Transnational Activism and National Movements in Latin America

Bridging the Divide

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Contents

6 Juggling Multiple Agendas
The Struggle of Trade Unions against National, Continental, and International Neoliberalism in Argentina[1]

Federico M. Rossi

INTRODUCTION

The economic dimension of neoliberal globalization implies an increased interdependence of national economies. The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), despite its failure, was the most ambitious international agreement promoted for the reduction or elimination of international trade barriers in the Americas. The anticipated economic and social consequences of the FTAA produced the mobilization of social movements and trade unions across the continent. After a decade of resistance to the FTAA, social movements and trade unions can—arguably—be considered partially responsible for the FTAA's failure in 2005. The role of trade unions in their resistance to this agreement opens an interesting theoretical question about how the transnational participation of domestic organizations affects their activism on the national scale (cf. Rossi 2008; Silva 2010). One could reason that the success of labor movements in Latin America could have been the result of trade unions' scale shift toward the transnational level of action. Moreover, the internationalist rhetoric of some labor movements might lead us to interpret their participation in this continent-wide campaign against the FTAA as an observable result of the increased cosmopolitanism of Latin American unions' leadership.[2]

In this chapter, I will show how these expectations are not met by the case of Argentina. The purpose of this chapter is to narrate and analyze how an important union organizes its action across multiple levels, and how these levels do or do not influence each other. In order to do so, I will analyze the process of coordination in Argentina that occurred in resistance to the FTAA and its aftermath from 2002 to 2010. This will be done through the study of the role played by the main national coalition created for precisely this resistance and, in particular, through analysis of the role played by the central actor in this coalition: the Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA, Argentine Workers Union). I will show how the CTA has participated in national, continental, and international resistance to neoliberalism and provide an explanation for the "parallel agendas" that it employed on these different levels for almost a decade.

The CTA has been a very important actor in the resistance to neoliberal reforms on the national level. At the same time, it also participated in the main

continental campaign against the FTAA. However, despite the coincidence of these activities, the two agendas simply ran parallel to each other, and the CTA's transnational activism did not have any significant influence on their domestic strategies. In other words—as I will show in this chapter—despite the fact that this trade union actively participated in the continental campaigns against neoliberal globalization, its participation in these campaigns was the result of a nationally focused agenda. It is worth noting that since the 1990s, the CTA's only program of action at the international level has been targeted at the Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur, Common Market of the South) and has not been affected significantly by the CTA's participation in the campaigns against the FTAA. The case of the CTA shows that "not all activism that is relevant to transnational politics takes place in the international arena. Relevant processes are found within domestic politics in the transitions from the domestic to the international level, and between states and within and around international institutions" (Tarrow 2005, 30). The goal of this chapter is to analyze the reasons for the CTA's application of three simultaneous parallel agendas in attempt to assess the influence of transnational activism on national contentious actors during the period of resistance to neoliberalism in Latin America. Moreover, I will show how, despite the multiplicity of these agendas, they did not redefine the CTA's domestically centered cognitive frame. In brief, the CTA is a paradigmatic case of a national actor involved in transnational activism against neoliberalism operating with an exclusively domestic logic.

This chapter profits from some of the results of research done on the Autoconvocatoria No al ALCA, No a la Deuda, No a la Militarización y No a la Pobreza[3] (Self-Convocation Against the FTAA, Against Debt Payment, Against Militarization and Against Poverty) (Rossi 2006; Bidaseca and Rossi 2008) and is based on interviews conducted by the author in 2005 with the main members of the Autoconvocatoria, as well as the CTA representatives in it. In 2010, this research was expanded through interviews with former and then-current CTA secretaries of international relations, covering the 1992–2010 period. Additionally, the main documents produced by the CTA and the Autoconvocatoria about the FTAA, Mercosur, and continental neoliberal processes have also been used. Finally, the author carried out direct observations of activities and meetings of the Autoconvocatoria from 2004 to 2005 in Buenos Aires, as well as conducting ethnographic observations of protests, public gatherings, and private meetings during the Third People's Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CTA'S "MULTIPLE, PARALLEL AGENDAS" (1992–2002)

In 1992, the CTA was founded as a result of the efforts of labor unions that had rejected the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT, General Confederation of Labor) agreements with the Carlos Menem administration

(1989–1999). The CGT had adopted a strategy of self-preservation that led to acceptance of and, in many cases, support of the government's neoliberal reforms (Etchemendy 2001; Murillo 2001). The CTA has as its core constituency the main victims of neoliberal reforms: state workers, teachers, and the unemployed. This particularity of the CTA fostered a movement-style trade unionism that has promoted and organized some of the most important national mobilizations against neoliberalism in Argentina. Another particularity of the CTA is that it mixes corporatist and territorial logics, affiliation of national unions, grassroots factory commissions, and neighborhood associations.[4] In other words, the CTA emerged as a consequence of the joint efforts of those social sectors worst hit by national neoliberal reforms.

Despite the fact that the CTA is a fundamentally domestic actor, it does not neglect the international context: the Secretariat of International Relations has existed since 1992 and has been an active section of the union. While interaction with some non-Argentinean trade unions has been promoted in order to gain political or economic support for the CTA's projects, the main arena of international action has been in the Foro Consultivo Económico-Social (Socio-Economic Consultative Forum) of Mercosur.[5] In 1996, the CTA was accepted as a member of the Coordinadora de Centrales Sindicales del Cono Sur (CCSCS, Coordinating Committee of Southern Cone Trade Unions), thanks to the support of the Brazilian Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT, Unified Workers Confederation) and notwithstanding the disapproval of the CGT.

During the redemocratization period in Argentina, the CCSCS has been the main umbrella organization for Southern Cone unions and has become the most important coordinator of the role played by unions in Mercosur negotiations (Badaró 2002; Portela de Castro 2007). The CCSCS has become a very stable arena for regional action for the CTA and other unions because Mercosur has been so important to their agendas: "Mercosur was proposed as a future common market, and not merely as the creation of a free trade area, [which] gave labor organizations a horizon of many years of negotiations on delicate issues such as labor mobility, a process they felt they could not be excluded from" (von Bülow 2010, 60).

Following the 1994 Summit of the Americas in Miami, all the presidents of the continent, with the exception of Cuba, got together for the first time to begin a negotiation process for the creation of an FTAA modeled on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The labor unions and movements saw both the goals and the process of implementation of FTAA as flawed. They considered NAFTA to have had negative consequences for the industrial and agricultural workers in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. In addition, the implementation of the FTAA was designed as a closed process, coordinated through the presidential summits set up by the Organization of American States.[6] In order to counterbalance the state-centered FTAA negotiations, trade unions increased their coordination toward the creation of a common strategy against the FTAA, with the

goals of preventing social consequences like those incurred by NAFTA and getting their voices included in the FTAA negotiations (Korzeniewicz and Smith 2004).

THE STRUGGLES AGAINST THE FTAA (2002–2005)

For the CTA and other domestic actors, the FTAA represented a project of U.S. imperialism that would reduce the national autonomy of Argentina and therefore needed to be resisted. At the same time, it was considered that Mercosur should be promoted and improved because it was seen as a South American counterbalance to the perceived advancement of U.S. interests over the whole continent. A CTA document argued as follows:

> At the moment, the FTAA presents itself to us as the US's strategy to cover the whole of the American continent, to establish their hegemony in this vast territory and avoid any possible [resistance] from us . . . for this reason, one of our main action-fronts is to struggle against the FTAA. This, we believe, must be done by starting from a strong commitment to the Mercosur countries. Our goal is to consolidate this regional space . . . and prioritize policies of industrialization, complementing our economies and above all, harmonizing the interests of the workers [in the continent].[7]

In other words, the CTA used an anti-imperialist and nationalist master frame to ground their analysis of Mercosur as an alternative to the FTAA (cf. also Arceo 2003). This rejection of the FTAA was shared by other unions in the Mercosur bloc,[8] as well as by others in the Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (ORIT, Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers).[9] Due to the exclusion of trade unions from the Second Summit of the Americas (1998, Santiago de Chile), ORIT decided to organize the First People's Summit to pressure states to include a social agenda in the FTAA negotiations.[10] During the Third Summit of the Americas (2001, Quebec), mobilizations by the alter-globalization movement were so massive that the official meeting failed to achieve its goals, showing ORIT the need to incorporate social movement organizations (SMOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the campaign. This new understanding led to the creation of the Alianza Social Continental (ASC, Hemispheric Social Alliance, henceforth to be referred to as ASC/HSA) as a space to integrate non-ORIT unions and social organizations in a regional campaign against the FTAA.

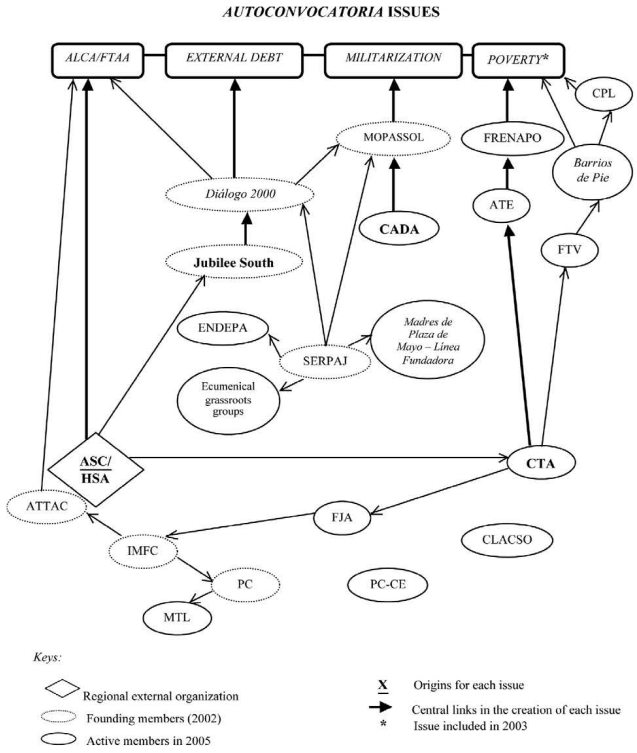
Meanwhile, at the domestic level, Argentina had been going through a cycle of protest since 1997, the years 2001–2002 being one of the peaks (Schuster et al. 2006; Herrera 2008). Indeed, the intensity of the social unrest at this time led to the resignation of President Fernando De la Rúa (1999–

2001) in December 2001. Though the CTA was a very important national contentious actor—mostly representing state workers and teachers but also some of the *piqueteros* (unemployed workers) SMOs—it did not play crucial role in the December 2001 crisis. During this period, the CTA was fully concentrated on the organization of the Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza (FRENAPO, National Front Against Poverty) referendum to put pressure on De la Rúa for the application of a "universal citizenship wage" that they believed could help to alleviate poverty and massive unemployment. The FRENAPO referendum was organized for December 15–17, with a turnout of 2,700,000 voters. However, the CTA had no time to present their results to De la Rúa, because after a week of urban food riots, spontaneous *cacerolazos* (saucepan-banging protests) emerged on December 19–20 to force the fall of the administration, which actually happened immediately afterward. Within this context of social unrest, a new movement of neighborhood and popular assemblies was created, calling for a total overhaul of the political elite (Rossi 2005).

The Anti-Imperialist Coalition: International Antagonists with a Domestic Agenda

In this context of increased national and continental contention, the coalition Autoconvocatoria No al ALCA, No a la Deuda, No a la Militarización y No a la Pobreza was created by combining several networks that had emerged out of the popular antiestablishment spirit of self-organization that dominated the 2001–2002 crisis. Between 2002 and 2005, this coalition was composed of some of the main SMOs of the human rights movement, the *piqueteros* movement, the cooperatives' movement; some Communist Party–related political, social, and academic organizations; Christian-based NGOs; and the CTA. In particular, the Autoconvocatoria was founded in 2002 by Jubilee South and the Campaña por la Desmilitarización de las Américas (CADA, Campaign for the Demilitarization of the Americas). Jubilee South was founded in 1999 as a division of Jubilee 2000 (created in 1997), which is the worldwide Catholic campaign for debt relief to the poorest countries. Due to differing opinions within Jubilee 2000 on what was the best way to solve debt problems, Jubilee South emerged as a new organization that considered debt to be "illegitimate and immoral" (Rivkin 2008).[11] CADA is a coalition created in 2002 by Latin American Catholic and Protestant SMOs with the aim of rejecting attempts by the United States to open new military bases in South America. Subsequently, CADA expanded its goals to include advocating the closure of all U.S. military bases in Latin America. In 2003, the CTA joined the Autoconvocatoria adding the FRENAPO network to the coalition (Bidaseca and Rossi 2008, 54–58).

The Autoconvocatoria integrated the main claims of three regional campaigns and one national coalition, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. Jubilee South introduced the agenda of nonpayment of the external debt; CADA introduced



a

Acronyms:

ASC/HSA: Alianza Social Continental/Hemispheric Social Alliance
ATE: Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado (union)
ATTAC: Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizens' Action (alter-globalization SMO)
CADA: Campaña por la Desmilitarización de las Américas
CLACSO: Consejo Latinoamericano en Ciencias Sociales (research institution)
CPL: Corriente Patria Libre (political party)
CTA: Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina
ENDEPA: Equipo Nacional de Pastoral Aborigen (Catholic SMO)
FJA: Federación Judicial Argentina (union)
FRENAPO: Frente Nacional contra la Pobreza
FTV: Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat (*piqueteros* SMO)
IMFC: Instituto Movilizador de Fondos Cooperativos (cooperatives association)
MOPASSOL: Movimiento por la Paz, la Soberanía y la Solidaridad entre los Pueblos (Catholic SMO)
MTL: Movimiento Territorial Liberación (piqueteros SMO)
PC: Communist Party
PC-CE: Communist Party – Congreso Extraordinario
SERPAJ: Servicio de Paz y Justicia (human rights SMO)

b

Figure 6.1a and b Networks of Actors that Established the Issues of the Autonconvocatoria No al ALCA, No a la Deuda, No a la Militarización, and No a la Pobreza, 2002–2005

Sources: Fieldwork observation and interviews (March–July 2005). Reproduced from Bidaseca and Rossi (2008, 52).

the U.S. militarization of the region; the ASC/HSA, the FTAA; and the CTA, poverty alleviation and "universal citizenship wage."

The Autoconvocatoria was originally created as an independent coalition, and as it was created before the ASC/HSA came to Argentina, it had to integrate actors with different priorities from one another, so it developed the four previous issues as its goals.[12] However, after the Autoconvocatoria became designated as the official ASC/HSA branch for Argentina in 2003, the FTAA became their predominant focus. After this point, the Autoconvocatoria followed the ASC/HSA agenda, despite the fact that none of its members were affiliated with the ASC/HSA's umbrella organization, ORIT. ORIT was considered by the CTA to be a Pan-Americanist institution with U.S. sympathies, which had supported the U.S. Department of State's policies during the Cold War, and as the CTA took a Latin Americanist, anti-imperialist stance, it saw ORIT as an organization that was opposed to its goals. The relationship between the CTA and the CIOSL/ICFTU-ORIT was only indirect and was based on the participation of some CTA-affiliated unions in the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, and the International Metalworkers Federation. Notwithstanding their differences with the ORIT, the CTA agreed to participate in the ASC/HSA campaign because of international and domestic realignments. On the international level, there were significant changes to ORIT, as the union that had historically controlled ORIT, the American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations, changed its position regarding U.S. foreign policy on Latin America. Simultaneously, the main regional ally of the CTA, the CUT of Brazil, became a member of ORIT and soon a very influential actor within the organization, making some important changes to its approach to some crucial topics (Wachendorfer 2007; van Bülow 2009). Domestically, the ASC/HSA's continental campaign was adopted by the CTA because of the opportunity it represented for the General Secretariat to coordinate its local political agenda with the national government during Néstor Kirchner's presidency (2003–2007). Kirchner's policy on the FTAA was based on presenting Mercosur and Latin America's political and economic integration as an alternative to the FTAA because the latter was perceived as an unfavorable trade agreement that would only benefit the United States and Canada. The increased coordination with the Kirchner government was sustained despite the refusal of the CTA to join ORIT and despite a climate of internal tension in the CTA surrounding its stance on the Kirchner administration.

The CTA began to participate in the Autoconvocatoria in 2003 and was actively involved in the coordination of a national referendum promoted by the ASC/HSA to resist the FTAA and the opening of U.S. military bases in South America. The first referendum was organized by the Autoconvocatoria and took place on November 26–27, 2003. The referendum was part of an ASC/HSA strategy and reproduced the logic of the 2001 FRENAPO experience and another event similar to the referendum, which had been

set up by the ASC/HSA in Brazil in 2000. The population was asked about their opinions on the FTAA process, the payment of the external debt, and the establishment of U.S. military bases in Latin America. It was a success, with 2,500,000 people responding and spurring the mobilization of 20,000 activists. Though the FRENAPO network was crucial for the success of the referendum, the CTA did not participate formally in the referendum, due to internal conflicts that prevented their national authorities from reaching an agreement on the CTA's position on the link between the claims of the referendum and the Kirchner administration (Bidaseca and Rossi 2008, 71–73).

In 2004, a second referendum which integrated the issue of poverty was called. This referendum was not part of an ASC/HSA strategy but was a domestic decision made by the Autoconvocatoria, in an attempt by some internal groups to push the coalition toward the Kirchner government's position. The Autoconvocatoria was composed of some government supporters, such as part of CTA and the *piqueteros*' Barrios de Pie (Standing Neighborhoods); but it also had many other SMOs in the opposition, such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo–Línea Fundadora (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo–Founding Line), the Servicio de Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ, Peace and Justice Service), the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Citizens' Action (ATTAC) of Argentina, and so forth. As a result of this division, the referendum was not fully supported by all the Autoconvocatoria members and failed (Bidaseca and Rossi 2008, 76–79).

The Third People's Summit: Subordination of the International Agenda to Domestic Politics

In 2005 the Third People's Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina was organized in order to confront the official Fourth Summit of the Americas. This presidents' meeting was considered crucial because the FTAA agreement was to be signed in 2005. President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina openly rejected the FTAA. The Third People's Summit was a massive event, with around 12,000 activists involved, mostly from Argentina, but also with quite a few participants from Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The activities were organized at the same time as the Summit of the Americas with the aim of building a common declaration calling for the end of the FTAA and to voice the other three demands of the Autoconvocatoria platform.[13] After the People's Summit, a march was organized, which included several progovernment SMOs, such as the Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat (FTV, Federation of Workers for Land, Housing, and Habitat) and the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Association of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo). Another group composed of Trotskyist parties and the radical flank of the human rights movement organized their own Autoconvocatoria No a Bush (Self-Convocation against Bush), which called for a march against both summits. In addition, the local alter-globalization network

Figure 6.2a and b Poster for the Final March (left) and Poster for the People's Summit (right), November 1–4, 2005 (Mar del Plata, Argentina)

Source: Website of the Third People's Summit (http://www.cumbredelospueblos.org; accessed November 5, 2005).

Grupo Bristol prepared a concert with French musician Manu Chao. All of these domestic groups came together in the main march, which boasted around 40,000 people (Rossi 2006).

As can be seen in the two posters in Figure 6.2a and b, the main mobilization (Figure 6.2a, left) was called to defend "Latin American dignity," which can be interpreted as a nationalist anti-imperialist master frame. In the People's Summit poster (Figure 6.2b, right), this position is clearer: by using a modified version of the World Social Forum's motto, claiming "Another America Is Possible," and by focusing on their rejection of the visit of the president of the United States George W. Bush to Argentina, they take a clearly anti-imperialist stance. Finally, the People's Summit poster itemizes the goals of the Autoconvocatoria. The Autoconvocatoria and its campaigns were developed out of a national coalition that coordinated its actions continentally through the ASC/HSA, framing the conflicts in an anti-imperialist, nationalist rhetoric rooted in the left-Peronist tradition of the 1970s. Consequently, the main antagonist of the Autoconvocatoria was the United States and what were considered "its instruments of oppression," which included the FTAA (Bidaseca and Rossi 2008). The FTAA added a continental issue to the agendas of the CTA and other domestic Argentine actors, but it did not change their identities and

priorities. The CTA continued to define itself as a domestic actor, with the same main national and international agendas. In theoretical terms, the CTA's struggle against the FTAA shows us that even though a domestic actor may confront an international process, this fact does not necessarily mean that this actor is doing a scale shift to the international level. In order for such a scale shift to happen, the domestic actor must also develop a new cognitive frame (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005, 8). In other words, neither the CTA nor the other members of the Autoconvocatoria changed their domestically centered understandings of resistance struggles against neoliberalism, even though they had actively participated in the ASC/HSA campaign.[14]

Mercosur: The Stable International Agenda

The previous series of events—among others—allowed for the boycott of the FTAA program as promoted by the United States. However, despite the CTA's wide and active participation in the Autoconvocatoria and the Third People's Summit, its international relations agenda remained unaltered. During this same period, the CTA continued with its usual participation in the CCSCS, which was focused on the implementation of the Mercosur Working Plan for 2004–2006. The CCSCS wanted to expand the Mercosur integration process into a common market and for this purpose it participated in the Mercosur Summit of Ouro Preto (Brazil, 2004), though it had little impact on the outcome of this meeting. From 2004 to 2005, the CCSCS coalition of unions increased its participation in Mercosur negotiations, even creating a labor subgroup; however, it did not manage to achieve its main goal: the incorporation of social and labor issues into the Mercosur agenda. It was not until 2006 that the CCSCS managed to insert the question of employment creation into the Mercosur agenda (Portela de Castro 2007). The CTA followed its own path in its participation in the CCSCS, which was disconnected from its participation in the struggles against the FTAA.[15] The parallel agendas used by the CTA with regard to these two different types of regional integration processes, the FTAA and Mercosur, are quite distinct. One line of action is seen in the contentious politics and coalition building that dominated the CTA's activism in response to the FTAA negotiations—the CTA's aim there being to link domestic resistance against neoliberalism to the foreign policy of the Kirchner government. The second agenda, which was followed contemporaneously to the first one, is characterized by a routine diplomatic political style and was used in the CTA's longer involvement in the Mercosur process. Although the unions did not in fact manage to extend much influence over the government's Mercosur agenda, they did however manage to increase their participation in the long-term process of negotiations.

Contradictory as it might seem, while the CTA played an active role in supporting the ASC/HSA campaign promoted by ORIT, it was never a member of ORIT, and it rejected this regional organization. The CTA only participated in

the regional ASC/HSA campaign because it served its domestic interests. The CTA's commitment to its own, nationally focused agenda was reinforced in three ways. First, an increase in local political opportunities resulting from the acceleration of the cycle of protest during the collapse of the De la Rúa government pushed the CTA to expand its resistance to neoliberalism. However, its increased efforts against neoliberalism occurred without any change in its understanding of its focus and level of action. Second, the CTA's know-how in coordinating SMOs made participation in the ASC/HSA campaign possible. This know-how was a result of the experience of the national coalition FRENAPO in 2001. Third, the support of the General Secretariat of the CTA for the Kirchner government helped to build a campaign that was compatible with the Argentinean policy of backing Mercosur and rejecting the FTAA as if they were incompatible processes. As stated by the Adjunct of the Secretariat of International Relations (1992–2006): "[Since Kirchner's presidency,] even though we don't participate in the national Ministry of International Relations . . . the CTA's Secretariat [of International Relations] has been greatly absorbed into national topics. This is a period when international issues have been overshadowed by the national processes" (Eduardo Menajoski, interviewed December 2010). When interviewed in 2010, the Secretary of International Relations Adolfo Aguirre (2006–2010) summarized the issue by explaining that the CTA considered the ASC/HSA and the Autoconvocatoria as just two "tools" among many others available to achieve their main goal "of resisting the neoliberal offensive" in Argentina.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE STRUGGLES AGAINST THE FTAA (2005–2010)

From 2006 on—once the series of events described previously had taken place, and the U.S. agenda for the FTAA was considered by many to have failed—two alternative processes can be identified as defining the evolution of the CTA program. In the continental and international sphere, as a result of a reconfiguration of international trade union confederations that were adopting a post–Cold War schema, the CIOSL/ICFTU-ORIT was dissolved (Wachendorfer 2007).[16] This new schema encouraged the CTA leadership to decide to become a member of an international trade union confederation for the first time.[17] The CTA participation there increased their international relations activities, enriching the organization with sustained extra-Americas bilateral relationships with trade unions in France, Italy, Spain, South Africa, and South Korea.

In the national sphere, the increased internal tension produced by the alignment mentioned previously of the General Secretariat of the CTA with the Kirchner government created a conflict between the two main factions of the CTA. While General Secretary Hugo Yasky's faction supported the government, former general secretary Víctor de Gennaro's faction did not

and formed part of the opposition.[18] This conflict resolved itself in 2006 through the constitution of a mixed national leadership. A division of roles within the CTA's General Secretariat was agreed on, with the administration of the Secretariat of International Relations falling to the faction that did not support the government, thus increasingly detaching the CTA from state foreign policy. This mixed national leadership collapsed in 2010, causing the CTA to split completely.

The Consequences of the Domestic Alliance with the Government

The internal distribution of power in the CTA after 2006 led to the emergence of a Secretariat of International Relations that attempted *not* to follow state foreign policy. While this new position of the secretariat did not produce any important outcomes, the consequences of the CTA's previous domestic alliance with the government became clear.[19] In 2010, the conflict generated by the division in the CTA on the issue of cooperation with the government produced two secretary generals: Pablo Micheli (Víctor de Gennaro's faction) and Hugo Yasky. Both considered themselves to have won the internal elections of 2010, which led to the creation of two separate CTA organizations based on the position taken by each faction vis-à-vis the national government.

The CTA's division was not the result of their engagement with the FTAA process but was rather a consequence of a series of decisions made by the Kirchner administration that pushed the de Gennaro faction into opposition. The first reason for their shift was that the government had not legally recognized the CTA as a trade union, maintaining the CGT as the only legally existing trade union. This decision has been sustained to today even though the CTA General Secretariat has backed the government.[20] The second reason was that Kirchner failed in his attempt to build a national-populist front that did not rely on Peronist clientelistic organizations; instead, he redesigned the government coalition to give more power to the traditional Peronist leaders. In addition, he took power away from those organizations that had been crucial to the resistance against neoliberalism in the 1990s and 2000s, such as the *piqueteros* and the CTA. So even though the rejection of the FTAA and the defense of the Mercosur alternative were goals shared by both CTA factions, it was not the international agenda that determined the evolution of the CTA, but rather the domestic.

The different interpretations of the Kirchner administration also affected most of the other main social movements in Argentina. Soon after the People's Summit, the Autoconvocatoria was renamed Movimiento Sí de los Pueblos (MOSIP, Movement for the Peoples' Proposal); but thereafter, no major proposal was presented by this coalition, and its mobilization capacity decreased substantially. The change was intended to resolve one of the main limitations of the Autoconvocatoria coalition, which was the huge collection of diverse actors unified in the Autoconvocatoria by a rejection of what was interpreted

as U.S. imperialism, but who lacked any common alternative project. As claimed by the CTA's representative in MOSIP (the former Autoconvocatoria): "We started by identifying this issue . . . that it is not enough to resist [neoliberalism], and that the only way to definitively stop the domination project [of the United States] is by having our own project. Therefore, we not only need to consider the 'against,' but we also need to start thinking about the 'for'" (Juan González, interviewed August 2005). A positive agenda was never agreed on, as some members considered the Kirchner government to be a solution to most of the demands of MOSIP, while others considered that their goals had not yet been fulfilled by any administration.[21]

The Emerging International Agenda versus the Continued Stability of the Mercosur Agenda

In 2008, as a result of the dissolution of ORIT, the CTA became a member of the new regional body for unions, the Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores de las Américas (CSA, Trade Union Confederation of the Americas, or TUCA; henceforth to be referred to as CSA/TUCA).[22] Simultaneously, the CTA's active support for MOSIP came to an end, which was a result both of the creation of the CSA/TUCA and of the fact that domestic dynamics led to a lack of consensus within MOSIP. Further, nationally, the CTA was increasingly discussing the best way to interpret the Fernández de Kirchner presidency; and regionally, MOSIP was considered to be de facto linked to the anti-FTAA struggles of ORIT.[23] Thus far, the CTA's participation in the CSA/TUCA has been unrelated to their FTAA struggles and has only been used for the coordination of a common continental strategy for unions in some state officials' meetings on environmental issues. Moreover, the CSA/TUCA is still developing its platform: the only relevant document that has been written to unify their positions is the *Plataforma Laboral de las Américas* (Latin American Labor Platform), which was written for the 2005 Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata and is being used to create common ground for the organization (cf. CTA 2006; Godio 2007). As a result, from the point of view of all the CTA authorities interviewed, the CSA/TUCA has not yet played any relevant role.

Since the 2009 World Social Forum, informal South-South coordination has been more important for the CTA. They have coordinated with the CUT of Brazil, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions of South Korea. These unions share an interest in a movement-type of trade unionism and all have unemployed and informal workers among their constituency. Although this South-South cooperation has not yet been acted on, apart from one meeting in South Korea, these shared qualities are expected to be used to build an alliance that can counterbalance the U.S., German, and British unions' moderate stances regarding reforms of world capitalism in the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC/CSI).

Meanwhile, the CTA has preserved its single international agenda, participating actively in the CCSCS and Mercosur regional economic and social meetings. Due to the parallel nature of the CTA's national, continental, and international agendas, the increased tension within the CTA has not affected the Mercosur agenda, which continues on its stable course of action, through state-controlled negotiations.[24] Until recently, the conjoining of the CTA agenda with that of the national government (something that also happened in Brazil and Uruguay) had led to a more dynamic process of negotiations and the integration of union members into governmental posts. However, it has also meant "a subordination of international to national politics" (Eduardo Menajoski, interviewed December 2010). In addition, the CCSCS is the only supranational coordinator that integrates all Southern Cone unions, irrespective of affiliation. In other words, while the CSA/TUCA expanded the number of unions originally in ORIT, it still does not include unions affiliated with the Communist World Federation of Trade Unions and some independent unions like the Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores–Convención Nacional de Trabajadores (Inter-Union Plenary of Workers–National Convention of Workers) of Uruguay.

During this period, the CTA has continued to focus on participating in the Foro Consultivo Económico-Social (Socio-Economic Consultative Forum) of Mercosur and, in particular, in the Grupo de Alto Nivel (High-Level Group), created in 2004. The Grupo de Alto Nivel is the first group created by Mercosur to produce common policies related to employment. The main task of the CCSCS has been to lobby for the creation of this space and the creation of policies on this area. In 2006, the first big success was achieved with the preparation of the *Estrategia Mercosur de Crecimiento del Empleo* (Mercosur Strategy for Employment Growth). In 2008, the CCSC developed a proposal for the creation of the Instituto del Trabajo del Mercosur (Mercosur Labor Institute) to further expand and implement common regional policies related to labor issues in accordance with the 2006 document.[25] Mercosur has continued to be a crucial area of action for the CTA, with participation based on a sustained agenda—albeit with setbacks and advances—of diplomatic negotiations rather than contentious action. Again, in this period, the CTA's participation in Mercosur has been parallel to international and national dynamics.

FINAL WORDS

The CTA's history of struggle against regional neoliberal processes is not the result of a specific regional agenda but is, on the contrary, a consequence of its local political alignment with the national government's agenda, an alignment formed strictly as part of its domestic struggles against neoliberalism. However, the CTA's nationally centered level of action does not indicate the absence of an international agenda. The international agenda of the CTA

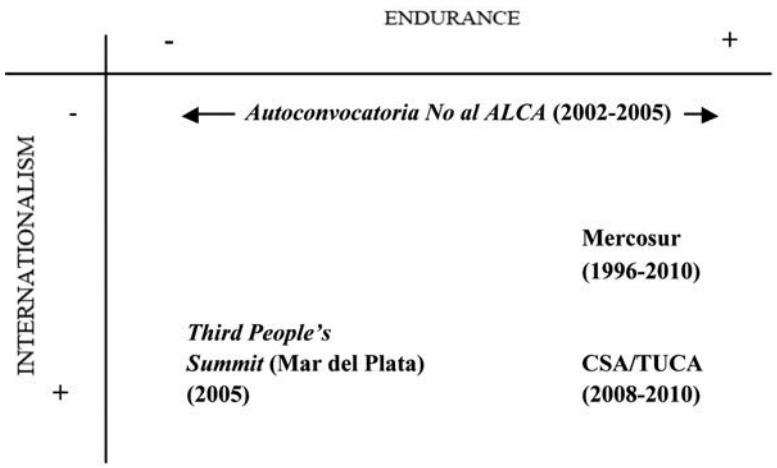


Figure 6.3 "Multiple, Parallel Agendas" of the Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina, 1996–2010

was indeed active and has been sustained up to the present, though it was unrelated to the ASC/HSA-ORIT's continental campaign.

Therefore, the problem presented by the CTA is that of explaining how the same actor simultaneously operates at national and transnational levels, and how these multiple levels influence one another. In this chapter, I classified and defined a process I called "multiple, parallel agendas" at the national, continental and international levels, which can be schematized as in Figure 6.3.[26] The argument of this chapter has been that none of these agendas determined the pace of the others; instead, they were simultaneously developed as differentiated processes. The explanation for this is that both the international and continental agendas were basically tactical responses embedded in a single, overarching domestic logic. In other words, the CTA's participation in transnational activism can be understood as the extension—largely without modification—of ideological frameworks and repertoires of strategies that dated back to the Peronist tradition of the 1960s. In the struggles against the FTAA, this legacy emerged as "multiple, parallel agendas," bound within a domestic-centered cognitive scale of action.

The CTA moved from periods of "periodic internalization"—when linking the ASC/HSA campaign with the national coalition agenda (2003 and 2005)—to phases of "sustained internalization," when domestic political events determined many of the Autoconvocatoria's dynamics (2002 and 2004). The People's Summit of 2005 was a peak of "periodic transnationalization" for the Autoconvocatoria and the CTA, as both increased coordination with regional actors and mobilization of national actors was required. This combination effort was not maintained however. The CTA's agenda with regard to Mercosur has been part of a longer, parallel process with

pendular swings. On the one hand, it went through what can be called an "increased transnationalization" when the CTA became more involved in the CCSCS (1996–2002); on the other hand, there were periods of fairly strong "sustained internalization," when the CTA mostly followed the government's foreign policy agenda (2003–2010). This last approach, however, evolved slowly and has only recently helped to make a few small advances toward the CTA's goals. In fact, the domestic alliance with the Kirchner government has been more important in promoting the success of the anti-FTAA coalition than it has been for its achievements with Mercosur. So why has the CTA maintained its focus on Mercosur when so many other actors in South America stopped paying attention to it? Mercosur was kept by the CTA as a long-term international agenda because it served domestic purposes: first, for the CTA faction that supported the government, Mercosur represented an opportunity to be associated with state foreign policy. Second, for the faction against the government, the institutional recognition offered by participation in official Mercosur forums was used as a tool in the struggle for domestic recognition.[27] Third, the FTAA was framed by both CTA factions as a U.S. imperialist project and Mercosur was seen as an alternative. So even though the CTA's participation in Mercosur preceded the FTAA struggle, their participation in the domestic campaign against the FTAA solidified their perception of Mercosur as a viable regional alternative to the FTAA. In other words, if the FTAA had any impact on the cognitive frames of CTA leaders, it was by reinforcing their domestically centered locus and agenda. Finally, the CSA/TUCA is a promising "sustained transnationalization" agenda for the CTA, but the CSA/TUCA is still too new to be assessed. There have not yet been any significant results from the CSA/TUCA, apart from the important unification of most of the trade unions in the Americas. This achievement is related to a crucial change in the CTA because as a result of the creation of the ITUC/CSI, for the first time ever the CTA has become affiliated with an international trade union organization, abandoning more than fifteen years of a nonalignment stance. Nonetheless, if there is a single most important agenda in determining the CTA's pace and development, it is the domestic. The CTA is a nationally rooted trade union that emerged as a result of domestic neoliberal state reforms in the 1990s, and this has always been the main locus of its activity. The widely debated possible end of the neoliberal period in Argentina is the thing that has produced most of the main conflicts in the CTA, as it has been faced with the dilemma of redefining its role.

In brief, this chapter provided an analysis of virtually parallel national, continental, and international agendas. These agendas have sometimes been active simultaneously, but their impact on each other has been less important than might have been expected, given the political results obtained in each level of action during this period.[28] This chapter offers insights into the unions' ongoing nationally focused agendas and levels of action, which follow patterns that have also been observed in the CGT (Palomino 2000; Badaró 2003) and in other countries (Tarrow 2005; Portela de Castro 2007;

von Bülow 2009). We have also gained new perspectives on the stability of union-state international agendas in the context of the national/regional cycles/waves of protest that dominated Latin America in the 2000s.

NOTES

1. I am very grateful to Eduardo Silva, Marisa von Bülow, Bill Smith, Kathy Hochstetler, and Laura Macdonald for their detailed comments and suggestions.
2. These assumptions are based on the arguments of some of the main globalization theories, which associate the increased interdependence of globalization with the promotion of cosmopolitan citizenship (for this debate, see Appadurai [1996]; Beck [2000, 2006]; Held [2010]; etc.).
3. ALCA, Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas; FTAA in English.
4. The main two unions in the CTA are the Asociación de Trabajadores del Estado (ATE, Association of State Workers) and the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina (CTERA, Confederation of Education Workers of the Argentinean Republic). The main territorial organizations that were members of the CTA during the period analyzed in this chapter are a group of the piqueteros (unemployed workers) movement, the liberation theology–inspired Federación de Trabajadores por la Tierra, Vivienda y Hábitat (FTV, Federation of Workers for Land, Housing and Habitat), the Movimiento Territorial Liberación (MTL, Territorial Liberation Movement) of the Communist Party, the national-populist Barrios de Pie (Standing Neighborhoods), and the Organización Barrial 'Túpac Amaru' ("Túpac Amaru" Neighborhood Association) (Rossi, 2013).
5. The most long-standing international ties of the CTA have been with the Central Única dos Trabalhadores of Brazil, the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, the Confédération Générale du Travail of France, and the União Nacional dos Trabalhadores Angolanos.
6. Concerning the lack of democratic process in the implementation of the FTAA, Korzeniewicz and Smith state: "The FTAA negotiations have always operated along a highly centralized track, one largely monopolized by regional governments acting through executive-branch agencies responsible for finance and trade. The closed and opaque style of negotiations has proven antithetical to significant civil society participation" (2005, 143).
7. CTA Secretariat of International Relations (document developed at the Sixth National Congress of Delegates, Mar de Plata, 2002).
8. Cf. CCSCS, "Ahora Mercosur: por una integración política, social, económica y cultural" (presented at the Fifth Union's Summit, Montevideo, December 2003).
9. ORIT was the regional body of the Confederación Internacional de Organizaciones Sindicales Libres (CIOSL, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU; henceforth to be referred to as CIOSL/ICFTU).
10. In Santiago, due to the differences between the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (Unified Confederation of Workers) of Chile and Chilean social organizations, unions and movements were unable to produce a unified event during the 1998 summit (I thank Marisa von Bülow for this information).
11. According to Jubilee South, "The peoples of the South do not owe these debts. These 'debts' have in fact been paid many times over in financial terms and, more importantly, in human terms by peoples of the South. Jubilee

South rejects the continued plunder of the South by way of debt payments!" (Jubilee South website, http://www.jubileesouth.org/news/About_Us.shtml; accessed September 19, 2011).

12. In these regards, it was different from the Brazilian and Chilean cases. In Argentina, the Autoconvocatoria was a temporary coalition that incorporated the anti-FTAA campaign, whereas in Brazil and Chile these domestic coalitions were sustained networks within the ASC/HSA (von Bülow 2010, 120, figure 7.1 for Brazil and Chile).
13. Final document of the Third People's Summit (Cumbre de los Pueblos website, http://www.cumbredelospueblos.org; accessed November 5, 2005).
14. For a detailed description of the different layers of analysis of the ASC/HSA by the Autoconvocatoria members, see Bidaseca and Rossi (2008).
15. The CTA was not alone in this path; this was also true for the CUT of Brazil (I thank Marisa von Bülow for this information).
16. At the same time, and as part of the same process, the Confederación Mundial del Trabajo (CMT, World Confederation of Labor) and its regional body, the Confederación Latinoamericana de Trabajadores (CLAT, Latin American Labor Confederation), were dissolved.
17. According to all the CTA leaders interviewed, this decision had no connection with the experience of international cooperation during the anti-FTAA campaign.
18. Hugo Yasky (CTERA) was secretary general of the unified CTA from 2006 to 2010; Víctor de Gennaro (ATE) occupied this position from 1992 to 2006.
19. The internal tension produced by the link with the Kirchner administration was mentioned in different interviews by Pedro Wasiejko, the former secretary of international relations (2002–2006) and government supporter, and by Adolfo Aguirre, the last unified secretary (2006–2011) and an opponent of the government (both secretaries were interviewed in December 2010). Both Wasiejko and Aguirre believed that national dynamics are the most important factors explaining the modifications made to the secretariat's priorities and agenda.
20. The government has also ignored the International Labor Organization's (ILO) request to legally recognize the CTA (cf. ILO, Record of Proceedings of the Ninety-Sixth Session [Geneva: ILO, 2007], 11–15).
21. Since 2007, there has been an intensification of the CTA and most social movements' internal divisions concerning the relationship with the Cristina Fernández de Kirchner government (Mauro and Rossi 2011).
22. The as CSA/TUCA is the regional body of the Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI, International Trade Union Confederation, or ITUC; hereafter to be referred to as ITUC/CSI). The ITUC/CSI was created in 2006.
23. As already stated, MOSIP's (the former Autoconvocatoria) connection with ORIT did not mean that the members of the former shared the latter's agenda or that the SMOs in MOSIP were members of the ASC/HSA-ORIT. However, MOSIP became part of the ASC/HSA and so was very closely associated with ORIT, an organization that—as mentioned—was politically rejected by the CTA and that disappeared in 2006.
24. However, in the future, this could lead to a further weakening of the CCSCS.
25. The CCSCS's "Propuesta Instituto del Trabajo del Mercosur" can be found at: http://www.ccscs.org/documentos-ccscs/publicaciones-y-documentos/9/195-propuesta-instituto-trabajo-del-mercosur (San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, July 2008; accessed March 20, 2011).
26. Inspired by von Bülow (2010, figures 2.1–2.3).
27. For instance, in order to enforce the CTA's claim for national legal recognition, in the 2007 meeting at the ILO, the CTA representative used the institutional recognition given by Mercosur as a rhetorical tool for his claim: "He

[the Argentinean representative] indicated that the Central of Argentinean Workers (CTA) was recognized in national and international spheres as one of the two trade union centrals in Argentina and participated in the institutions of Mercosur" (ILO, Record of Proceedings of the Ninety-Sixth Session, 13).

28. Two crucial results are the collapse of neoliberalism in Argentina and the failure of the FTAA process. However, the successes achieved in these important political struggles does not mean that the CTA was the only actor involved or that their intervention was the crucial element. Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that the CTA has been an active and important actor in these processes at the domestic level since the 1990s.

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