation showed that 98% of the people that participated were opposed to the signing of the FTAA, versus 1% that supported this treaty ('Dez milhões', 2002). Material for popular education was also produced and widely distributed: 40,000 booklets; 5,000 videos; 15,000 books; 50,000 posters; CDs that were circulated to local radio; and 3,000,000 information leaflets on the FTAA. The massive turn out to the plebiscite was the result of a very successful information campaign, but also of the political momentum generated by an earlier popular plebiscite on Foreign Debt in 2000, in which 6,000,000 people participated.

The views of Berrón (2005) from the HSA Secretariat and Pietricovsky (2005) from REBRIP coincide in the suggestion that the success of this consultation is based on the infrastructure and mobilisation capacity made available by the National Catholic Bishops Confederation, the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) and the CUT—the PT as the party in government did not take part in the organisation of this consultation. According to Mello (2005), also from REBRIP, there is no other consultation experience in the continent that is comparable. Its uniqueness is linked with the remarkable dynamism and complexity of civil society in Brazil.

Other activities organised to raise awareness of the consequences of the FTAA, and possible alternatives to this agreement, included the Continental Juridical

Encounter on the FTAA held in August 2003 (HSA, 2003a). Also, the HSA and the organisations that integrate the Brazilian Campaign against the FTAA also collected 2 million signatures to petition the government to hold an Official National Plebiscite on the FTAA. The relatively low number of votes cast at this consultation is explained by the decreased level of mobilisation of the campaign resulting from the expectations placed on the recently elected government of Lula (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 303).

Another important occurrence took place in Argentina, where the *Autoconvocatoria No al ALCA* organised a popular consultation on the FTAA, foreign debt and militarization between 20 and 26 November 2003. On this occasion, 2,252,358 people voted in 5,700 voting boxes placed in every province of the country (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 301; Echaide, 2006). The results of this consultation showed that 96% of the people expressed their opposition to the FTAA, 88% against the payment of the country's foreign debt and 97% against the authorisation for the establishment of a U.S. military base in Argentina to hold joined military exercises. According to Clara Algranati from CLACSO, this consultation helped to stop the advance of the FTAA negotiations ('Comercio-America', 2004).

In terms of the number of people that it included, this consultation was the second most important initiative of the campaign, following the Brazilian consultation (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 301). A second consultation was launched again in July 2004 to pressure the government to hold an official

referendum on the FTAA, other trade agreements, the payment of foreign debt, militarization, and the need for solutions to the problems of poverty in Argentina. However, the pressure mounted by this second initiative was not sufficient to make the government hold this kind of referendum (Echaide, 2006).

The experience of Paraguay was also quite successful. With the leading role held by the National Social Pastoral, rural movements and organisations and NGOs working mostly on human rights and the environment, a popular consultation was organised during 2003 in seventeen districts from around the country. Surpassing the organisers' expectations, 162,676 participated in this consultation. A series of popular grassroots education initiatives were likewise held before the launch of the consultation: 23 workshops specifically catered to community leaders in which 2,065 participated; and 182 general workshops that reached 15,489 people. The Paraguayan campaign managed to introduce the FTAA as an issue of discussion in the press and in the national debate agenda. This is considered one of its most important achievements (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 304).

A system of permanent consultation process was used in Mexico from 12 October to 18 March of 2003 in which 2,000,000 participated. However 900,000 voted in favour of the FTAA. The Permanent Committee of Struggle against the FTAA launched a consultation in Ecuador on 9 October 2003, and the Uruguayan chapter of the HSA coordinated a Citizen Popular Consultation

for our Sovereignty and against the FTAA on the 21 August 2003 (HSA, 2003a).

In the United States, ART organised an on-line consultation on the FTAA. Deborah James (2005) from Global Exchange (member of ART) claims that the popular consultations in the United States were extraordinary, due to the 'lack of strong mass-based social movement'. She adds that 'in the lead-up to the Miami FTAA Ministerial [Meeting] in November 2003, U.S. groups could only amass about half a million signatures against the FTAA from our collective education efforts'.

Campaigns to collect signatures were launched in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras. In Nicaragua, 10,000 signatures were collected in the first five months starting in June 2003 (HSA, 2003a). Aguilar (2004) explains that:

In Costa Rica and the rest of Central America we did not have the organisational capacity or resources to organise a consultation. Instead we had a collection of signatures. In our countries the competition we have with the mass media is brutal! It is not easy to win a consultation like that. That's why we organised a collection of signatures against the FTAA, the Central American-U.S. free trade agreement, and Plan Puebla Panama. We've been very successful with this signature campaign in terms of the educational impact it had.

A public opinion survey was conducted in Peru by the Peruvian Committee of Struggle against the FTAA on 20 October 2002. The results showed that 35.6% of the 500 people that participated in the survey did not know what the FTAA is, while 27% claimed that the FTAA would be beneficial for the country, and 73% considered that there should be an official consultation before signing this

agreement. Likewise, in English-speaking Canada, Common Frontiers collected 54,000 signatures (until October 2003) which voted no to the FTAA (HSA, 2003a). In the province of Québec alone, RQIC gathered 60,000 signatures. 93% of these votes were against the negotiation of the FTAA, while 95% demanded their government not to sign any hemispheric agreement that may be reached without a transparent and democratic negotiation process and which could undercut the sovereign power of the state to legislate in behalf of the public interest, democracy and respect for the environment, the prevalence of individual and collective rights over trade and the equality of women and men (Brunelle and Dagenais, 2004: 5).

Héctor de la Cueva from RMALC explains that the efforts to conduct popular consultations on the FTAA in every country of the continent led to very unequal results. While in some countries this initiative was successful, in others it was either not possible to hold a consultation, or else the scope of the consultation was rather limited. This is explained by the differences in political and social conditions of each country, the unequal strength of the social organisations involved in the consultations, the lack of support by some international networks to hold the consultations, the difficulties they encountered in making the FTAA debates accessible to the popular sectors, and the failure to connect the struggle against the FTAA with the priorities of some of the social movements at the national levels (De la Cueva, 2004).

Nevertheless, the activist also acknowledges that despite these limitations, the

popular consultations increased the public knowledge about and visibility of the FTAA and encouraged the participation and education of large popular sectors in many countries in the construction of multisectoral coalitions. He argues that ‘the struggle against the FTAA has definitely acquired a more solid base and a much greater reach than it had in an earlier period [before the popular consultations were held]’ (De la Cueva, 2004: 3; my translation).

Conclusion

In this chapter, it was argued that the inability of the HSA to engage government representatives in a meaningful political debate on the implications of trade liberalisation and development in the Americas led to a search for other options outside the designated formal institutional arrangements to promote a debate on the implications of the FTAA project. The participation of the HSA in the official channels for the consultation of civil society created in the FTAA and the Summitry processes did not result in a greater acceptance of these processes, as was originally expected.

Rather than facilitating the democratisation and transparency of the negotiation process, they exposed the political restrictions put in place to debate trade issues. This was evidenced by the absence of adequate institutional mechanisms to ensure a two-way dialogue between government representatives and civil society organisations. It was also demonstrated that once the draft text of the

agreement was made public, the FTAA process remained insulated from the public demands of the HSA.

Failing to make use of the existing institutional arrangements unnecessary to relay its views to the trade negotiators, the HSA hardened its critique of the undemocratic nature of the hemispheric process. This significantly undermined governmental pretences to legitimate their efforts to advance the negotiation of a trade agenda. Once the idea that the FTAA process was only representative of the interests of transnational corporations was installed, the early HSA strategy to reform the FTAA through the incorporation of a social dimension to the agreement was no longer seen as viable, or even desirable. The decision in 2001 to abandon this approach in favour of a rejectionist strategy would not have been possible if the HSA had not been confronted with the systematic attempts of governments to marginalise their demands for a more inclusive and democratic process. In other words, opposition to the FTAA only became a political option after the experience of exclusion from the FTAA process had demonstrated the absence of other viable options.

Capitalising on its denunciation of the undemocratic and exclusionary nature of the FTAA process, the HSA embarked on the ambitious attempt to derail the entire FTAA process by forcing governments to step out of the negotiations, or at least to hold official referendums on the FTAA. The previous chapter discussed the extent to which this goal was deemed feasible in light of the greater support added by the alignment of the HSA with other social movement

coalitions in the continent and the Cuban government in the framework of the Continental Campaign. In this chapter, it was argued that the increased legitimacy of the HSA as a democratic force in the continent was also a key factor that facilitated its cohesion and subsequent mobilisation capacity in the context of the Campaign.

The debate that was prevented from taking place within the official FTAA process was taken to the grassroots level with the organisation of public consultations on the FTAA. This helped to increase the opposition to the agreement by raising awareness of what was at stake. None of the national members of the Campaign in any country succeeded in forcing its government to leave the FTAA negotiation – not even Venezuela, despite its openly critical view of the process – or in pressing their governments to hold an official plebiscite on the FTAA. Moreover, albeit obtaining irregular results, the organisation of popular consultations on the FTAA contributed to the promotion of a debate among civil society on the meaning of the FTAA. Likewise, it also expanded the rights of citizens to information.

Chapter 6 will explore the political opportunities created by the HSA to oppose the FTAA process by exposing the signals of an eroding neo-liberal hegemonic consensus in the region. Exploiting the weaknesses and contradictions of the hemispheric process, the HSA ensured that ongoing mobilisation against the FTAA was sustained and optimism renewed.

CHAPTER 6

Divisions in the ruling elites: The decline of the neo-liberal consensus

The previous chapter suggested that in its efforts to build alternatives to the FTAA project, the HSA created a political opportunity by denouncing the undemocratic and exclusionary nature of the hemispheric process. This permitted not only the possibility of a consensus to reject this trade project, but also an opportunity to promote a debate on trade and development at the grassroots level through the organisation of popular consultations throughout the continent.

This chapter explores another dimension of the HSA's engagement in the construction of alternatives. Arroyo Picard argues that the first step in the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism is to convince ourselves and others that alternatives exist (Arroyo Picard, 2005b: 1-2). To do so, the HSA capitalised on the widening divisions amongst the political elites (in close connection with the corporate power) to bolster the confidence of the social forces by conveying the view that the FTAA could be effectively stopped. Divisions among the ruling elites associated with the deepening of market

liberalisation policies indicated that neo-liberalism was loosing the ideological battle. This improved the conditions for the construction of counter-hegemonic alternatives to the FTAA. The main claim of this chapter is that elite divisions renewed expectations among the HSA that the FTAA could be effectively defeated, as they were interpreted as the breakdown of a neo-liberal consensus in the region.

The first section discusses the early signs of disruption to the neo-liberal hegemony at the global level with a shift in the terms of the development approaches that followed the Washington consensus guidelines, the rise of a global justice movement, the militarization of U.S. foreign policy, and the problematic advance of the WTO Doha Round. The second section draws attention to the weakening of neo-liberal hegemony in the Americas. It discusses the governability crises and instability of governments in Latin America associated with the continuity of market liberalisation and structural adjustment policies. Lastly, the third section focuses on the stagnation of the FTAA negotiations process, which peaked at the FTAA Ministerial Meeting in Miami, 2003. Differences between the negotiating governments over the FTAA agenda became even more difficult to resolve in light of such decreasing support for this hemispheric project.

Signs of disruption

Towards the mid 1990s, the neo-liberal hegemonic consensus that had prevailed since the late 1980s began to show signs of disruption. The decline of neo-liberalism was heralded by a series of incidents that included the financial crises in emerging countries, the rise of social movements in the search of alternatives to corporate globalisation, the recourse of the United States to a militaristic and unilateral foreign policy, and the incapacity of the WTO to reach a renewed global consensus on trade liberalisation. These events put an end to previous years of neo-liberal euphoria, and marked the beginning of a critical appraisal of the norms and principles underpinning the international economy (Estay, 2004: 276).

The Mexican financial crisis of 1994 was the first blow to the confidence of the dominant paradigm of development associated with the Washington Consensus policy framework: fiscal discipline, macroeconomic stability, privatisation, trade liberalisation and deregulation, and competitive exchange rates. The Mexican crisis became 'the context and the opportunity to begin reversing the ideological defeats that were suffered in the first stages of neo-liberalism' (Arroyo Picard, 2005b: 2; my translation). Subsequent financial crises in East Asia (1997), Brazil (1997) and Russia (1998) further exposed the detrimental effects of financial instability resulting from capital deregulation and the liberalisation policies advocated by the IMF and World Bank as recipes for growth in emergent economies. In addition to the devastating consequences for

the economies and social conditions of these countries, these financial crises contributed significantly to undermining the credibility of the hitherto unquestioned Washington Consensus (Munck, 2003: 500-501).

The certainty with which a neo-liberal strategy of development had been previously defended gave way to a debate that questioned the viability of this approach to bring about prosperity and growth. At the level of policy and academic circles, influential economists like Paul Krugman (1995) and Joseph Stiglitz (1998a, b) called for the need to formulate a *post-Washington Consensus*. Different views began to debate the reasons behind the failure of the earlier development paradigm. Positions oscillated between a defense of a continuity and further deepening of market liberalisation policies, the demand for a total transformation of the rules of economic globalisation, and a middle ground position that proposed a more balanced assessment of the benefits and costs of market liberalisation which took into account the social implications of market restructuring policies. The extent to which such a debate actually transformed the current development paradigm constitutes a disputed issue in policy and academic circles (Hayami, 2003; Öniş and Şenses, 2005). Nevertheless, the significance of this debate within mainstream academia is that it reveals the need to reassess the assumptions and consequence of a previously unquestioned neo-liberal approach to development.

This was merely the tip of the iceberg in terms of the political change that was underway. Below the timid indications of an eroding consensus of the viability

of neo-liberal approaches on the policy and academic settings, an emerging global movement critical of corporate globalisation posed a much greater challenge to the legitimacy of neo-liberalism. The 'Battle of Seattle' in 1999 became the most visible moment of this emerging global movement.

The significance of this event was not only the massive mobilisation of broad sectors to repudiate the launching of a new trade round in the WTO. It was also the fact that it took place in the United States, the main promoter of neo-liberal globalisation. It became clear that opposition to neo-liberalism was not an issue that could simply be reduced to differences between the national state interests, or groups of states. Rather, Seattle showed that neo-liberalism was a global agenda that concerned all sectors throughout the planet that were subject to what Harvey (2005) calls the dynamic of 'accumulation by dispossession'. In an era of mass communications, the images of Seattle under siege by the thousands of demonstrators blocking the streets were transmitted around the world as a global spectacle of resistance.

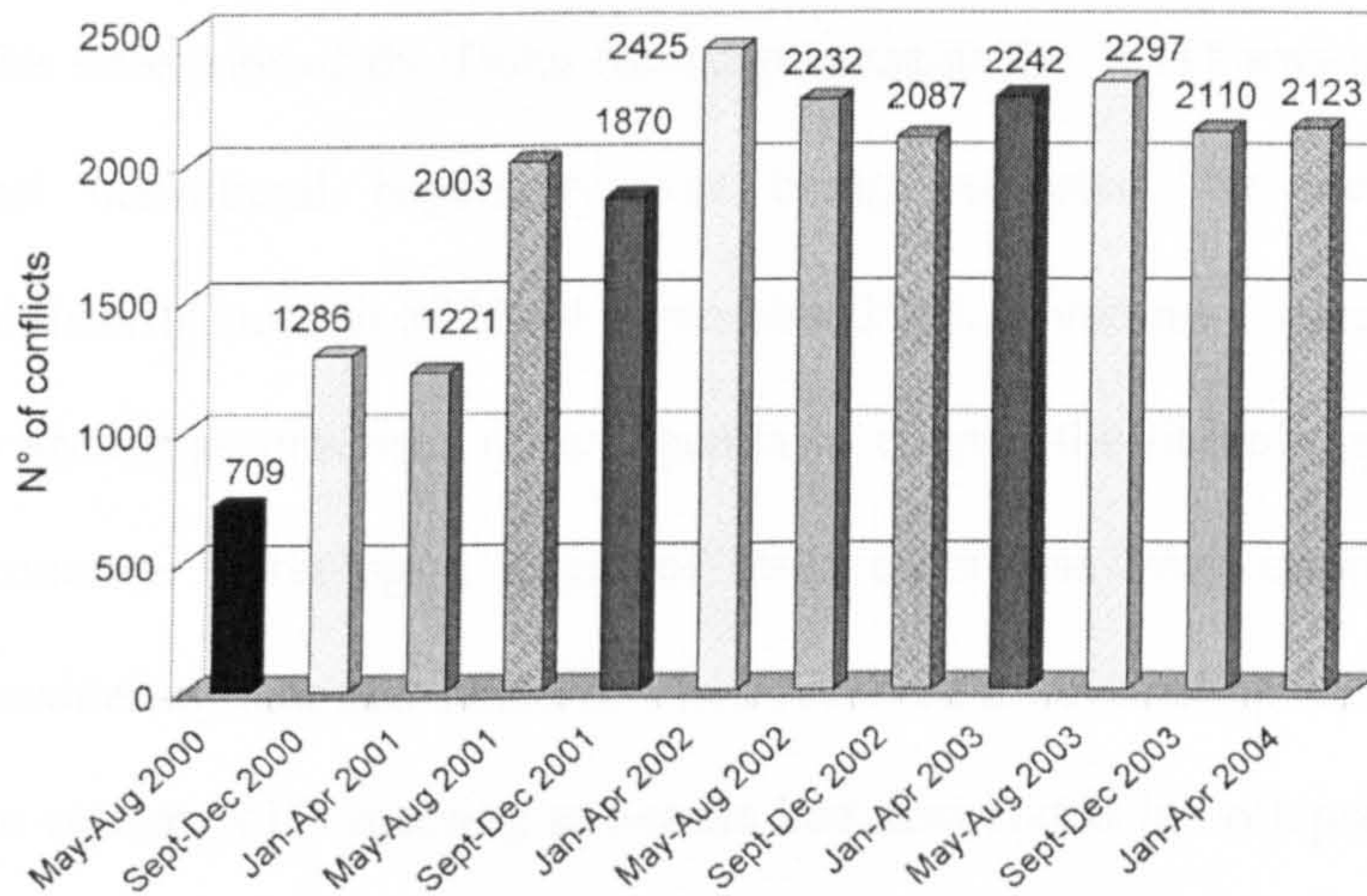
Although the Battle of Seattle is usually remembered as an iconic symbol of resistance, there was a long process of grassroots resistance and transnational coordination that had been slowly developing during the previous years. Many other forms of resistance had also been actively searching for new means of articulation and political expression. The development of the anti-globalisation movement began as early as mid 1996, with the first of a series of Intercontinental Encounters for Humanity and Against Neo-Liberalism held in

Chiapas, Mexico, by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). These meetings led to the formation of Peoples Global Action. Also, from 1997, the campaign against the OECD Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) by the U.S. association Global Trade Watch was another foundational initiative that contributed to the unification of social forces from North America and Europe to undermine the advance of a neo-liberal order. The defeat of the OECD Multilateral Agreement of Investments (MAI) in 1998, due to the pressure of the campaign, showed the new anti-globalisation movement that it was possible to shift the balance of power through the mobilisation and articulation of broad sectors of the population.

Many other experiences of resistance would follow these first initiatives. The First European March held by the unemployed workers movement against labour flexibility policies was held in 1997, as well as a strike in the United States by the truck drivers union (Teamsters) with the support of the AFL-CIO. That same year yielded the results of the Asian financial crisis: protests in Indonesia that led to the downfall of Suharto's regime; demonstrations by workers in Thailand and strikes of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) against the layoffs resulting from the effects of the crisis in that country. The surge of a global 'movement of movements' that challenged the principles and consequences of neo-liberal economic globalisation was a manifestation of a political weakening of this 'consensus' which opened the possibility for the conformation of a new historical bloc.

In Latin America alone, the turn of the century witnessed a substantial rise in the number and intensity of social conflicts. Seoane *et al.* (2005: 2) argue that ‘this increase in social conflictivity accounts for the appearance of a new cycle of social protest, which, being inscribed in the force field resulting from the regressive structural transformations forged by the implanting of neoliberalism in our countries, emerges to contest the latter’.

Table 5: Social conflicts in Latin America (May 2000 – April 2004)



The Iraq War was another important sign that neo-liberalism began to retreat from its declining position as the hegemonic consensus for a model of global civilisation. The intervention in Iraq without consent from the international community and without the legality bestowed by the U.S. Security Council resolution, revealed the weakening leadership of the United States. In Gramscian terms, the recourse to war and violence evidences the breakdown of hegemonic consensus. The credibility of the United States as the leader of a

world hegemonic order was thus seriously undermined. Influential scholars closely linked to the political establishment such as Joseph Nye (2004) announced the importance of rebuilding the United States' 'soft-power'; namely, their capacity to convince others without resorting to the use of force. Bello (2005) suggests that the renewed unilateral militarism of U.S. foreign policy is indicative of its political weakness rather than of its strength. As a main advocator of neo-liberalism, the United States had ceased to be the source of values that others in the world sought to emulate.

The stalemate of the Doha Round process at the WTO was also an indication that neo-liberal hegemony was being contested. At the Cancún WTO ministerial summit of 10-14 September 2003, governments tried unsuccessfully to secure a consensus on an agenda to deepen the liberalisation of the world economy. Initiating a round of trade talks was very important politically, considering that neo-liberalism had received a devastating blow in 1999 when the earlier WTO meeting at Seattle had also ended in collapse in the midst of unprecedented street protests. North-South divisions over the definition of trade rules were at the centre of the breakdown of the Cancún summit.

A newly created coalition of Southern developing countries (G20) demanded that agricultural subsidies in industrialised countries were dismantled. The G20 was integrated by China, India, South Africa, Egypt, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela and Chile among others, and its formation opened 'a new front in geopolitical bargaining' that could signal 'the emergence of an "anti-

neo-liberal” power bloc in the world’ (Harvey, 2005: 230; 231).

The demands of the G20 contrasted with the agenda that Northern industrialised countries sought to put forward. This latter related to the incorporation of new trade areas of the so-called Singapore issues: investment protections; competition policy; government procurements; and trade facilitation. The G20 even refused to initiate talks on such new issues until they could ensure that the markets of the Northern countries were effectively opened to their agricultural exports. The unwillingness of developed countries to move away from protectionist safeguards against the competition of developing countries in the agricultural sector exposed the hypocritical rhetoric of free trade of some of the most fervent proponents of neo-liberal globalisation (particularly the United States and the European Union).

Arroyo Picard from the Mexican RMALC interprets the outcome of the WTO summit in Cancún as an indication that the United States is no longer capable of generating international consensus to move the liberalisation process forward. Its capacity to convince has simply been damaged, despite its enormous continuing capacity to impose itself. However, what this summit shows is that the hegemonic standing of the *pensée unique* has been broken. The social forces against neo-liberalism are winning the ideological battle and reaching unprecedented levels of international coordination and unity. According to the activist, although the struggle will be long and difficult, they have begun to shift the balance of power in their favour (Arroyo Picard, 2005a).

Also from RMALC, De la Cueva highlights the fundamental role played by social movements in the derailing of the WTO summit. Without the pressure of these movements, governments would have enjoyed a more favourable political context in which to negotiate and overcome their differences. Nevertheless, the activist also recognises that the contradictions between the great powers, and the emergence of a coalition of Southern countries, were determining factors behind the failure of this summit. This failure represented a significant blow to the WTO, and to the global neo-liberal institutionalisation of which it is a part (De la Cueva, 2003: 282-3).

The Cancún events generated optimistic expectations that the FTAA could be defeated (Berrón, 2006). Particularly, if the pressure that was applied by the formation of a coalition of Southern countries at the global level was transposed to the context of the hemispheric process, the FTAA negotiations could be derailed or prolonged indefinitely (De la Cueva, 2003: 282-3290). In a framework discussion document presented at a plenary session at the III Hemispheric Meeting of Struggle Against the FTAA in Havana (26-29 January 2004), De la Cueva claims that ‘the victory that was secured at Cancún against the WTO was able to put into question the neo-liberal agenda of ‘free trade’ and its institutions. This became an important precedent for our future struggles’ (De la Cueva, 2004: 4).

Governability under fire: political instability sweeps the region

In the Americas, the erosion of neo-liberal hegemony became manifest in the recurrent crises of governability that swept many governments of a neo-liberal persuasion. The political instability and failure of market-led models of development in the region were interpreted with great optimism by the social movements that participate in the HSA and Continental Campaign against the FTAA.

These events provided a sense of optimism that is very much required to ensure that the mobilisation of opposition to the FTAA can be sustained throughout time. It is often the case that the public visibility and mobilisation capacity gained by issue-based campaigns during their first stages of formation can lead to the gradual loss of political momentum. It is not always easy to keep many social sectors unified and active. The downfall of governments that were associated with the continuity of market-making policies contributed to a sense of immediacy and success with regard to the possibility of derailing the FTAA process. Interpreting these governability crises as expressions of a declining neo-liberal consensus became a political opportunity to build confidence and endurance in the battle against the FTAA. These crises were regarded as the regional expression of a broader transformation at the global level, as noted in the previous section.

The most spectacular of such crises was experienced in Argentina in December

2001. Having been the poster-child of neo-liberalism during the 1990s, Argentina descended into the worst political and economic crisis of its history. Its neo-liberal development model – based on the irresponsible deregulation of the economy, privatisation of state assets and liberalisation of trade and financial markets – proved to be economically and socially unsustainable. In the midst of unprecedented popular mobilisations demanding the resignation of the entire political class, and denouncing the moral vacuity of institutions, President Fernando de la Rúa stepped down from office on December 21, leaving behind a political crisis that accounted for the succession of five presidents in the course of twelve highly unstable days. Thirty street protestors died at the hands of sanctioned police repression, bank savings were confiscated, the country eventually defaulted on most of its \$141 billion debt and the currency was later devalued, terminating the convertibility regime that had been regarded as the cornerstone of economic stability since 1992 by pegging the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar.

The distributional and political repercussions of the crisis were phenomenal. More than 50% of the population was submerged below the poverty line, and the credibility of political institutions was seriously undermined. Similarly, the crisis rearranged the configuration of political forces in the country. Factions that advocated the continuity (by ‘correcting’ and even deepening) of the neo-liberal orientation of the 1990s experiment were politically weakened by the crisis. This led to the accession to power of a left-of-centre government with the election of Néstor Kirchner in 2003, and its subsequent confirmation at the mid-

term elections of 23 October 2005. The extent to which Kirchner's government represents a breakaway from a neo-liberal approach to development remains an open question.

The social movements that participated in the Continental Campaign against the FTAA that gathered at the II Hemispheric Meeting in Havana (20-23 November 2002) highlighted the significance of the Argentine crisis for the struggle against neo-liberalism. The magnitude of this crisis was regarded as revealing the debacle of the neo-liberal model (Hemispheric Meeting, 2002: 1).

The events in Argentina infused the Campaign with a sense of enthusiasm and optimism, as the prospect of defeating the FTAA became more real. This presented an opportunity to bolster the efforts of the social movements to make governments step out of the FTAA negotiations, in line with the objectives of the Campaign. De la Cueva claims that, 'in light of a disastrous neo-liberal experience in Argentina, the new forms of resistance and popular organisation that emerged are sources of hope' (De la Cueva, 2004: 4). The Final Declaration document states that 'there is no doubt that the new scenarios presented by these victories constitute a setback to the neo-liberal model because the vote of our people was against that model, against "free trade" and against North American domination (...) *Our possibilities for resistance are better than before and there are new sources of hope. Our struggle must also enter a decisive phase*' (Hemispheric Meeting, 2002: 3; my translation, italics added).

Furthermore, the declaration states:

In the year that has passed since our First Hemispheric Meeting we have witnessed the considerable strengthening of the resistance against the threat posed by the FTAA and other dangers that neo-liberal policies have caused to our peoples. (...). In Argentina, where the demise of the neo-liberal model has been most evident, popular mobilisation against policies of wealth concentration responsible for a social genocide is on the rise. (...) The individualism, competition and divisions fostered by neo-liberalism are in retreat due to the growing unity and solidarity of the peoples (Hemispheric Meeting, 2002; my translation).

The Bolivian crisis was another important manifestation of the notion that there was an opportunity to construct political alternatives to neo-liberal policies in the region. The escalation of popular protests in Bolivia pressing for nationalisation, or for greater control of the benefits derived from the country's oil and gas industries, led President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada to step down from office on 17 October 2003. This political crisis followed a wave of demonstrations against his project to export gas via Chile that left 80 people dead. Vice-President Carlos Mesa replaced the ousted president, but also had to resign in June 2005 – he was replaced by head of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodríguez. These incidents were the last in a line of events that began in April 2000 with the popular struggles in opposition to the privatisation of water services in Cochabamba that opened the door for increasingly militant popular movements, shifting the balance of power in Bolivia away from the neo-liberal direction that it had embraced since the early 1990s. The political crisis that led to Sánchez de Lozada's resignation heralded the incapacity of weakened ruling coalitions to secure support for political programs associated with neo-liberal

reforms (Berrón, 2005).

Bolivia became 'an example of dignifying resistance' in the eyes of the social movements participating in the Continental Campaign convened at the III Hemispheric Meeting of 2004 (Hemispheric Meeting, 2004). The escalation of protests and violence leading to the resignation of president Lozada were celebrated as 'a truly popular revolt of the Bolivian people against the FTAA and to the challenge this agreement posed for this country's sovereignty over its natural resources' (Hemispheric Meeting, 2004). De la Cueva argues that 'in Bolivia there has been a popular revolt in defense of the sovereignty of their natural resources and against the FTAA that led to the fall of a puppet government of Washington, and which has infused the continental struggle of resistance with enthusiasm' (De la Cueva, 2004: 4).

In an opening speech at the III Hemispheric Meeting, Osvaldo Martinez from the hosting Cuban organisation committee paid tribute to the role played by organisations that integrate the HSA in bringing about the downfall of the Argentine and Bolivian governments, suggesting that other governments would follow a similar fate (Martínez, 2004: 5). Social movements were encouraged to continue pressing their governments to step out of the FTAA negotiations and to raise public awareness about the dangers of this proposed treaty. The final declaration of this event ends with an optimistic tone:

At the end of this III Hemispheric Meeting we can be satisfied that we have accomplished many of the objectives laid out at the II Hemispheric Meeting.

Furthermore, we are enthusiastic to see that our peoples are better prepared today to face this new decisive phase [of the FTAA negotiations] (Hemispheric Meeting, 2004).

Ecuador was also another scenario in which an intense political struggle led by the popular sectors resulted in a deep governability crisis. Lucio Gutiérrez came to office with a mandate to place social issues at the centre of his government agenda. The support he received by the vigorous indigenous movements that are part of CONAIE was crucial for his electoral success. However, once in power, Gutiérrez swayed towards a neo-liberal orientation by trying to advance controversial reforms and economic austerity measures. This was interpreted as a betrayal (De la Cueva, 2004: 5). Widespread mobilisations and protests resulted in the resignation of Gutiérrez on 20 April 2005 – the CONAIE had also occupied a central role in earlier events leading to the ousting of Presidents Buchanan in 1997 and Mahuad in 2000.

The events of Ecuador were celebrated as a victory in the struggle against the FTAA. The Final Declaration of the IV Hemispheric Meeting at Havana states that these events shook other ‘weak governments’ in the Andean region, complicating their negotiation of Bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the United States (IV Hemispheric Meeting, 2005a). The view was that events in Ecuador and Bolivia could destabilise the Andean region altogether, with direct implications in Peru and even Colombia (Hemispheric Meeting, 2005a).

The failure of neo-liberal governments to stay in power was regarded by the

HSA as a sign that ruling elites could no longer generate hegemonic consensus leading to political destabilisation (Jacobsen, 2006). Gustavo Cudas from the Brazilian CUT and a member of the HSA Executive Secretariat claims that even at a time when U.S. imperialism shows its highest degree of aggressiveness with the invasion of Iraq, imperial order in the Americas is being undermined, as demonstrated by the events in Ecuador. This represents a political opportunity for social movements to confront U.S. imperialism in the Americas and elsewhere ('ALCA, "estado de coma"', 2005). González (2006) from ORIT argues that the accumulation of resistance to neo-liberal policies throughout the region raised the optimism and confidence of the HSA.

The stagnation of the FTAA negotiations

The stagnation of the FTAA negotiation process was also a signal that neo-liberalism could no longer provide a hegemonic consensus to cement a new wave of liberalisation in the continent.

The VIII FTAA Trade Ministerial Meeting held at Miami in November 2003 had the enormous task of preparing the ground for the last period of the negotiations, ensuring that existing differences that prevented a consensus could be ironed out before the 1 January 2005 deadline for the coming to force of the FTAA (see chapter 1 for details on the chronogram of the negotiation process). Considering the lack of progress of the negotiations, preparation prior

to the FTAA Miami meeting was essential in order to avoid the collapse of the meeting, which could seriously jeopardise the political viability of the entire FTAA project.

As co-chairs of the FTAA negotiations, the Brazilian and the U.S. trade officials called for an emergency mini-ministerial meeting at the Wye River Conference Center in Maryland in May 2003. Only 15 out of the 34 countries engaged in the FTAA process participated in this meeting, presumably to facilitate reaching a consensus to overcome the crisis of the FTAA process. Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch claimed that 'half the countries in the hemisphere [were] pushed to the side while a blueprint for the Miami Ministerial [was] drawn by a select few' (Public Citizen, 2003).

However, reducing the number of governments at the negotiating table did not guarantee consensus. Even with a smaller number of countries involved, governments could not manage to bring their positions into alignment (Public Citizen, 2003). This placed a great expectation on the coming meeting at Miami. The possibility that the final phase of the FTAA negotiation process would be successfully completed within the estimated timeframe was dependent on the success of Miami in overcoming the stagnation of the process.

Since no progress was reached prior to the meeting, in order to prevent a breakdown of the FTAA process, ministerial governments agreed to a limited variant of the FTAA – to a 'FTAA-light' or 'à la carte' – in Miami. This new

negotiation scheme allowed governments to overcome the impasse of the negotiations by moving the most sensitive issues of the agreement from a multilateral to a bilateral track – it was also decided that the principle of ‘single undertaking’, which establishes that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, was to be renounced. This meant that the Latin American countries could withdraw from negotiations on intellectual property rights, investments, government procurement, services, competition policy and other area of interest to the United States. Similarly, it also meant that the United States could continue subsidising its agriculture. A minimum number of commitments to liberalisation would be sought multilaterally as the common base for the FTAA, while countries would be free to decide which issues they wanted to negotiate at the bilateral level (see chapter 1 for more details).

Having saved the Miami ministerial from a devastating collapse, the trade negotiators resumed their efforts to build a minimum consensus for a now scaled-down FTAA agenda. Despite their working on a comparatively less ambitious agenda, no agreement was reached in any of the consecutive meetings held in the aftermath of the Miami meeting. Notwithstanding the attempt to overcome their differences by holding an extraordinary Summit of the Americas in Monterrey in January 2004, no progress was reached in the subsequent Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting of February 2004 in Puebla, Mexico, or at the ‘informal’ meetings called in Buenos Aires on 31 March and on 1 April 2004 to rectify the February TNC deadlock (Public Citizen, 2004).

In these informal meetings, trade negotiators from only nine countries hoped they could agree on a common set of FTAA obligations that they could approve at a planned Vice-Ministerial TNC scheduled for April at Puebla. No consensus was secured then either, leading to the cancellation of the Vice-Ministerial meeting of Puebla (Public Citizen, 2004). A Trade Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place in Brazil was also cancelled. Since April 2004, the FTAA negotiations have been halted.

The stagnation of the FTAA negotiations was a sign that the political contradictions in the Hemisphere had become so accentuated that governmental efforts to reach a common base concerning this trade agreement were simply futile (Continental Campaign, 2003; Escribano, 2004; HSA, 2003c: 1; Jacobsen, 2006; Martínez, 2004). Similarly, it was also increasingly evident that the United States government lacked the required leadership to overcome this deadlock (De la Cueva, 2004: 3) – especially considering that it could potentially offer sufficient concessions in the negotiations in order to move the process forward at least before the the November 2004 presidential elections.

In a public statement following the Miami ministerial meeting, the HSA declared that:

The final declaration from the VIII FTAA Ministerial held on 20 and 21 November 2003 in Miami confirms the demise of the original vision underlying these negotiations. Despite every effort by officials to declare this Ministerial a resounding success and one that breaks an impasse in the FTAA

talks, the lack of consensus that brought down the WTO negotiations in Cancun was evident once again in Miami. In addition, it was plain for all to see that the U.S. government no longer has the capacity to impose its agenda while making it appear that a general “consensus” was achieved (HSA, 2003c).

The FTAA process could never recover from its stagnation. The commitment to meet the January 2005 deadline as a date to begin implementing the FTAA was never met. All the attempts to move this process forward could not resolve the difference of visions among the negotiating governments. This was finally evidenced in the IV Summit of the Americas at Mar del Plata in November 2005. In spite of the efforts of the U.S., Canadian, Mexican – and others – governments, the Final Declaration of this Summit does not make any specific reference to a commitment to resume the FTAA negotiations (see chapter 1 for details). This confirmed the insufficient political conditions for advancing the continental project.

Bilateral Free Trade Agreements: moving targets

The political divisions between governments that prevented the conclusion of the FTAA negotiations and the definition of its agenda, however, did not leave much room for celebration for the HSA. The adoption of an FTAA-light scheme at the Miami ministerial meeting meant that the most dangerous issues of the agenda were transferred to the negotiation of bilateral Free Trade Agreements (BFTAs), where the United States had a greater advantage to

impose its position on the negotiations (De la Cueva, 2003: 290; Estay, 2004: 284-85). The intention of the the United States government to begin negotiations of such agreements with the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia was even announced at this ministerial meeting in Miami.

The HSA understood that this development in the hemispheric negotiations could actually further complicate its efforts to prevent the advance of a neo-liberal agenda in the continent and, consequently, its pursuit of alternatives to such a model of integration and development. The HSA stated that:

This [FTAA-light] “agreement” in Miami may in fact turn out to be more dangerous than the original FTAA formulation. The final declaration maintains the original time frames and its antidemocratic character and puts forward a “flexible” structure for the negotiations, shifting them to a bilateral level, particularly on issues lacking common agreement. This shift towards bilateralism puts many countries at a greater disadvantage in their direct negotiations with the United States. In addition, all issues remain on the table. In other words, the danger is that, beyond the issue of market access, supra-constitutional rules will be imposed on all economies in the areas of investment, services, intellectual property, government procurement, agriculture, etc. (HSA, 2003c).

According to Oscar Martínez, keynote speaker at the Hemispheric Meetings in Havana, the FTAA-light and the FTAs ‘are not proof of the defeat of the FTAA, but rather of a new tactic to impose the domination of Latin America and to make neo-liberal policies irreversible, whether this is done with one name or another’. The U.S. managed to save ‘the essence of the project’ thus allowing the resurgence of ‘a new and perhaps even more dangerous proposal of negotiation’ (Martínez, 2004; my translation). In a statement issued after the Miami ministerial it was declared that:

We are witnessing in Miami the failure of the original FTAA project, and at the same time the emergence of a new and perhaps more dangerous proposal for negotiations (...). The United States will try and present the 'flexible' proposal to move the negotiations forward as a success of the Ministerial Meeting. But this is only a façade (...). Miami has revealed that the United States has lost its capacity to convince people of the virtues of its 'free' trade project, and is using force to impose its objectives, trying to isolate the governments of the continent that are proposing a different vision (Continental Campaign, 2003).

Escribano from the RQIC argues that the Miami ministerial opened the door for the negotiation of BFTAs, which are especially problematic for social movements (Aguilar, 2004; Brunelle, 2004a; Escribano, 2004). There was no doubt in the HSA that, in light of the threats posed by these agreements in addition to the FTAA-light scheme, the strategy of engagement with these processes had to be redefined (De la Cueva, 2004). However, it became difficult to generate broad bases of consensus among the social movements on how to define common objectives and actions (Escribano, 2004).

It was comparatively easier to mobilise a continental opposition to the FTAA project (Rodriguez, 2005), when the negotiation process involved all the countries in a single scheme – as in the original version of the FTAA. In that case, it would only have taken the decision of one government to step out of the negotiation process to considerably obstruct the FTAA project. The social organisations that partake in the HSA were more readily available to mobilise opposition to an agreement that could potentially affect the social and environmental conditions of their own country.

Nevertheless, as the bulk of the negotiation agenda was moved to the bilateral

track, it became more difficult to maintain a focused hemispheric-wide mobilisation. The specific priorities of each country began to override the hemispheric dimension of the HSA collective action. Trade processes such as the CAFTA-DR and the BFTAs with Andean countries were opposed with impressive resistance by social movements in those countries that were involved in these potential agreements. The same cannot be said in other countries in which these agreements did not pose an immediate threat.

In the background of this challenge faced by the HSA, the United States government proved to be relatively successful in its strategy to obtain allies in the region for the creation of BFTAs. In 2003, the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement was signed by the governments of these countries. This was the first free trade agreement between the United States and a South American country. The US-CAFTA-DR Agreement was later signed by the United States, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (August 2004), followed by the the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (February 2006) and the Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (April 2006).

It was at this point that the Venezuelan and Cuban governments began to demand stronger backing from the HSA to the *Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA)* project. Chapter 4 referred to the fact that some of the ways in which this political support was obtained violated the tacit agreements that the HSA had with the Cuban government regarding their autonomy and consensus building processes. This was exemplified by the unexpected launch

of ALBA that took place at a local theatre in Habana without prior consultation with the HSA during the IV Hemispheric Meeting and which was presided over by Presidents Castro and Chávez. For the first time, the final declaration issued at the Hemispheric Meetings at Habana make explicit reference to ALBA, appealing to the hope and optimism that this project represents a 'radically different model of development and trade' from the FTAA and the BFTAs (Hemispheric Meeting, 2005a).

Conclusion

In this chapter, it was argued that the HSA created a political opportunity for the construction of alternatives to the FTAA by highlighting each instance in which neo-liberal coalitions failed to produce a political consensus that could advance market liberalisation policies. Attention was given to the notoriously virulent crises of governability that swept many Latin American countries, and to the obstacles encountered by governmental elites in advancing trade liberalisation talks at the multilateral level.

Focus on such events provided the necessary confidence and encouragement to social sectors mobilised within the Continental Campaign that the stalling of the FTAA was a near and realistic possibility. The HSA's biggest challenge was to ensure that resistance to the FTAA could be sustained and so withstand the inevitable tendency towards demobilisation that characterises extended

transnational campaigns.

This worked relatively well until the FTAA negotiation process became stagnant in 2003. Thereafter, the diversification of the trade liberalisation agenda into the DR-CAFTA and the BFTAs between the U.S. Andean countries put a greater strain on the mobilisation capacity of the coalition to act as a hemispheric force. The prominence acquired by bilateral negotiations of trade issues permitted the strengthening of government alignments in the region associated with the support of the more controversial aspects of the trade agenda – rules on investments, intellectual property rights, subsidies, government procurements, dispute resolutions, lack of binding obligations on labour and environmental international standards, no recognition of asymmetries or application of special and differential treatment to developing countries in the region, amongst others. These contested issues in the trade agenda were also part of the original version of the FTAA agenda, which had led to the formation of the HSA in the first place (see chapter 1 for details).

The ‘mutation’ of the FTAA negotiation process into an FTAA-light format combined with BFTAs imposed significant limitations on the efforts of the HSA to coordinate a hemispheric-wide opposition to neo-liberalism. This gave a certain advantage to the sectors within the HSA that were more inclined to support the ALBA project. The next chapter analyses the political opportunities created by the HSA at the discursive level in the framing of the FTAA as an antagonistic *other*.

CHAPTER 7

Framing the FTAA: The discursive construction of an antagonistic *other*

The purpose of this research is to assess the role of the HSA in constructing political alternatives to the neo-liberal view of development contained in the FTAA agenda. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the HSA sought to create political opportunities by exposing the decline of neo-liberal hegemony while renewing the encouragement of resistance to the FTAA. This chapter explores the framing practices undertaken by the HSA to discursively construct the 'FTAA' as an antagonistic *other* in opposition to which mobilisation and resistance was encouraged. It also analyses the extent to which these framing practices have advanced the construction of alternatives to the FTAA.

The HSA helped create a critique of the FTAA that animated the imagination of a broad-range of actors throughout the continent by discursively visualising the links that exist between trade and development and the power structures that mediate this relation. The discursive construction of the FTAA as the antagonistic *other* has undergone considerable changes since the origins of the HSA in 1997 until the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas in 2005. The analysis of the discursive strategies employed by the HSA to oppose the

advance of a neo-liberal agenda reveals three distinctly identifiable FTAA frames. The differences between them reflect the adaptation of this coalition in light of a changing political context in the hemisphere.

The main claim of this chapter is that the HSA was limited in its capacity to frame the FTAA in a way that was conducive to building political alternatives to neo-liberalism. The prevailing FTAA frames reflected a disproportionate emphasis on mobilisation of opposition at the expense of a discussion on policy alternatives to neo-liberalism.

The following sections of this paper discuss these distinct FTAA frames used by the HSA. In each case, their specific prevailing understandings of justice, attribution of political responsibility and proposed action are discussed.

The FTAA as an *unsustainable* and *undemocratic* model of development

The first image of the FTAA framed this project of hemispheric integration as an *unsustainable* and *undemocratic* model of development. This corresponds to the early stages of formation of the HSA, in which the coalition was integrated mostly by the trade union organisations affiliated to ORIT and NGOs working on human rights, the environment and gender issues, amongst others. The emphasis of this initial frame was placed on highlighting the detrimental effects that the creation of a hemispheric market would pose for the attainment of

sustainable forms of development in the region.

Appeals to justice were raised in connection to the deteriorating conditions of workers' rights, the undercutting of democratic sovereignty to the advance of corporate rule, and the devastating impacts on the environment. The FTAA project is deemed to be immoral, since it would lead to economic polarisation, social and political disempowerment and environmental degradation. The FTAA is compared to the NAFTA model, which had demonstrated that it caused greater harm than goods, in terms of advancing social and environmental justice causes (HSA, 2001; Public Citizen, 2004). Echoing a humanist ethic that places the person at the centre of concern, the HSA defines itself as a 'movement of the peoples of the Americas demanding their very humanity'. This is done by stating that 'nutritious food, a comfortable place to live, a clean and healthy environment, health care and education are human rights' (HSA, 1998). The idea that trade integration should be subordinate to the advancement of human development and not the reverse as proposed by the FTAA becomes a recurrent theme.

The first declaration of the HSA states:

There should be no FTAA agreement if it is to be created along the lines of other existing agreements such as NAFTA. We need an agreement that promotes **genuine development** for all of the peoples of the hemisphere, one that recognizes and attempts to **reduce the differences** in levels of development, one that allows for integration of our economies based on **democratically** determined national development models, and one that is based on **consensus**. Strong national economies must be the basis for a strong hemisphere. We are proposing an agreement designed for **sustainable development** rather than for trade liberalization. (...) Any trade agreement should not be an end in itself, but rather a means toward combating poverty and social exclusion and for achieving

just and **sustainable development**. We do not support isolationism or traditional protectionism. We are not nostalgic for the past. We are looking forward, and we have viable proposals. We know that our economies cannot be isolated from the dynamics of the world economy, but we do not think that free trade is the solution. The problem is that free trade involves more than the opening of borders; it involves the abandonment of national **development** models and poses a serious threat to **democracy** (Foro Nuestra América, 1997; emphasis added).

Furthermore,

We call on our governments to ensure that no further efforts to increase hemispheric trade and economic integration will be undertaken unless and until they clearly enhance the broad Summit goals of **democracy, sustainability, and the eradication of poverty**. If the proposed FTAA will not further these goals, it should be radically changed or rejected. (...) We call on our governments to reject the 'low road' approach, by which we all compete to sell our natural resources and labour power at the lowest possible price. Instead, we believe that our governments have both an opportunity and a duty to take the 'high road': building capacity and skills, improving labour standards and living conditions, and respecting and valuing **cultural diversity and biodiversity** in our hemisphere. Our people demand the construction of a new model of development based on **justice, democracy, and freedom**. Only in this way can we avoid **social exclusion** and ensure a **sustainable livelihood** for all people of the Americas (HSA, 1999b; emphasis added).

In the final declaration of the Second Summit of the Peoples the HSA states:

We reject this project of liberalised trade and investment, deregulation and privatisation. This neo-liberal project is racist and sexist and destructive of the environment. We propose to build new ways of continental integration based on **democracy, human rights, equality, solidarity, pluralism** and respect for the **environment** (Summit of the Peoples, 2001; emphasis added).

Responsibility is attributed to transnational corporations and international capital, the main would-be benefactors of the FTAA agreement. It is their interests that drive the FTAA agenda of integration. Corporate interests are behind the push to introduce rules on investments that would restrain the sovereignty of states to legislate in cases that would easily be interpreted as encroachments on the rights of investors, and giving investors the right to sue governments directly (as in NAFTA Chapter 11 on Investments); a dispute settlement system that would transfer the functions of national judicial systems

to the special tribunals integrated by technical appointees without public accountability; and rules to protect the intellectual property of large corporations without consideration for the social implications in terms of the health of the population, among others. Corporate power is embodied in the transnational corporations, many of which are located in the industrialised economies of North America, but some of which are also based in Latin America. There is an obvious advantage in the North, but a transnational dimension of corporate globalisation overrides a geographic North-South distinction.

The first version of the *Alternative for the Americas* policy documents launched by the HSA at the Summit of the Peoples in Santiago, Chile, in 1998 clearly stresses that the financial power of transnational corporations with the complicity of governments, are behind the FTAA agenda:

While transnational corporations, speculators and their government sponsors will continue to act in their self-interests; we now are beginning to unite across borders and across sectors in order to oppose these self-interests with those of the vast majority of the residents of our hemisphere. While the building of such a social alliance is in its early stages, this urgent task has begun (HSA, 1998; emphasis added).

Conflict is not bound by geography, even when it is recognised that governments are complicit in the pursuit of this trade agenda. What is most important, however, is the distinction created between ‘corporations’ and ‘people’, as a conflict that transcends national boundaries. The need to defend the rights of the people against the encroachment of corporate power is

sometimes represented in terms of a conflict between ‘corporations’ and ‘states’. In a document issued for the occasion of the Toronto FTAA Ministerial meeting in 1999, the HSA argues that:

What is at stake is a struggle between the ambition of transnational corporations to be free of state controls and the capacity of the hemisphere’s citizens and the governments we elect to decide on our own destinies (...). There is every indication that the intention is to extol the rights of large enterprises without establishing corresponding obligations towards peoples and nations. Our proposals subordinate the rights of corporations to the rights of the peoples and nations of our continent (HSA, 1999a; emphasis added).

Action is directed at redressing the unbalance in favour of corporations by incorporating public instruments of regulation that will ensure that trade liberalisation is made compatible with sustainable development: ‘Our proposals are to subordinate the rights of corporations to the rights of the peoples and nations of our continent’ (HSA, 1999a; emphasis added). This portrayal of the FTAA is the early ‘reformist’ strategy of the HSA, in which the view that there could be a rights-based approach to sustainable development through the inclusion of labour and environmental rights are central parts of an agreement, is still influential within the coalition’s overall orientation.

As discussed in detail in previous chapters, the reformist phase of the HSA was never fully supported to the same extent by all the members of the coalition. This became increasingly problematic as it became evident that there were few, if any, possibilities to make the FTAA project compatible with an agenda for sustainable development. The critique of the FTAA, as highlighted in its initial frame, centred on policy issues. Although politically limited, it was relatively

clear what an alternative to the FTAA should look like. Its understanding of social justice was tied to democracy, social equity and environmental sustainability. Transnational capital and corporations were the forces that needed to be contained in an eventual alternative view of integration that emphasised a rights-based approach to the relation between domestic and international trade relations.

The FTAA as a project of U.S. Imperialism

The decreasing expectations that the FTAA could be reformed led to the HSA decision to adopt a strategy to reject the FTAA process and to the launching of a Continental Campaign. Generating opposition across the continent to derail the FTAA process became the most important political priority. The task of building a common ground of identification invariably became more challenging than it had been when it concerned a smaller group of social organisations, comprising mainly trade unions and NGOs. The original FTAA frame was accordingly adapted in order to address this new challenge. The new frame that was adopted was not absolutely different from the one previously employed. The first FTAA frame was expanded to incorporate other elements that could resonate within a much broader range of social sectors mobilised in the Campaign in opposition to this trade agreement.

The appeals to justice associated with notions of social equity, democracy and

environmental sustainability that had characterised the early FTAA frame was expanded with the incorporation of the notion of the independence of Latin American peoples from colonial domination. This theme resonated widely throughout the broad spectrum of social movements in the hemisphere that were able to join forces under a common struggle of opposition to the FTAA project. The alignment of the HSA with Cuba was central to this rhetorical shift (Berrón, 2005; Rodríguez, 2005). Increasingly, the notion of justice became used in direct allusion to the condition of emancipation from imperial subordination.

This was accompanied by the glorification of those leaders who led the independence revolutions of Latin American republics during the XIX century from the rule of their European colonial powers. Largely due to the influence of the alignment with Venezuela, Simón Bolívar was the most cited of these historical figures, as the inspiration of a revolution against colonial oppression. Marchand (2005) argues that the HSA invokes 'a Bolivarian geopolitical imagination' in order to construct an alternative regional project and identity. This involves the reinterpretation of Bolívar's doctrines in ways that allow the HSA to retain its anti-colonialist elements and yet add a commitment to democracy and justice which was originally absent from Bolívar's worldview. Past and present are thus united in a discourse that emphasised the continuity of the peoples' struggle for emancipation and freedom. Opposition to the FTAA project came to be regarded as ethically compelling.

Although transnational corporations continued to be represented as the sources of blame attribution, the links between state power and corporate power was made more explicit. Nowhere was this link more clearly stressed than in the relation of the United States government with the large corporations based in that country. The discursive construction of the United States as the focus of responsibility behind the FTAA project led to a growing sense of anti-Americanism.

Bruce Jay (2001b: 1) from ART explains that 'the FTAA is being tainted with an image of US imperialism and identified with other unpopular US initiatives, such as Plan Colombia. This climate makes it harder to talk about engagement and compromise'. Likewise, 'the anti-corporativism of the opposition to globalization and trade is turning to a more standard version of 'Yankee' baiting to express opposition to the FTAA'. It did not take much to polarise the sentiments and perceptions of the social forces involved in the Campaign by invoking anti-American and anti-imperial rhetorical devices. The FTAA became the expression of 'an ongoing process of annexation and re-colonisation of our peoples' by the United States (Hemispheric Meeting, 2001; emphasis added). The final declaration of the Hemispheric Meeting in Havana in 2002 claims that:

Behind the false rhetoric that the FTAA will bring about progress and well being for our peoples, our governments are committed to the negotiation of an integration project that will consolidate the **hegemony of the United States** in the region through its political, economic and military **domination** (Continental Campaign, 2002; my translation. Emphasis added).

There were at least two reasons that ensured the effectiveness of this discursive strategy. First, despite the heterogeneity that characterised the broad range of social forces gathered at the Continental Campaign, there was an embedded and shared perception that the United States represents an interventionist and imperialist threat in the region. This suspicion towards the imperial pretence of the United States is the obvious result of a history of illegal U.S. intervention in Latin America, cynically conducted in the name of freedom and democracy – some of the most notable examples include the interventions in Guatemala (1954), Cuba (1961), Guatemala (1966-67), Chile (1973), El Salvador (1981-92), Nicaragua (1981-90), Grenada (1983-84) and Panama (1989).

Other events such as the illegal invasion by the United States (and Britain) of Iraq in 2003, and the overtly unilateral U.S. foreign policy as seen by this government's rejection of the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Kyoto Protocol, were taken as confirmations that the policies of the United States government responded to purely self-interested considerations.

The ideological identity of the most progressive sectors and movements in Latin America has been shaped by their experience of such a history of intervention and by the struggle against the allied authoritarian military governments in the region. This deeply rooted suspicion of the United States has played a central part in the development of nationalist ideologies in Latin America, shared by both left and right on the political spectrum.

Second, the alleged support of the United States government for the short-lived coup of the Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez between 11-14 April 2002 – either with direct financial support or by its notorious delay in publicly condemning this – facilitated the identification of the FTAA project with the politics of U.S. imperialism in the region. In a public statement of support to the Venezuelan government and the principles of ALBA, the HSA pronounced its:

vigorous readiness to defend our sister Venezuelan nation from the attacks and serious threats it receives from the ultra-rightist cronies that govern the United States. We understand and feel each of these threats and attacks as threats and attacks on our own nations, and to our own aspirations to overcome the centuries of imperial plundering in our region (HSA, 2005; my translation).

Once the idea of U.S. imperialism was established, following its turn to a *realpolitik* engagement in global issues, the new FTAA frame was ready to resonate and become more effective as a means of raising opposition to the FTAA project.

Framing the FTAA as a United States imperialist project permitted the conceptual linkage of the *trade liberalisation* agenda with the issues of *foreign debt* and to *militarization* in the region. These were presented as three complementary and self-supporting ‘mechanisms of re-colonization’ of the region (Hemispheric Meeting, 2002; 2004; Summit of the Peoples, 2005a). They all became part of the same U.S. project for domination. The militarization of the continent referred specifically to the Colombia Plan sponsored by the United States, as well as to their intentions to build new military bases, in Paraguay, Brazil, and earlier in Argentina. The final

declaration of the Hemispheric Meeting in Havana in 2002 claims that:

(...) the **United States** and its allied governments in the Hemisphere persist in their objective to impose a supranational treaty on our nations that will increasingly impoverish larger sectors of the population in the South and the North, grant rights to **transnational corporations** that supersede the rights of states and peoples, plunder our natural, productive and human resources undermining the possibility of a **sovereign development** for our nations, and thus constituting a new era of **colonization** and annexation of our America to the **political, economic and military power** of the **United States** (Hemispheric Meeting, 2002; emphasis added).

This FTAA frame directs political action towards building opposition in order to derail the negotiation process through the polarisation of public opinion in terms of a U.S. versus Latin American conflict – or North and South. As argued in previous chapters, the alignments with the Venezuelan and Cuban governments sought to steer the support of social movements in the region towards embracing the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA). The considerable success of president Chávez' attempts to be seen as the embodiment of the peoples' resistance to imperialism (as demonstrated at the Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata in 2005) could not have been possible if a discursive frame of the FTAA that locates and defines conflict along the lines of a Latin American struggle for emancipation and independence against the imperialist hegemony of the United States there had not been already in place.

Framing the FTAA as a project of American imperialism was a successful strategy to increase mobilisation and opposition to this trade process. As argued in chapter 4, the Continental Campaign permitted the alignment of the HSA

with other coalitions that had been working actively in the region on issue-based campaigns. The most important of these other campaigns includes: that against the privatisation of water services, the one in defense of public education, the campaign against the payment of 'illegitimate' foreign debt led by Jubilee South, and the Campaign for the Demilitarization of the Americas (CADA). In order to ensure cohesion among these social forces within the Continental Campaign, the HSA and other social forces in the Campaign explicitly linked the struggle against the FTAA with the advocacy efforts of other coalitions promoting debt cancellation and the demilitarization of the Americas

The significance of this strategy of continental mobilisation against the FTAA goes beyond its instrumental value to ensure cohesion within the Campaign. It is also an exercise of ideological construction. The identities and normative understandings of the social forces that partake in the Campaign are also transformed. The framing of the FTAA as U.S. imperialism facilitated the uncovering of the organic relations between political and economic power. This can be regarded as a contribution to the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism.

However, other things which are also important for the construction of alternatives were left out from this frame. In contrast to the earlier FTAA frame that stressed the undemocratic and unsustainable nature of this trade agenda, the FTAA as U.S. imperialism does not emphasise the importance of democracy or

sustainable forms of development for the construction of alternatives.

Democracy became a rather 'uncomfortable' issue that was avoided whenever possible, or raised in ways that did not generate controversy over its meaning and political implications. Furthermore, it was also trivialised, as I personally observed it at the III Hemispheric Summit in Havana when Fidel Castro made what he considered to be a humorous remark in a plenary session, commenting that he did not have any problem with the issue of political representation in Cuba since he *was* Cuba.

Many began to see democracy and human rights simply as convenient rhetorical resources to justify the illegal interventions of the U.S. government in foreign countries in order to expand its control of their natural resources. The controversial electoral process that led George W. Bush to power in 2001 was often held up as evidence that his government has no moral authority to justify its actions on the basis of a defence to democracy. While these are certainly appropriate observations, such claims should also be qualified with a clear proposition of what constitutes desirable democracy. Of course, this would have inevitably created rifts in the coalitions. By maintaining silence on this issue, the FTAA frame discouraged a much-needed reflection on democracy.

This lack of stress on democracy in the FTAA frame did not mean that it was absent from the campaign altogether. In chapter 5, it was argued that one of the main activities of the campaign was the organisation of popular consultations

on the FTAA, including putting pressure on governments to make the approval of the FTAA conditional to the outcome of official plebiscites, and ultimately the derailing of the entire negotiation process. Thus, participatory forms of democracy were indeed encouraged through these popular consultations – even when their success was generally scant, with the exception of a few countries. However, whereas as democratic values were actively encouraged in this regard, this was left to the discretion of the national campaign organisers in each country to decide what kind of consultation was carried out and how to promote it. When it came to framing a hemispheric discourse on the FTAA as a collective initiative of the campaign through which to unite its forces, democracy was not explicitly highlighted as a central theme of this particular frame.

Furthermore, another important implication of framing the FTAA as American imperialism is that it underplayed the centrality of policy alternatives to neo-liberalism. Many advances had been made by the HSA in defining a policy-oriented vision of alternatives to neo-liberalism as evidenced by the production of a series of *Alternative for the Americas* documents. This base of consensus on alternative policies was expected to become the ‘the Bible’ of activist organisations fighting against the FTAA. Its contribution was meant to be ‘pedagogical’ (Martins, 2004), and to provide a framework for debates among different social forces in their search for alternatives and new consensus (Rodriguez, 2004; Hansen-Kuhn, 2004). However, the Alternatives documents were never sufficiently diffused and socialised (De la Cueva, 2004: 3): ‘It was

never really popular' (Martins, 2004). There has always been a certain resistance amongst many of the organisations that are part of the Campaign to even read this document (Rodriguez, 2004). Much of this resistance has to do with the complexity rather technical nature of these documents which does not facilitate their diffusion among a non-specialised audience. Also, with the fact that many of the movements that are part of the Campaign prioritise mobilisation and public protests as their main strategy of response to the FTAA process. The political value of the *Alternatives for the Americas* documents have not been easily recognised by these movements.

As a consequence, the contents of the documents have not been fully appropriated discursively by the social forces mobilised against the FTAA (Hansen-Kuhn, 2004). According to Jacobsen, the HSA Alternatives documents was very influential in setting the boundaries for discussions and consensus building from the Santiago Summit of the Peoples in 1998 until the Québec Summit of the Peoples in 2001. It later ceased to be influential when the Campaign was launched in 2001 (Jacobsen, 2006).

The discursive construction of the FTAA during the period of the Campaign can be described as a 'broad stroke without too much room for detail' (Foster, 2006). The strategy associated with the frame of the FTAA as U.S. imperialism prioritised the mobilisation of opposition by appealing to popular sentiments against the imperialist impulse of the United States. This allowed the association of trade integration with the issues of foreign debt and

militarization, therein identifying key areas which alternatives to neo-liberalism would need to address. However, it did not go far enough. It did not facilitate an exploration of the meaning of democracy nor a policy- focused reflection on alternatives to neo-liberalism. This would eventually become a liability for the HSA.

The FTAA as “free trade”

The FTAA project had permitted the unification of social forces, which resulted in the formation of the HSA and later the Continental Campaign (Escribano, 2004). However, as discussed in previous chapters, the negotiation format of this trade project suffered considerable modifications due to the lack of political consensus within the region on a multilateral set of rules and obligations to open and regulate hemispheric trade relations. After the Miami FTAA ministerial meeting in 2003, the original version of the FTAA was changed to an FTAA-light scheme. This meant that in addition to the governmental pursuit of a minimum base of agreement for a scaled down FTAA-light commitment, the most sensitive issues of the trade agenda were also negotiated bilaterally through trade agreements: the DR-CAFTA and BFTAs between the U.S. and Peru, and Colombia and Ecuador. Likewise, the negotiation dynamics of these processes were also tied to the ongoing development of simultaneous negotiations at the WTO, and in the EU-MERCOSUR process. This diversification of simultaneous trade processes created the need to further

readapt the ways in which the HSA framed its critique of the FTAA.

Berrón and Freire (2004: 300) from the HSA Secretariat argue that having so many fronts complicates things for the Continental Campaign against the FTAA. Raising any awareness amongst the general public about the FTAA had already been a considerable achievement. Highlighting the relation between the FTAA and other processes was much more challenging, considering the greater complexity that is introduced and the sense of distance of those other processes from the immediate realities of people. As these activists claim, 'it was considered important to 'broaden and consolidate a convergence of social coalitions on comprehensive and unifying focal points' (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 306). The FTAA frames that had prevailed during the early stages of the HSA and later during the peak of mobilisation of the campaign were no longer adequate to face this challenge. A new focus had to be found.

Following lengthy discussions within the HSA, it was decided that the notion of 'free trade' provided the new emphasis of the FTAA frame. In this, Aguilar (2004) explains that 'the HSA is leaving behind the FTAA and adopting 'free trade' as its main focus of mobilisation and struggle. We have broadened it to 'free trade', and not exclusively restricted it to the FTAA. There was a very long discussion on this issue within the HSA. Now the struggle is also against WTO, BFTAs, the effects of NAFTA and the Chile-U.S. Agreement, foreign debt and militarization. This shift to free trade is concerned with the reality of the BFTAs. I share the view with some sectors of the HSA who believe that

there is a fundamental relation between the FTAA, WTO and BFTAs’.

The shift towards the notion of ‘free trade’ was meant to re-energise the declining levels of mobilisation that were taking place once the original FTAA process ceased to be the main driving force for the mobilisation of continental social forces critical to neo-liberalism (Berrón, 2006; Rodriguez, 2005). The rationale behind this decision lay in a strategy of semantic appropriation and subversion of this term. Governments often publicly defend their trade policies by appealing to the beneficial gains supposedly derived from ‘free trade’ policies in terms of economic growth, prosperity and development. Though increasingly less, this view of ‘free trade’ constitutes the ‘common sense’ of policy discussions and the mass media coverage. Given its positive overtones, the HSA set out to appropriate this widely disseminated term in order to subvert its accepted meaning.

Through the discursive re-signification of ‘free trade’, the HSA attempted to create an underlying inter-subjective basis of meaning that could embrace the many simultaneous trade liberalisation processes under a common and encompassing critique. The FTAA, BFTAs, WTO and EU-MERCOSUR processes would become different manifestations of the same phenomenon.

Following lengthy discussion within the HSA, the new FTAA frame was finally available at the Hemispheric Meeting of 2004 (Berrón and Freire, 2004: 299). In a speech at a plenary session at this meeting in Havana, Héctor de la Cueva

from REMALC claimed that:

The HSA was created with the focus on the struggle against the FTAA. Maintaining this narrow focus has been convenient in order to ensure the unity of such a broad, diverse and delicate coalition. However, as it was demonstrated at the Cancún WTO summit, there is an evident **overlap** between the agendas, issues, alliances and actors. The **WTO** is a more global setting for dispute on **'free trade'** that is linked to the **regional and bilateral** initiatives used in the competition among large corporations. The HSA participated in the battle at Cancún, although its role there was rather timid. In the case of the **bilateral and sub-regional** free trade agreements, the HSA has so far had a little response, despite the obvious link between these initiatives and the FTAA project. Certainly, the HSA cannot jump from one issue to the next, expecting to respond to every bilateral negotiation that takes place. This is something that has to be done by the corresponding local and sub-regional social forces. Nevertheless, it is also true that not acting upon these new bilateral and global scenarios weakens the ultimate objective of the struggle against the FTAA. **It is no longer possible to continue with a strategy of resistance focused exclusively on the FTAA project, without also addressing the other parallel and linked scenarios.** It is also the case that it is not possible to address everything simultaneously. The focus [of the campaign] should remain on stopping the FTAA, but it is necessary to adopt a strategy that will also enable us to take part in other scenarios. (...) The challenge is to undertake a global campaign against **'free trade'**, forming coalitions with all the international forces beyond the Americas ... to demonstrate that no agreement based on this kind of [**'free trade'**] model can be beneficial. This campaign would not be limited to one particular agreement, but it would rather address the fundamental implications behind **'free trade'**. (...) This requires greater coordination between the agendas of anti-neoliberal social movements from around the continent. One of the main problems that we face in the majority of the countries is the lack of connection, practically the divorce in many cases, which exists between the global and national agendas. It is necessary to place the struggle against **'free trade'** (namely, the WTO, FTAA and the Bilateral Free Trade Agreements) at the centre of the specific popular struggles taking place against privatisations, the defence of water, small agricultural interests, labour rights, and others' (De la Cueva, 2004; my translation. Emphasis added).

The FTAA frame as "free trade" does not break away from the previous frames. Rather, it builds on them, expanding its scope in order to mobilise opposition to the other trade processes. The previous focus on the U.S. government as a force of imperial domination in the region became limited to accommodate processes where this government was either absent, as in the EU-MERCOSUR negotiations, or simply less influential than in the Western Hemisphere, as in

the WTO process. Albeit less prevalent, the emphasis on the U.S. as an imperial force has not been altogether abandoned. The following excerpts from the final declaration of the IV Hemispheric Meeting in Havana show the cumulative layers of meaning associated with the FTAA as derived from its earlier formulations:

In spite of the resistance demonstrated by our peoples and the social destruction caused everywhere by **'free trade'**, we are gathered here again because the governments from the hemisphere – with some honourable exceptions – persist in their commitment to negotiate the FTAA (...). The United States government is trying to impose bilateral and sub regional treaties and mega projects, such as the **free trade agreements** between the United States and Central America and with the Andean region – with the exception of Venezuela. To prevent the advance of these projects and treaties is also to prevent the advance of the FTAA (...) The **Empire** does not rest. The plague of the wrongly called **'free trade'** – the emblem of a neo-liberal globalisation that seeks to expose our countries to indiscriminate plundering and denies their **right to development** – expands everywhere adopting all possible forms. (...) The most delicate scenario that we are facing is in Central America, the Caribbean and the Andean region. Having failed to advance the original FTAA project, the **United States** immediately shifted its strategy to advance its agenda through the negotiation of **bilateral and sub-regional free trade agreements** (Hemispheric Meeting, 2005a; my translation. Emphasis added).

The FTAA as “free trade” was a response to the diversification of trade processes. The bargaining leverage of governments in one negotiation process is affected by the outcomes and expectations of the other processes in which they are simultaneously involved. This meant that, in order to prevent any one of these processes from succeeding in progressing the most sensitive issues of the neo-liberal trade agenda, the HSA also had to mobilise against the other simultaneous processes.

The tactical effort to devise a more encompassing FTAA frame that enabled the

incorporation of other processes exposed some of the inherited limitations of the earlier framing strategies. When the FTAA project had ceased to be the main integration project driving the dynamics of hemispheric integration, the HSA lost the mobilising instrument that it had so painstakingly created. In terms of frames, the discursive shift to 'free trade' did not have the same effect as the somewhat clearer U.S. imperialist FTAA. This is particularly noticeable in reference to the WTO and the EU-MERCOSUR processes. Moreover, the signing of BFTAs between the U.S. and Chile, Peru, Colombia, Central America and the Dominican Republic also evidences the limitations of this frame in mobilising opposition to the trade agenda that was originally part of the FTAA project.

As previously suggested, the reason for this lies in the fact that opposition was not mobilised on the basis of a reflection on policy alternatives to neo-liberal trade integration, regardless of what format this integration may adopt. Priority was instead given to the mobilisation of the largest possible number of social actors in the campaign in order to ensure that the balance of power against the FTAA process could be attained. The concept of "free trade" was simply too abstract without the necessary reflection on alternatives.

Conclusion

In this chapter it was argued that the HSA engaged in a strategy of mobilisation

by framing the FTAA project as an antagonistic *other*. Three frames were introduced and analysed in terms of their appeal to values of justice, the sources of responsibility behind a given issue or situation that was deemed problematic, and the related proposed action that follows to revert that situation. Differences between the three frames that were identified related to the new challenges faced by the HSA for the building of alternatives to the FTAA, in light of the changing political opportunities in the hemisphere.

It was argued that the original emphasis on a critique of the 'FTAA as an undemocratic and unsustainable model of development' was a good start that promised a productive reflection on alternatives to the project. Nevertheless, as explained in more detail in previous chapters, this frame failed to mobilise a sufficiently strong opposition to the FTAA.

The framing of the 'FTAA as project of American Imperialism' helped to personify an otherwise complex and less graspable process. This frame could more easily ensure greater resonance among the critical sectors of the public opinion in the Americas, and especially among the social movements that were involved in the Continental Campaign against the FTAA. The alignment with the government of Cuba, and later of Venezuela, significantly contributed to changing the tone of the discursive construction of the FTAA. Since at this point the priority was to derail the FTAA process, the FTAA frame that was employed tried to increase the polarisation of public opinion. This frame was successful in building such opposition, leading to the halting of the FTAA

process in 2005 at the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas (see chapter 1 for details). However, this framing strategy proved to be a double-edge sword.

When the possibility of the BFTAs became a reality, continental opposition to their agenda was less successful. This was the moment at which a deeper debate on policy alternatives to neo-liberalism was most needed. The appeal to an abstract discourse of “free trade” replaced the visible face of U.S. imperialism without successfully installing the content necessary to fill this void.

The chapter showed the the ways in which the dominant FTAA frames favour mobilisation of opposition but not a reflection on alternatives. The cause of advancing alternatives could have been improved if the framing of the FTAA had placed greater emphasis on discussing the policy alternatives to this project’s agenda.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the efforts of the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA) to construct political alternatives to the FTAA project. It was argued that the HSA was only partially successful in this venture.

One of the main achievements of the HSA has been the articulation of the main social forces in the continent critical of neo-liberalism in a consensus building process for the construction of alternatives of development for the region. Such varied social forces as trade union organisations, development NGOs and grassroots social movements came together in the HSA united by a shared concern on the FTAA project. Throughout time this fruitful encounter led to the production of the *Alternatives for the Americas* policy documents. Albeit incipient, these documents constituted a valuable political resource in so far as it embodied the common aspirations of different social sectors in the collective pursuit of concrete alternatives to neo-liberal integration.

Another important victory of the HSA is the greater transparency obtained in the FTAA negotiation process with the public release the draft text of the FTAA resulting from the concerted pressure exerted on the governments. Likewise, in conjunction with the Continental Campaign against the FTAA, the HSA launched a hemispheric-wide popular consultation on this trade agreement initiative. Although not successful in all countries, the organisation of popular

consultations permitted the HSA to hold a public debate to inform citizens about the meaning and implications of the FTAA agenda. This debate had been denied by official FTAA process. Despite their limitations, these consultations expanded the rights of the public to information about and participation in political matters with such enormous social implications as the implementation of an FTAA. In this respect, the HSA acted as a democratising force in the continent.

Moreover, the HSA was also capable of generating optimism and confidence amongst the social movements in the continent that their struggle against the FTAA would be victorious. This was crucial in order to ensure that continental resistance to the FTAA could be sustained, therein avoiding the tendency to demobilisation that often characterises extended transnational campaigns. This was carried out by successfully exploiting politically the divisions amongst governments in their recurrently failed attempts to arrive at a consensus to move the neo-liberal trade agenda forwards. Exposing the weaknesses of these governments evidenced their limits to create hegemonic order in face of the counter-hegemonic challenges posed by social forces such as the HSA. This worked relatively well until the original FTAA negotiation format was changed at the Ministerial meeting in 2003.

The opportunities created by the HSA for the construction of political alternatives in the region to the FTAA project were also limited by a series of shortcomings which hindered the remarkable advancement attained by this

coalition. This limitation stemmed from the gradual decrease in the leadership of the HSA's capacity to act as a hemispheric force in the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism in light of the influence acquired in the region by the government of Venezuela with its initiative to create a *Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas* (ALBA). The agenda of ALBA rests on the bases of consensus that the HSA had painstakingly articulated at the grassroots hemispheric level. However, once appropriated by president Chávez as a governmental initiative, ALBA came to be regarded as the beacon of counter-hegemonic models of integration opposed to the neo-liberal FTAA project (Berrón, 2005).

This reduced the political margins available to the HSA to continue to drive forward a process of bottom up coalition-building independently of governmental control. The concern about the autonomy of the HSA is not only limited to the case of Venezuela. Other governments in the region with whom the HSA shares some political affinity include Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba, Bolivia and recently Ecuador and Nicaragua. Since in politics means and ends can never be separated, the challenge of the HSA remains to make the construction of alternatives to neo-liberalism an inclusive and democratic process. In this regard, the HSA faces the central challenge of finding new ways of relating to allied governments and political parties, as a way of participating in the construction of alternatives without compromising its cherished autonomy. The type of social movements that will prevail in the future will depend on how these issues are resolved. Likewise, the prospect of truly

democratic alternatives to neo-liberalism is also dependent on this.

Furthermore, the unity reached by the HSA in its capacity to inspire confidence about their success in struggling against the FTAA project was only noticeable until the original FTAA negotiation format was changed at the Ministerial meeting in 2003. In this meeting, governments agreed to a scaled down FTAA-light format in an attempt to prevent the failure of the negotiations process. The adoption of an FTAA-light format meant that governments transferred the most divisive issues in the trade agenda to the bilateral track and also to the WTO negotiations. This led to the diversification of the trade negotiation processes in the Americas with the simultaneous advance of the DR-CAFTA, the FTAs between the U.S. and Andean countries, and the FTAA-light. The complexity added by these concurrent trade processes put a greater strain on the capacity of the HSA to act as an hemispheric force for the mobilisation of opposition to neo-liberalism. It was comparatively easier to mobilise a continental opposition to the FTAA project when all the countries were involved in a single hemispheric trade process. The completion of these negotiations and signing of the FTAs demonstrated the limited ability of the HSA to steer resistance to these initiatives when pursued bilaterally.

Finally, the HSA was also limited in its capacity to frame the FTAA in ideologically productive ways that could advance further the building of political alternatives to neo-liberalism. The dominant FTAA frames employed by the HSA favoured the mobilisation of opposition to the FTAA while

discouraging a policy-oriented reflection over the implications of this hemispheric project and its possible alternatives.

Trade agreements like the FTAA can serve as focal points for the convergence of different social forces in the search for other understandings of development, expanded notions of democratic rights, the environmental and social justice. The experience of the HSA in the context of the Continental Campaign shows that it is too easy to make up for the absence of this kind of debate by portraying the FTAA simply as a form of American imperialism, conveniently invoking nationalist sentiments and other populist rhetorical devices. Inflammatory declamations of imperialism and American dominance have certainly been functional to the objective of raising opposition to the FTAA. However, they also became increasingly a liability as the trade integration agenda in the hemisphere was diversified through the simultaneous negotiations of the FTAA, BFTAs, the WTO and the EU-MERCOSUR processes. At this point rhetorical denunciation of imperialism became insufficient to address the extent of the challenge faced by the HSA with the negotiation and signing of others trade agreements by the region's governments. The cause of advancing alternatives to neo-liberalism could have been improved if the framing of the FTAA had placed as much emphasis on visualising possible avenues along which to continue building concrete policy alternatives as it did on denunciation.

Contributions of the thesis

The study of the HSA from the perspective of the political process tradition of social movement theory challenges realist, liberal and critical theorizations of state strategies for regional integration such as the FTAA process.

Firstly, a bottom-up study of transnational social movement resistance to the FTAA process exposes the limitations of realist perspectives of regional integration. In the case of Latin America, it shows the simplistic assumptions of 'national interest' and democratic representation that underpin this kind of state-centric perspective. The study of the HSA and the FTAA process evidences precisely that the mobilisation of social forces seeks to undermine the legitimate authority of governments to represent people's interests in trade integration processes. Likewise, the underlying struggles for deeper and more significant forms of democratic control within and across countries renders abstracted notions of 'national interest' analytically limiting and politically questionable. Transnational social movement coalitions undermine the separation of realist accounts between the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres of politics. The study of the HSA demonstrates that in the case of the Americas it is no longer possible to understand the nature of domestic politics concerning issues of trade and development independently from the politics of transnational coalition building at the hemispheric level. Domestic and hemispheric dimensions have been interlaced in the construction of political alternatives to neo-liberal regional integration.

Secondly, the study of the HSA also challenges the institutionalist accounts of the FTAA process advanced by liberal theories of regional integration. Although liberal theory assumes a pluralist understanding of politics, accounts of the FTAA process from this perspective are inadequate to address the complex dynamics of grassroots mobilisation throughout the continent. The reason for this is that liberal accounts have focused primarily on the few civil society organisations that have sought to influence the FTAA process by participating in official institutional mechanisms of consultation created by governments at the hemispheric and national levels. Nevertheless, most of the civil society activism directed at the FTAA process has not been mediated through such formal institutional mechanisms.

As the late period of the HSA shows, most social movements and some NGOs (perhaps less the trade unions) have pursued other avenues to influence their governments on the FTAA process. Some of these strategies include street protests, hemispheric summits, popular education initiatives and the organisation of plebiscites in which people could have a saying with regards the FTAA project. Since none of these 'non-institutional' or 'informal' ways of engaging with the FTAA process are part of the formal institutional architecture of the hemispheric process, they have not been addressed by liberal accounts. The political process approach to the HSA outlined in this thesis permitted to bring in the bottom-up social responses articulated by the HSA into the hemispheric politics of the FTAA process.

Thirdly, the political process framework used for the analysis of the HSA makes a contribution to the understanding of the agency of counter-hegemonic social forces. Neo-Gramscian perspectives have not adequately addressed the question of agency in their analyses of the emerging transnational forms of resistance to neo-liberalism. Their emphasis rely heavily on structural explanations of the changing features of global capitalism and simply stating the opportunities that these changes create for the resistance and transformation of the system by the global activism of marginalised social sectors. Likewise, in the specific case of the FTAA, much of the reflection from critical perspectives has centred on the denunciation of the dangers posed by this trade integration project on the most vulnerable social sectors of the continent. This kind of analysis does not reflect on the role of social movements in contesting the FTAA project and in creating its alternatives. Instead, they portray the FTAA process as something 'external' to the social forces, which they must oppose and resist. As a result of this, the social forces are not regarded as actors capable of conditioning the political dynamics of the hemispheric process, but rather as reactions to it. In light of this, the analysis of the HSA from a political process approach contributed to explore the contingencies and challenges of social movements in their efforts to create broad-based coalitions across national borders.

Despite the value of a political process approach for the analysis of the HSA in the Americas, there are some aspects of this process that are not addressed

adequately by this theory. In particular, its instrumental view of politics becomes problematic in order to understand the dynamics of such a diverse coalition like the HSA whose identity and composition have been subject to constant construction and change. It is limiting to address the HSA from a purely utilitarian perspective. The HSA's interactions with the political opportunities created in the hemispheric context in the pursuit of alternatives to the FTAA has also transformed some of the initial identities, perceptions and consensus that were the original defining features of this coalition. The alignment of the founding HSA core organisations with other social forces (social movements and governments) in the framework of the Continental Campaign has surely redefined some of the initial perceptions and attitudes of this coalition. In this regard, a theoretical perspective that facilitates the assessment of the possibilities and limitations of the HSA in its construction of alternatives can also obscure the complex dynamics of identity formation underlying this coalition.

The analysis of the HSA prioritised the hemispheric level of coalition building. This has come at the expense of a deeper exploration of the national and sub-regional levels. Much more can be said about the particular conditions in each country and/or sub-region which have facilitated or inhibited the HSA's efforts to build political alternatives to the FTAA through its engagement with other forces at the hemispheric level. The same factors associated with the rise and development of the HSA that were analysed at the hemispheric level can also be explored in detail at the local levels to reveal their differences and

complementarities: politics of multi-sectoral alignments, access to political institutions, divisions of the elites, and framing practices.

The case of the HSA has wider implications for the study of other transnational coalitions. Clearly, some of its characteristics could not be found elsewhere and are therefore specific to the context of the Americas and Latin America in particular. Nevertheless, other of its features can illuminate similar experiences of transnational activism in other parts of the world.

One of such features refers to the search for what constitutes political 'power' and how is it built and exercised when concerning a broad based coalition of social forces. That is, what is the power of a social movement coalition and how is it created and used? There is a debate in the HSA on whether power is built 'top-down' with the support of allied governments in the region, or 'bottom-up' through the construction of solid bases at the grassroots level autonomously from governments. In Latin America this debate has become central since many of the Left governments have emerged from a long history of social movement activism. It is not necessarily clear in many cases what are the distinctions between governments and social movements (e.g., Bolivia and Venezuela). However, to some extent this debate over the nature of power can also be found in a different variant in the World Social Forum. There has been a long discussion among the forum organisers of whether the forum should aspire to issue a final declaration document containing the conclusions and final positions of each forum, or if it should continue being an open space for the

exchange of ideas. The latter view can be identified with the 'bottom-up' position in the debate over the nature of power.

Central to these concerns over the nature of power is the issue of democracy. How to organise and represent the interests of different social actors mobilised by common concerns in the absence of formal systems of representation. There are no obvious answers to this. However, it can be said that the HSA constitutes a social laboratory for the emergence of new forms of deliberative democracy. Social movements, NGOs and trade unions have been able to negotiate their differences and find spaces of convergence in order to ensure their continuity as an effective hemispheric coalition while defining a common vision and agenda. This has required undergoing a certain transformation at the level of political culture in favour of more open and democratic values. To give an example, it is less than obvious that trade unionists, activists from rural movements, indigenous movements and NGO members specialised in trade negotiations have been able to accommodate each others differences to find common grounds. The experience of the HSA in this respect can be valuable to explore other broad-based coalitions.

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ANNEX:

Social organisations part of the main HSA national chapters and affiliated regional networks

Common Frontiers:

APG Americas Policy Group of Canadian Council for International Cooperation
CAW Canadian Auto Workers
Canadian Consortium for International Social Development
CELA Canadian Environmental Law Association
CFS Canadian Federation of Students
CLC Canadian Labour Congress
CUPE Canadian Union of Public Employees
CEP Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada
Council of Canadians
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Maquila Solidarity Network
Oxfam Canada
Rights and Democracy
Sierra Club of Canada
SHF Steelworkers Humanity Fund
United Church of Canada - Latin American and Caribbean Division

Réseau Québécois sur l'Intégration Continentale (RQIC):

ACAMS Association canadienne des avocats du mouvement syndical
ADEESE (UQAM)
AEP et AECSP (polytechnique)
AGEPA
AGEUQAR et AEEESUQAR (UQAR)
AGEUQAT (UQAT)
AGEUQO (UQO)
AGEUQTR (UQTR)
Alternatives
Amnistie internationale - Section canadienne francophone
AQOCI Association québécoise des organisations de coopération internationale
CADEUL et AÉLIÉS (Laval)
CAP Monde (Vers une convergence pour l'avenir des peuples du monde)
Centrale des syndicats démocratiques (CSD)

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)
 Centre de femmes du pays de Maria-Chapdelaine
 Centre de femmes Mieux-Être de Jonquière
 Centre populaire de Roberval
 CERD-McGill Centre d'études sur les régions en développement
 CISO Centre international de solidarité ouvrière
 Comité d'environnement de Chicoutimi
 Comité des droits sociaux d'Alma
 Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)
 Conseil central de Montréal métropolitain (CSN-CCMM)
 Corporation de développement communautaire des Bois-Francs
 CQDE Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement
 CSN-CCMM Conseil central de Montréal
 CSQ Centrale des syndicats du Québec
 CUSO-Québec
 Développement et paix
 FAÉCUM (U de Montréal)
 FECQ Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec
 Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants (FCEE) Section Québec
 Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)
 FEUQ Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec
 FEUS et REMDUS (Sherbrooke)
 FIIQ Fédération des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec
 Forum Social Québec-Apalaches
 FTQ Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec
 GRIC-UQAM Groupe de recherche sur l'intégration continentale, Université de Québec à Montréal UQAM
 Ligue des droits et libertés
 MAGE-UQAC (UQAC)
 Mouvement d'éducation populaire et d'action communautaire du Québec (MÉPACQ)
 Regroupement d'éducation populaire d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (RÉPACT)
 Regroupement des organismes d'éducation autonome de la Mauricie (ROM)
 RQGE Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes
 Service budgétaire et communautaire d'Alma
 Service budgétaire et communautaire de Chicoutimi
 Service budgétaire populaire de St-Félicien
 Solidarité Nord-Sud des Bois-Francs
 SPGQ Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec
 SPQ Solidarité populaire Québec
 SSMU (McGill)
 Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec (SFPQ)
 Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ)
 Table des groupes populaires de la Côte-Nord.
 Table régionale des organismes volontaires d'éducation populaire (TROVEP)

Montréal
TROVEP Montréal

Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART):

AFL-CIO
Agricultural Missions, Inc.
Alliance for Democracy
American Friends Service Committee
American Lands Alliance
Campaign for Labor Rights
Center of Concern
Committee for New Priorities
Development GAP
Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean
Friends of the Earth – U.S.
Global Exchange
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Policy Studies, Global Economy Project
INTERCONNECT
International Labor Rights Fund
Kensington Welfare Rights Union
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mexico Solidarity Network
Orders of Friar Minor, Peace and Integrity of Creation Council-English
Speaking Council
Public Services International, Inter-American Regional Office
Resource Center of the Americas
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
United for a Fair Economy
United Methodist Women's Office for Economic Justice
U.S./Labor Education in the Americas Project
Witness for Peace
Women of Color Resource Center
Women's EDGE
Individuals:
Bruce Jay, Center for Labor Research and Studies, Florida International
University
Rob Scott, Economic Policy Institute

Rede Brasileira Pela Integração dos Povos (REBRIP):

ActionAid Brasil
AGAPAN
CDH Palmas
CEDEC
CEPIA Cidadania, Estudo, Pesquisa, Informação e Ação
Criola
CUT Central Única dos Trabalhadores - Nacional
CUT - Rio de Janeiro
DIEESE
FAOR Fórum da Amazônia Oriental
FASE Federação de Órgãos para a Assistência Social e Educacional
FNU- Federação Nacional dos Urbanitários da CUT
Fundação Vitória Amazônica
ICEM
IBASE - Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas
INESC - Instituto de Estudos Sócio-Econômicos
Instituto Terrazul
Jubileu Sul
Marcha Mundial das Mulheres
IPDH- Instituto Palmares de Direitos Humanos Amauri Queiroz
MST - Movimento dos Sem Terra Daniel da Silva
Nova Pesquisa e Assessoria em Educação
PACS - Instituto Políticas Alternativas para o Cone Sul
Ser Mulher

Red Mexicana de Acción contra el Libre Comercio (RMALC):

CIEPAC Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria
CILAS Centro de Investigación Laboral y Asesoría Sindical
CMDPDH Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
CODEHUTAB Comité de Derechos Humanos de Tabasco
DAS Desarrollo, Ambiente y Sociedad
DECA Equipo Pueblo
Factor X (Tijuana)
FAM Foro de Apoyo Mutuo Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
FAT Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
FDAL Frente por el Derecho a la Alimentación
Fronteras Comunes
GEA Grupo de Estudios Ambientales
MCD Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia
Secretariado Social Mexicano
Seminario Permanente de Estudios Chicanos y de Fronteras
SIPRO Servicios Informativos Procesados

Alianza Chilena para un Comercio Justo y Responsable (ACJR):

ROLAC Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe de Consumer's International

CONADECUS Corporación Nacional de Consumidores y Usuarios

Asociación de Inmigrantes por una Integración Lati-noamericana

Escuela de Ingeniería Comercial de la Universidad Bolivariana

Red Internacional de Género y Comercio – capítulo Chile

CODEPU Corporación de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo

IEP Programa de Economía Ecológica del Instituto de Ecología Política

Interamerican Regional Labor Organization (ORIT):

Argentina: Confederación General del Trabajo – CGT

Barbados: Barbados Workers Union Solidarity House – BWU

Brazil: Central Unica de Trabajadores – CUT; Confederación General de Trabajadores – CGT; Fuerza Sindical – FS

Canada: Canada Labour Congreso – CLC

Chile Central Unitaria de Trabajadores – CUT

Colombia: Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia – CTC

Costa Rica: Confederación de Trabajadores Rerum Novarum – CTRN

Dominica: WAWU

Ecuador: Confederación Ecuatoriana de Organizaciones – CEOSL

El Salvador: Central de Trabajadores Democráticos – CTD

United States: American Federation of Labour and Congress – AFL-CIO

Guatemala: Confederación de Unidad Sindical de Guatemala – CUSG

Guyana: Guyana Trades Union Congress – GTUC

Honduras: Confederación de Trabajadores de Honduras – CTH; Confederación Unica de Trabajadores de Honduras – CUTH

Jamaica: Jamaican Confederation of Trade Unions – JCTU

Japan: APRO

Mexico: Confederación de Trabajadores de México – CTM; Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros Campesinos – CROC; Unión Nacional de Trabajadores

Montserrat: Monserrat Allied Worker'Union – MAWU

Nicaragua: Confederación de Unificación Sindical – CUS; Central Sandinista de Trabajadores – CST

Panama: Confederación de Trabajadores de la Republica de Panama – CTRP; Convergencia Sindical – CS

Paraguay: Central Unica de Trabajadores – CUT

Peru: Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores – CUT

Dominican Republic: Confed. Nacional de Trabajadores Dominicana – CNTD; Confederación de Trabajadores Unitarios

Trinidad and Tobago: National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad – NATUC

Venezuela: Confederación Trabajadores de Venezuela – CTV

ORIT partner organisations:

Belize: National Trade Union Congress of Belize – NTUBC

Colombia: Central Unitaria de Trabajadores – CUT

El Salvador: Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadoreños – UNTS, Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos – UNOC; Coordinadora Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños – CSTS

Guatemala: Unidad Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala – UNSITRAGUA; Central de Trabajadores del Campo – CTC

Nicaragua: Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo – ATC

Suriname: Algemeen Verbond van Vakverenigingen de Moederbond – AVVS

Uruguay: Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores-Convención Nacional de Trabajadores – PIT-CNT.

Latin American Confederation of Peasant Organisations (CLOC):

Argentina: Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero (MOCASE); APENOC

Belize: Belize Association of Producers Organization (BAPO)

Bolivia: Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia "Bartolina Sisa" (FNMCB-BS); Confederación Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia (CSUTCB); Confederación Sindical de Colonizadores de Bolivia (CSCB/FTC)

Brazil: Movimento Sin Terra (MST); Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens MAB; Confederacao Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura (CONTAG); Articulacao Nacional de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais (ANMTR); Comissao Pastoral da Terra (CPT); Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores (MPA)

Chile: Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Indigenas (ANAMURI); El Surco; Confederación Nacional Sindical Campesina e Indígena de Chile (NEHUEN).

Colombia: Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos-Unidada y Reconstrucción (ANUC-UR); Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria (FENSUAGRO)

Costa Rica: Mesa Nacional Campesina

Cuba: Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (ANAP)

Ecuador: Federación Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas Indígenas y Negras del Ecuador (FENOCIN); Confederación Unica Nacional de Afiliados al Seguro Campesino (CONFEUNASSC).

Guatemala: Coordinadora Nacional Indígena y Campesina (CONIC).

Honduras: Consejo Coordinador de Organizaciones Campesinas de Honduras (COCOCH).

México: Central Campesina Cardenista; Coordinadora Nacional Plan de Ayala (CNPA); Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas (UNORCA); Central Independiente de Obreros Agrícolas y Campesinos (CIOAC).

Nicaragua: Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo, Nicaragua

Paraguay: Movimiento Campesino Paraguayo (MCP)

Peru: Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP)

Dominican Republic: Confederación Nacional de Mujeres del Campo (CONAMUCA)