



**Counter-Hegemony and ALBA:  
The Answer to the FTAA**

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### **CERLAC**

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### Counter-Hegemony and ALBA: The Answer to the FTAA

The post-WWII hegemonic system was marked by the institutionalization of liberal economic thought (Cox, 1981, p. 104) which had thrived under the internationalization of the state and of production (p. 108-110). This marked a new and lopsided process, termed globalization which began in the 1970s (Cox, p. 10), where some states were its promoters and prospered because of it, while others were instead devastated by its effects. This devastation usually occurred (and continues to occur) within developing countries, whereas it is within the developed countries that globalization is able to work to their advantage or rather where there exists an ability to harness it. Cox argues that the internationalization of the state and of production has transformed the social forces that construct power and hegemony (Grugel and Hout, 1999, p. 22). These changes in economic structures of the state and of production are argued to be a shift in the world order, to a neoliberal discourse, forging a transnational historic bloc (Gill, 1995, p. 69). It is also argued that different forms of scalar governance are used to "...legitimize or challenge existing power relations." Actors seeking hegemony continuously struggle with different scalar constructions where some are considered to be more useful than others (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, 2007, p. 159). It is within these structures that social forces engage with a certain production process and structures of power to form legitimate rule. Roncallo (2009) maintains that within the Americas there are at least five scalar constructions that must be considered in order to understand Cox's notion of hegemony within the region. They are global, regional, national, sub-national and

ethnic community scales (p. 366-368). The neoliberal discourse is strengthened through institutions and rules on multiscalar planes that support the goals of transnational capital and corporations (Gill, p. 78, Roncallo, p. 368). This paper will be specifically dealing with regional constructions that are able to 'politically lock in' a certain discourse within national policies (p. 72).

In the case of the American continental project, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), the US pushed for top privileges for transnational capital in the developing states of Latin America (Buono, 2007, p. 2). It is important to note however, that the FTAA is not a strictly US-led project. Many governments in the Americas as well as corporate interests have been pushing for this arrangement. Nevertheless, the US has been the prime pursuer and moulder of this project, designing policies that directly mirror the US economic interests (Phillips, 2005, p. 3-4). It is argued that the FTAA was a proposed extension of the power politics and the hegemonic strategy of the US that was experienced during the 80s and 90s in Latin America (Buono, p. 12; Phillips, p. 3; Bianculli, 2006, p. 12). Although the FTAA was widely accepted in South America before the new millennium, at the 2005 Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas, the FTAA as a whole was rejected by Latin America (Kellogg, 2007, p. 188).

Recently, in 2004, a new regionalist project was created, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America<sup>1</sup> (ALBA). This endeavor greatly differed from the FTAA. First, not only was it proposed by the South, it was created by

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<sup>1</sup> Before the VI Special Summit, ALBA was named the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America (Portal-ALBA-TCP, 2009b).

two anti-neoliberal heads of state, President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and the president of Cuba, Fidel Castro. Second, ALBA is a unique South-South regional arrangement, as opposed to the FTAA's North-South organization. Thirdly, ALBA is specifically written in anti-neoliberal terms (Kellogg, 2007, p. 200), which again greatly differs from the strict neoliberal approach of the FTAA, which I will be exploring in the second section.

In this paper, my aim is to show how Latin American responds to the hegemonic FTAA through the creation of a regional economic bloc based on solidarity rather than capitalist accumulation. Cox writes about dialectics as a would-be alternative to development through the clash of social forces within a historical structure (Cox, 1981, p. 95). The very historical structure itself produces contradictions for the possible creation of another historical structure (Cox, 1995, p. 35). In other words, dialectic is the creation of a new structure of development that is formed through the very one it was opposed to. The actual conflict between these social forces suggesting an alternative path to development is driven by "collective images" or ideas of concepts that have become engrained or institutionalized in a social order by a certain group of people. The institutionalization of these ideas is linked to hegemony (Cox, 1981, p. 99), the domination of one ontological path over another (Cox, 1995, p. 43). It will be argued that ALBA is the dialectical response to the FTAA and therefore a counter-hegemonic movement. Cox states that "A counter hegemony would consist of a coherent view of an alternative world order, backed by a concentration of power sufficient to maintain a challenge to core countries (Cox, 1981, p. 115)", something that ALBA is becoming through the

consolidation of legitimacy on a regional scale. This will be shown through the three subsequent sections of the paper. The first section will deal with the FTAA, look at its historical and discourse origins as well as its intended goals by using documents from the negotiation process. In the second section, ALBA will be examined under the same rubric as was used with the FTAA, its historical and discourse origins and its intended goals using summit and council meeting documents. For the third section, the FTAA and ALBA will be considered under dialectics using the two previous sections as anchors, drawing on various structural and ideological differences as well as contestations between both regional constructions. Finally, the conclusion will end with the idea that through these structural ideological differences and contestations, ALBA is indeed a dialectical response to the FTAA.

### **THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA)**

The FTAA is a reflection of the Monrovia geopolitical paradigm (Marchand, 2005, p. 103), which was based on the idea of Pan-Americanism and security of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a project designed to keep European powers from interfering in "American affairs" (p. 105) rather than to build inter-American relations (p. 106). It has been argued that the FTAA is the present day Monrovia project focusing on economic and political spheres, where the US seeks to consolidate its presence within Latin America in order to be able to compete economically with other regional agreements in Europe and Asia or to keep non-US competition out of Latin America (p. 115).

The idea of a hemispheric free trade agreement was first proposed by President

George Bush Senior in 1990 and was carried forward by the thirty-four Presidents and Prime Ministers (with the exception of Cuba) of the Americas at the first Summit of the Americas in 1994 dubbed the Miami Summit with the expectation that the FTAA was to be set up by 2005 (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 294, 295).

The FTAA is considered to be a form of “new regionalism” or also known as “strategic regionalism” which deviates from the traditional integrationist and liberal economic models of integration. The FTAA does not fit either mould because its policies and goals do not match the integrationist or liberal economic design since it does not deal with the expansion of industrialization within the region nor does it include any efforts to soften the asymmetries between member states as would be encouraged in the interventionist model. Moreover, it does not plan for further integration into for example, a customs union, as would be done within a liberal economic model but rather aims for the promotion of free trade, especially within key sectors of the economy and ‘trade related issues’ namely services, investments and intellectual property rights (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 296).

Strategic regionalism within the FTAA is argued to be the marriage of the US government and MNEs (multinational enterprises) (Briceño Ruiz, p. 296). It is used as a tool to better insert economies into the rapidly globalizing world economy as well as to further the neo-liberal ideology that creates the paths of policies within the region (Grugel and Hout, 1999, p. 21). Here, the goals are to deregulate and liberalize in order to allow the market to take control of development and economic growth (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 297).

The FTAA was primarily considered to be an extension of NAFTA into Latin America and the Caribbean. The US opted for a ‘single-undertaking approach’ where the FTAA would be created in one move, while other countries, namely Brazil, preferred a ‘building block’ approach, where the FTAA would slowly be built upon the integration of the various trade agreements already established throughout the Americas (Kennedy, 2003-2004, p. 125).

The negotiation process of the FTAA was made up of summits and ministerial meetings. Up until the present year of 2010, there have been eight ministerial meetings and five summits as well as one special summit. Since the FTAA was never put into practice, it is vital to examine each meeting and summit in order to understand how the negotiation process unraveled and how the goals and underlying ideas within each gathering of ministers and leaders of the continent evolved. Ministerial meetings were attended only by the trade ministers from all thirty-four member states looking to participate in the FTAA, where economic, trade and investment policies were discussed while the summits were attended by the heads of state and of government as well as specific members of civil society were able to observe discussions based on issues such as democracy, security and poverty reduction (Summit of the Americas Information Network, 2008 & FTAA, 1995). Every summit and ministerial meeting produced written texts summarizing their discussions<sup>2</sup> some of which will be explored chronologically, highlighting

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<sup>2</sup> Two types of document were produced during the Summits: declarations and plans of action however, only the declaration of the summit will be used and not the plan of action.

points that are pertinent to the purpose of this paper.

During the First Summit of the Americas in Miami in 1994, all thirty-four countries present agreed to build upon the idea of a hemispheric integration and confirmed the commitment to the creation of a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 294-295). In the Declaration of Principles, democracy and free trade have been the underlying prerequisites for what is understood as prosperity and development under the FTAA. Without the strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions, there can be no peace, development or stability a state requires to implement sound economic policies that encourage free trade and investment. In addition to these key themes, there are a few interesting points to note. First, the financing of various economic projects across the hemisphere were planned to be funded by the private sector and by international financial institutions (IFIs). Second, there was recognition that the FTAA would encompass a wide variety of states with different sizes and levels of development as well as a acknowledgement that some of these members would continue to have debts

that prevent development. However, there was no consideration to smooth over these asymmetries (FTAA, 1994)

The First Ministerial Meeting in 1995 essentially created eight working groups in: market access, customs procedures and rules of origin, investment, standards and technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties and smaller economies. The goal of these working groups was to establish closely knit negotiations on the most important issues in the creation of the FTAA to shorten the process of negotiation. One working group that is worth highlighting for the purposes of this paper is the smaller economies working group where negotiators were asked to isolate any factors that disturb the integration of smaller economies in the FTAA as well as identify ways to facilitate their integration (FTAA, 1995).

In addition to the eight working groups created in the First Ministerial Meeting, the Second Ministerial Meeting created four additional working groups on: government procurement, intellectual property rights, trade on services and competition policy (FTAA, 1996, p5).

**Table 1**

*List of FTAA Summits and Ministerials*

Year	Meeting	Location	Main Issues
1994	First Summit	Miami, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Democracy</li> <li>▪ Free trade</li> <li>▪ Prosperity</li> <li>▪ Economic integration</li> <li>▪ Sustainable development</li> </ul>
1995	First Ministerial	Denver, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of first working groups</li> </ul>
1996	Second Ministerial	Cartagena, Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set date of FTAA creation no later than 2005</li> <li>▪ Building block approach to FTAA construction</li> <li>▪ Creation of new working groups</li> </ul>
1997	Third Ministerial	Belo Horizonte, Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Necessity of participating in the World</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade Organization</li> <li>▪ Single undertaking in the construction of FTAA</li> </ul>
1998	Fourth Ministerial	San José, Costa Rica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formulation of negotiation structure</li> <li>▪ Creation of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC)</li> <li>▪ Construction of negotiation groups: market access, investment, services, government procurement, dispute settlement, agriculture, intellectual property rights, subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties, competition policy</li> </ul>
1998	Second Summit	Santiago, Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education</li> <li>▪ Encouragement of <i>constructive</i> civil society participation in FTAA process</li> <li>▪ Free trade, investment, economic integration as vital for raising living conditions and participating in global market</li> </ul>
1999	Fifth Ministerial	Toronto, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade negotiation committee gaining main role in managing FTAA</li> <li>▪ Creation of business cooperation measures to begin the economic integration of the FTAA</li> </ul>
2000	Sixth Ministerial	Buenos Aires, Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade liberalization and environmental policies should be complimentary</li> <li>▪ Recognition that labour rights and environmental protection can be used as trade restrictions</li> </ul>
2001	Third Summit	Québec, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Democracy is key to all objectives of the FTAA</li> <li>▪ Formulation of an Inter-American Democratic Charter</li> <li>▪ Poverty reduction</li> <li>▪ Venezuela voices first hesitancy</li> </ul>
2002	Seventh Ministerial	Quito, Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Approval for the creation of Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP)</li> <li>▪ Considered events of Québec 2001, urging constructive civil society participation</li> </ul>
2003	Eighth Ministerial	Miami, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Countries to combine trade with national development plans (poverty reduction)</li> <li>▪ Creation of a FTAA Secretariat in United States</li> <li>▪ HCP to be implemented at the completion of FTAA negotiations</li> </ul>
2004	Fourth Summit	Monterrey, Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic and social growth</li> <li>▪ Poverty reduction</li> <li>▪ Democratic governance</li> </ul>
2005	Fifth Summit	Mar del Plata, Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment generation</li> <li>▪ Employment as a tool for poverty reduction</li> <li>▪ Democratic governance</li> </ul>

*Note.* Information on summits and ministerials adapted from the official Free Trade Agreement of the Americas website [http://www.ftaa-alca.org/alca\\_e.asp](http://www.ftaa-alca.org/alca_e.asp).

The third ministerial gathering heavily stressed the execution of the Uruguay Round obligations<sup>3</sup> as well as the open participation of the FTAA in the World Trade Organization (WTO) (FTAA, 1997, p.1). The Smaller Economies working group also recommended some more measures to deal with less developed members: proper internal policies and cooperation for effective participation of these members in the FTAA (p.3).

The Fourth Ministerial Meeting in 1998 established a Committee of Government Representatives which would be responsible for the acceptance of any civil society contributions to the FTAA forum (FTAA, 1998a, p.8). This meeting established that official FTAA negotiations were to begin at the Second Summit, where heads of state were encouraged to remain loyal to WTO conventions and the single-undertaking notion (p.2). Furthermore, there were ten negotiation groups created: market access, investment, services, government procurement, dispute settlement, agriculture, intellectual property rights, subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties, competition policy, which were to carry through the construction of the FTAA (p.3).

Shying away from the traditional issues addressed in ministerials, the Second Summit of the Americas in 1998 in Santiago centered the importance and

need for education, rather than on the matters of the negotiation groups in the previous ministerial meeting. Civil society was encouraged to expand the sphere of knowledge (FTAA, 1998b, p.6) as well as to contribute to the FTAA negotiating process in a “constructive manner” through the means created by the FTAA process (p.10). The Summit was more socially oriented and included human rights, indigenous and women participation as well as labour and health standards into its declaration and plan of action.

The Fifth Ministerial Meeting urged for the creation of the first draft of the FTAA text (FTAA, 1999, p.2) and allowed for the Trade Negotiation Committee, created in the precedent meeting, to take on a fundamental role in the management of the negotiating process (p.3). During the meeting, there was a call to work on agricultural negotiations as well as to support differential treatment of smaller economies by providing technical assistance (p.5). As for civil society, its contributions were discussed under the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society (p.6).

The first draft of the FTAA text was made public during the Sixth Ministerial Meeting (FTAA, 2001a, p1, p9, 10) and the Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society was encouraged to engage deeper with civil society (p1, p26). The different levels of development and the size of the economies between potential FTAA members were recognized, as well it was stated that the design of the FTAA should take into account these diverse levels of development (p1, p5). Most importantly, this was the first time environment and labour standards were recognized as possibilities of trade

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<sup>3</sup> The Uruguay Round was intended to amend the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to better accommodate developing countries, but instead was used by the US to pursue further liberalization that actually harmed these countries (Sen, 1994, p. 2802). The Uruguay round dealt with four specific areas: trade-related investment measures, trade-related intellectual property rights, agriculture and textiles, within which further liberalization was pursued (Anand, 1992, p. 968-970).



diversion rather than protectionist purposes (§2, p11).

Again as in previous summits and ministerials, the Third Summit of the Americas held in Québec in 2001 underlined democracy as a key component of progress in the FTAA agreement. It was agreed that there would be “consultations” between members if there were to be a disruption of the democratic process in any of the member states (FTAA, 2001b, p5). A proposal was made for the creation of an Inter-American Democratic Charter to enshrine the principles of the Organization of American States (OAS) for a strong defense of representative democracy (p6) through which inter-American human rights were to be strengthened institutionally.

Armed conflict and violence, drugs, HIV/AIDS and poverty were some of the social issues the members addressed (p 7-10, 14). There was agreement to promote environmental sustainability, equal access to medicine and for the first time, a commitment to the expansion of agriculture, including rural life and agrobusiness (p11, 12, 15, 20). An important detail to notice within the declaration is Venezuela’s disagreement with the definition of democracy that was being used throughout the Summit. Instead Venezuela opted for democracy to be used in a general sense rather than a representative sense, which stresses political representation as well as civil and political rights that do not guarantee democratic governance (Martinez, 2004, p. 662-663). Democracy in a general sense would trace back to the original practice and meaning in Ancient Greece that emphasized the ‘rule of the people’ (Kellogg, 2009, p. 48-49) and this is reflected by Venezuela’s President’s practice of participatory democracy

(Wilpert, 2007, p. 53-54). Nevertheless, the meetings proceeded full speed ahead.

The Seventh Ministerial Meeting produced a second draft of the FTAA agreement (FTAA, 2002, §1, p5, 30). There was another urging of civil society to make *constructive* contributions to the FTAA process in light of the occurrences during the Quebec Summit<sup>4</sup> the previous year (§1, p.31). As well, it was recognized that certain financial policies should be encouraged to alleviate debt problems and further economic growth (§1, p.13). The most groundbreaking accomplishment of this meeting however was the creation of a Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP) which was to help less developed countries financially in order to provide capabilities for their participation in the FTAA and possess certain productive capacity and competitiveness (§2).

The third draft was made available during the Eighth Ministerial Meeting (FTAA, 2003, p.23), however many lines still contained several brackets (Kennedy, 2003-2004, p. 128). Also, a commitment to the integration of trade into members’ national development designs, namely the Poverty Reduction Strategy, was achieved (p.17). There was more discussion on the HCP, including requests made for HCP funding to be non-reimbursable, which was to be implemented after the FTAA was in operation (p.17, 21). There was also dialogue around the creation of a FTAA Secretariat where several cities were nominated, among them: Atlanta, USA; Cancun, Mexico; Chicago, USA; Colorado Springs, USA; Galveston, USA; Houston, USA; Miami, USA; Panama City, Panama; Port of Spain, Trinidad and

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<sup>4</sup> The Third Summit of the Americas was greeted with 80,000 demonstrators infuriated with the FTAA and its lack of transparency (Kellogg, 2007, p. 188).

Tobago; Puebla, Mexico; and San Juan of Puerto Rico, USA, where seven out of eleven were US destinations (p.32). However, due to previous disagreements during the WTO Ministerial Conference, the FTAA goals were scaled back and the agreement took a turn towards a “NAFTA lite” approach (Kennedy, 2003-2004, p. 130-131).

The Fourth Summit held in Monterrey in 2004 revolved around three major points: economic growth with equity to reduce poverty, social development, and democratic governance. The first point, economic growth with equity to reduce poverty, focused on poverty reduction through good governance, rule of law and rigorous economic policies where the private sector would be used to achieve these goals (FTAA, 2004, p.2).

The second point, social development, was to be achieved through the execution of social safety nets, and the increasing participation of members in many international organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the International Labour Organization. Education and intellectual property rights were key elements in social development as well (FTAA, 2004, p. 4-8).

Thirdly, democratic governance was to be strengthened through good governance, modernization of the state, pluralism, and sound socio-economic policies. Terrorism was also cited as a major threat to democracy and international security and members were encouraged to ratify the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism (p. 8-13).

During this Summit, Venezuela voiced reservations regarding the philosophy behind the FTAA, calling for fair trade and respect for every member’s unique characteristics to be included within the

process of negotiations and the actual agreement (p. 13).

The main topic surrounding the Fifth Summit in Mar del Plata in 2005 was poverty reduction which was to be achieved through the creation of employment, the completion of the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable economic growth and sound economic and social policies, to name a few (FTAA, 2005, p. 1-4). Strengthening democratic governance was also key to this summit, where terrorism, representation, accountability and reliable social and economic policies and standards contributed to its growth (p. 11-13).

To sum up the progression of the FTAA negotiations, it is important to note some fundamental concepts that were repeated throughout every ministerial meeting and summit such as, democracy, free trade, prosperity, economic growth, environmental sustainability and poverty. The first few ministerial meetings and summits focused on democracy and the development of economic policies and an environment conducive to free trade and investments. The second ministerial meeting was the first time the smaller economies asymmetry within the FTAA process was addressed. However, it was not until the third meeting that some suggestions regarding these asymmetries were made and it took up till the seventh meeting to formulate ideas for concrete solutions through the creation of the HCP. The fourth meeting was the first to deal with civil society and to create a forum for input regarding the FTAA and the since then, the discussion and appeal for *constructive* civil society contributions to the process was encouraged. It also created strictly economic negotiation groups and formulated the structure of negotiations that would be used through

the rest of the negotiation process. During the Fifth Ministerial Meeting and the Third Summit agricultural negotiations were directly addressed, the former promoting both rural and agrobusiness. Throughout negotiations there was a push for environmental sustainability, however at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting, there was a shift, and environmental standards were seen as possible protectionist measures. Poverty reduction discussions began during the Third Summit, and they have become prominent ever since, while security began to be a big issue post 9/11.

Overall, the underlying backbone throughout the entire FTAA process, both in ministerial meetings and summits was made up of (representative) democracy and economic growth.

### **ALIANZA BOLIVARIANA PARA LOS PUEBLOS DE NUESTRA AMÉRICA (ALBA)**

ALBA originates from the Bolivarian ideal of a united Latin America where Simón Bolívar wanted to unite all the states of Latin America and ally with Great Britain in order to offset the American and Spanish hegemonic forces within the region and create a counter-hegemonic force (Marchand, 2005, p. 107). Today this modern day Bolivarian project is focused more so on the inter-relations between Latin American countries creating a strong bloc of solidarity against neo-liberal projects (Marchand, p. 109-110).

ALBA in itself was intended to be an alternative to the FTAA and a response to the imperialist confrontations experienced by Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, it is considered an “historical project” continuing Bolívar’s dream of a united Latin America. It currently is made up of nine members: Venezuela, Cuba,

Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Honduras, Ecuador, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009g). ALBA is the next stage in the revolution of Latin America against imperialistic influences responding to the many protests of the peoples of the Latin America reacting to these forces. ALBA is a step forward; it is a proposal that will embody the cries of the peoples and this is why it is based on the participation of all people of the Caribbean and of South America. People, not the market, are the ones that lead the direction of ALBA and so this project must be sensitive to the changes within Latin America and not remain stagnant (Fernando Bossi, 2009).

It must be a solid political tool that will unite Latin America and the Caribbean into a unifying confederation that will be strong enough to keep the FTAA and any other imperialist endeavours out of the region. This project is however, not only for Latin Americans, but will serve as an example towards a better world, one where there is no human exploitation, where there is harmony between humanity and nature, where there is liberty and justice. ALBA is created to reject the logic of capitalism and exploitation, of material gain at the expense of others and of economic competition. It embraces social programs and promotes them widely throughout Latin America, focuses on the well-being of the people and not the economic gains as the wealth of America (Fernando Bossi, 2009).

ALBA is composed of four pillars: complementary action, cooperation, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of nations. In terms of complementary action, member states exchange goods for other goods that complement their respective economies and needs rather than exchanging them for capital. Cooperation may include for example,

sharing technological know-how in order to achieve a common goal, while solidarity is shown through Petrocaribe and the supply of cheap oil to Caribbean countries that lack petroleum resources. Finally the respect for the sovereignty of every nation and its right to self-determination is considered within every agreement (Fernando Bossi, 2009).

ALBA will be explored through documents produced after various summits and meetings. The documents that will be examined will pinpoint ALBA's underpinnings; such did the negotiation documents of the FTAA.<sup>5</sup>

The *Acuerdo entre el Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y el Presidente del Consejo de Estado de Cuba, para la aplicación de la Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas* is a document that outlines the creation of ALBA, where both the heads of state of Cuba and Venezuela affirmed that the FTAA is a continued form of domination, one that will entrench and deepen the roots of Neoliberalism within Latin America and will create deep levels of dependency. For this reason, both states have rejected the FTAA proposals because of the conviction that this agreement would have created the same poverty and underdevelopment that has

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<sup>5</sup> The documents that I will be using from the ALBA agreement will be different than those of the FTAA. They will not be from the negotiations prior to the creation of ALBA, but from the ongoing negotiations as ALBA takes on new initiatives and members. This difference in documents is due to the fact that no documents prior to the ALBA signing are available and for the reason that ALBA is a new regional agreement that has been slowly growing since 2004, while the FTAA has officially been in the negotiation process since 1994. Finally, not all ALBA documents produced will be used due to the length of this paper, only those that carry the purpose of this paper to show the dialectics between both agreements.

been provoked by transnational corporations and agreements with the US in the last fifty years. Venezuela and Cuba agreed that in order for Latin America to grow and prosper, it needs an agreement that builds on cooperation and solidarity of a region that has continuously been subjected to neoliberal hegemony. There was much emphasis put on the notion that ALBA would not be interested in mercantilist practices, or any forms of advancement of one country over another, rather it would concentrate itself upon the development of Latin American and Caribbean states. ALBA was based on twelve guiding principles:

1. The trade within ALBA should not be an end in itself, rather a means to achieve sustainable and just development, where the state must be a regulator of the market.
2. ALBA will take into account the levels of development of each member creating projects that benefit all members equally.
3. ALBA will promote an economic cooperation that is at the same time competitive and compatible with the fight against poverty and the protection of culture and identity.
4. Cooperation and solidarity through the expansion of access to education, free healthcare and technology transfer is crucial.
5. ALBA will create an emergency social fund in the Summit of Latin American countries
6. ALBA will work to develop transport and communication services across Latin America
7. ALBA vows to use natural resources responsibly and sustainably.
8. ALBA will integrate energy sources across Latin America and the Caribbean maintaining a secure source of energy for its populations,

- eventually moving towards a Petroamérica.
9. ALBA will strongly encourage investment within Latin America and the Caribbean in order to lessen dependency on foreign capital, eventually creating a Latin American Investment Fund.
  10. ALBA will protect Latin American and Caribbean culture, including indigenous identity.
  11. Intellectual property rights should be protected for the well-being of each country and not for the prosperity of transnational companies.
  12. ALBA will cooperate with other regions of the world to demand democratization and transparency in international institutions such as the United Nations (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2004)

These twelve principles are the foundation for every declaration, agreement, council or working group created after this date. For the remainder of this section, I will be briefly exploring some subsequent ALBA creations that embody these principles.

**Table 2**

*List of ALBA summits and meetings examined*

Year	Meeting	Location	Main Issues
2004	Acuerdo entre el Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y el Presidente del Consejo de Estado de Cuba, para la aplicación de la Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas	La Habana, Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of an agreement leading to the integration of both Venezuela and Cuba under ALBA in the name of solidarity, human needs and human development</li> </ul>
2005	Acuerdo de Cooperación Energética	Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of Petrocaribe as a body that promotes energy security and management in the Caribbean region for the benefit of the peoples</li> </ul>
2006	Acuerdo para la Aplicación de la Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América y el Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos	La Habana, Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of the Trade Treaty of ALBA</li> </ul>
2007	Fifth ALBA Summit: Energy Treaty of ALBA	Barquisimeto, Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of an agreement between ALBA members concerning the sustainable use and management of energy found within the borders of all members to create an “energy matrix” within ALBA for the benefit of all members</li> </ul>
2007	Fifth ALBA Summit: Transnational Project		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formulation of various transnational projects concerning: Education; Culture; Fair trade; Finance; Food; Health; Telecommunications; Transport; Mining; Industry; Energy</li> </ul>
2007	Memorandum de Entendimiento entre la República de Bolivia, la República de Cuba, la República de Nicaragua y la República de Venezuela para la Creación del Banco del ALBA	Caracas, Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The creation of the Bank of ALBA</li> </ul>
2009	Sixth Special ALBA Summit	Maracay,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of the ALBA-TCP, an</li> </ul>

		Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ economic integration of members</li> <li>▪ Various projects centering on the expansion of post-secondary education</li> <li>▪ Various telecommunication projects</li> </ul>
2009	I Consejo Ministerial de Complementación Económica del ALBA-TCP	Caracas, Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of new working groups</li> </ul>
2009	Declaración de la VII Cumbre del ALBA-TCP	Cochabamba, Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expanded economic integration between members</li> <li>▪ Expanded many social programs</li> </ul>
2009	Manifiesto General de la Primera Cumbre de Consejos de Movimientos Sociales del ALBA-TCP	Cochabamba, Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A formal realization of the Council of Social Movements as part of the ALBA body</li> </ul>

*Note.* All information regarding ALBA meetings was retrieved from the official ALBA website: <http://www.alianzabolivariana.org/>.

In the *Acuerdo de Cooperación Energética* the members of ALBA and other potential member of the Caribbean created an organization that would foresee energy services throughout the region aiming toward energy security and socioeconomic development. Energy sources would not be priced according to the world market, but according to the needs of the nations within the Caribbean and Latin America. Petrocaribe would ensure technology transfer and the development of energy infrastructure. With the funds made from this endeavour, Petrocaribe will set up a fund for socioeconomic development in order to finance projects that would lead to a sustainable and alternative development in the region (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2005a).

The path of the energy alliances was made clearer during the fifth ALBA summit, where Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua signed the ALBA Energy Treaty. These four countries were to ally under a single *empresa grannacional* where their respective national energy companies would unite to cooperatively develop and share new technology to provide the population of ALBA with the right to energy for education, health and

production. However, this treaty discouraged wasteful use of energy resources that is promoted by the capitalist mode of production (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2007).

In the Declaration of the Sixth Special Summit of June 2009 the principles of solidarity and cooperation among ALBA members were very obvious. ALBA agreed to create a network of universities spanning across the members of ALBA that would be dedicated to alternative solutions and would also promote scientific and technological progress. As well, many working groups were created. Among them, the working group on the accreditation and evaluation of higher education systems, the working group on international law, self-determination and the respect of sovereignty and human rights and a working group on the review of industrial production. In addition to the creation of these working groups, a Ministerial Council of Women of ALBA was also created to directly include women of Latin America in the development of their countries (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009d).

In terms of its economic measures, ALBA has created eight working groups in: industry and production, trade, new finance architecture, energy integration, food sovereignty and security, technological sovereignty, tourism and infrastructure and transport (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009d).

It also established a bank, considered as an alternative to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in times of economic crisis to encourage local saving and investment in ALBA nations to help foster social programs and development projects (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2007c).

Similarly, the SUCRE, a common currency developed by ALBA was created to provide its members with some autonomy from the American dollar and international financial institutions as well as from the financial crisis created by the North (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009a). ALBA also founded the Peoples' Trade Agreement that is based on the founding principles established in 2004. This agreement promotes the exchange of goods and services for other goods and services with the mutual benefit of each member in mind. For example, technology packages and traditional knowledge of medicine is exchanged rather than traded for capital. This is a trading system based on mutual interest and cooperation, rather than on exploitation and self-interest (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2006).

Lastly, it is important to mention ALBA's acknowledgement of the importance of social movements in the history of democratization and decolonization of Latin America during the First Summit of the Council of Social Movements of ALBA through the formation of a Council of Social Movements, where these social movements have a direct say in the

national goals and agendas of ALBA (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009f).

Throughout the assessment of ALBA's documents, it is clear that cooperation and solidarity are not only words, but underlying notions that are emphasized within each document. Every agreement that does not have very obvious ties with the social well-being of the *pueblos* has underlying aims for social development. For example, the working group on industrial production concentrates on industries that produce food and health products that affect the population (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009b). Another example is the Peoples' Trade Agreement that does not focus on capital as the trading medium, but rather on goods and services that benefit each member's society, for instance, the offering of scholarships and free health services by Cuba to Bolivians is exchanged for agricultural and mining goods. (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2006).

### **THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FTAA AND ALBA**

There is a large amount of contestation surrounding the FTAA. ALBA shows this contestation through its allegiance to principles that ideologically counter those of the FTAA, while certain participants of civil society, especially the hemispheric social alliance, counter its very existence. This phenomenon is precisely what Polanyi has termed the "double movement". This is a simultaneous movement of market expansion and a counter movement that attempts to limit its expansion. The counter movement occurs because of a natural need for self-protection through legislation and social intervention, since further market expansion or economic liberalization threatens the social well-being of the people through the decrease of social

services or simply a lack of them (Palacios, 2001, p. 5-6). This is what will be shown in this section, through the comparison of various principles and notions within both regional arrangements.

Venezuela has proven to be the black sheep of the FTAA negotiations. Besides voicing concerns regarding the definition of democracy being used by the FTAA texts during the Third Summit in 2001 (Organization of American States, 2001) and the complete reservation behind the philosophy of free trade being pushed by the FTAA during the Special Summit in 2004 (FTAA, 2004), Venezuela has produced seven documents voicing reservations or much needed additions to the FTAA. I will briefly explore two out of the seven documents that touch on key issues present in all seven documents.

The first document is the *FTAA Trades Negotiation Committee – Working Document September-October 2003* where Venezuela expressed apprehension for the fast approaching deadlines of the FTAA. For the reason that the Venezuelan Constitution requires prior informed consent of the citizenry and a referendum on the FTAA document before its formal signing, the nearing of the 2005 deadline for the creation of the FTAA caused serious concern. This Venezuelan requirement demanded substantial time and a strong need for increased transparency in the FTAA process, especially since only the economic sector of each country was aware of the FTAA proceedings. Secondly, Venezuela held reservations against the inequality amongst members of the FTAA claiming that free competition between unequal countries will benefit only the strongest ones and the FTAA must take on concrete steps to permanently reduce inequalities amongst countries through for

example Structural Convergence Funds (FTAA-Trade Negotiations Committee, 2003a).

The second document is the *FTAA Trade Negotiations Committee – Memorandum November 2003*. Here, Venezuela addressed some important issues that affect all of Latin America. First, there was a growing concern that the FTAA would eliminate the rich and historic cultural diversity that is present. Second, although the FTAA states that no services supplied by the government will be privatized, Venezuela was concerned that in the end all services would be privatized through increased liberalization, since services that are private now were once provided by the government. Third, the idea of agriculture as a way of life in Latin America was emphasized as a reason to treat it differently and not as a commodity that can be traded (unequally, since other countries subsidize their agricultural sectors). Lastly, the idea of intellectual property rights further concentrated in the FTAA threatens many peoples of Latin America and will without doubt threaten standards of living (FTAA-Trade Negotiations Committee, 2003b).

These two documents show the beginnings of contestations found in the ideological underpinnings of the FTAA by Venezuela. Through these reservations, it is easier to understand the intended path behind the ALBA principles and their direct opposition to the FTAA. In fact, there are certain principles within ALBA that can be directly contrasted with those in the FTAA.

First, the ways in which ALBA and the FTAA were created were very different. The FTAA was first proposed by President George Bush Senior in 1990 and driven further by Latin American and Caribbean governments (Phillips, 2005, p.



3) and is structured almost identically to NAFTA. It is commonly called a ‘package deal’ where free trade and market access advantages only come with ‘trade related issues’, such as intellectual property rights (p. 7-8), which are based on comparative advantage (Kellogg, 2009). ALBA on the other hand was created through the Hemispheric Social Alliance (HSA), and the Cuban and Venezuelan governments. The HSA was formed by the “outsider” civil society that did not provide constructive criticism to the FTAA, promoted political mobilization against it and was thus not invited to “participate” in its summits (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 306). It was through the HSA that ALBA’s political agenda was created through the *Alternatives for the Americas* documents that were used as policy guidelines (Saguier, 2007, p. 258). ALBA was based on comparative need, rather than on the FTAA’s comparative advantage (Kellogg, 2009). And so, even from the creation of the FTAA which was a top-down construction, and the creation of ALBA which was a bottom-up construction, there is a dialectical relationship.

Second, there is a large difference in the way civil society is treated within both regional agreements. In 1998, during the Fourth Ministerial Meeting, the FTAA created the Committee of Government Representatives on Civil Society. This was to be the link between civil society and the FTAA. However, only groups that expressed ‘constructive views’ were invited to join. This venture was more so an attempt by the FTAA to partner up with civil society in search for legitimacy and support from the public eye. However, it is important to note that this Committee had no direct connections with the FTAA negotiations (Briceño Ruiz, 2007, p. 304). Even worse, civil society had absolutely no access to

ministerial meetings which is where economic integration was propelled. Civil society with constructive views of the FTAA had limited access to the summits where political integration was discussed within loose frameworks and no endpoints (Grugel, 2006, p. 216). Any other mechanisms created to “include” civil society such as the internet system for civil society consultation failed (p. 217-218). ALBA however, as was mentioned earlier, has policies that are based on civil society’s development of an alternative to the FTAA (Saguier, 2007, p. 258). Furthermore, even before the official creation of ALBA, in January of 2004, President Chavez spoke of the absolute necessity of a Council of Social Movements of ALBA, which was formally created during the Fifth Summit of ALBA in 2007. This Council is invited to participate directly during the ALBA summits, having a decisive impact on national goals of ALBA members. Women and indigenous peoples are strongly encouraged to participate within this Council, a proposal that is not put forth in the FTAA (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009f).

Third, there is a significant difference in the working groups established in the FTAA and in ALBA. While the working groups in the FTAA (market access, custom procedures and rules of origin, investment, standards and technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, subsidies, antidumping and countervailing duties, smaller economics, government procurement, intellectual property rights, trades on services and competition policy, agriculture) all focus on the efficiency of free trade and liberalization (FTAA 1995, 1996), ALBA’s working groups always have a social underpinning. Some of ALBA’s more economic working groups (industrial production, trade, new financial

architecture, energy integration, tourism and infrastructure and transport), are supported with social aims and complemented with social working groups (accreditation and evaluation of higher education systems, international law and self determination and respect for sovereignty and human rights, food sovereignty and security) (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009d & Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009b).

Fourth, the FTAA, centered on free trade and purely economic integration, would increase exports and investment; this would be based on a continuous exploitation of cheap and intensive labour that would further hinder the development of Latin America (Venezuelan Bank of External Commerce, 2004). ALBA on the other hand, is a “social integration” based on mutual cooperation and solidarity through the exchange of goods and services that best benefit the *pueblos* (Kellogg, 2007, p. 200). Economic liberalization, deregulation and privatization are seen as inhibitors for the access of basic social services and this is why there is a need for endogenous development, focusing on eliminating the technological and human capital asymmetries between Latin American and the developed countries.

The fifth difference that is crucial to look at between the two integrations is their treatment of smaller or less developed economies. Although the FTAA had created a working group on smaller economies during the First Ministerial Summit in 1995, no concrete steps towards eliminating asymmetries between countries was taken until the creation of the Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP) during the Seventh Ministerial Meeting in 2002. Nevertheless, the key issue with the HCP is however, not when it was enacted, but rather the reasons it gave for providing assistance to smaller

economies which was for the “Establishment of a mechanism to enable countries to define, prioritize, and articulate needs related to strengthening the capacity for: i) preparing for negotiations; ii) implementing trade commitments; and iii) adjusting to integration (FTAA, 2002).” This means that the priority of the FTAA was the advancement of negotiations involving the smaller economies and not their development. ALBA on the other hand, focuses on Compensatory Funds for Structural Convergence with both economic and social aims. It also puts into practice special and differentiated treatment with both members and specific sectors, something that was denied and brushed aside during FTAA negotiations. A final factor that is a detail, but a very crucial one, is that ALBA strives to define a “smaller economy”, something that is not considered in the FTAA (Venezuelan Bank of External Commerce, 2004).

Finally, the environment is another way in which the ideological differences can be drawn out from the agreements. The environment is mentioned several times during the FTAA summits. During the beginning of the negotiation phase, there was a push towards environmental sustainability, however, this term was never defined, and thus, it is hard to pinpoint exactly what was meant by this. More importantly, during the latter half of negotiations, notably during the Sixth Ministerial Meeting, environmental policies were seen as possible protectionist measures within the free trade. To counter this idea, ALBA maintains that capitalism destroys Mother Earth through unsustainable practices of production and consumption that is unequally divided among the world’s population (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009e). Moreover, through Petrocaribe, ALBA maintains that it must not waste energy as

the developed countries do, but rather consume it responsibly (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2007a).

## CONCLUSION

Through the examination of certain FTAA negotiation documents and ALBA documents, key concepts from each approach to regional integration have surfaced. While the FTAA focused on free trade, liberalization and promotion of democracy, ALBA concentrated on solidarity, cooperation and social well-being. Comparing the major policies or principles within both arrangements has allowed the surfacing of a dialectical relationship. It has become clear that ALBA was created in opposition to the FTAA, as an “alternative” through the ideas of civil society (Saguier, 2007, p. 258).

This is what Polanyi called the ‘double movement’, where the FTAA attempts to expand the reach of the market with further liberalization, deregulation and privatization, whilst the peoples of Latin America respond to this action through a counter-movement, establishing a socially-focused ALBA. This is seen by Cox as a form of counter-hegemony, where an alternative view of development is supported by a sufficient amount of power (Cox, 1981, p. 115). Beginning with only two members, ALBA now has nine committed members (Portal ALBA-TCP, 2009g) and has developed a “gravitational pull south”, becoming a very appealing alternative to several Latin American and Caribbean countries (Kellogg, 2009). The very fact that ALBA members can bypass the market and discuss their nation’s social and economic needs with its members for the trading of goods and services without resorting to capital, especially the American dollar, truly shows

a great amount of power (Kellogg, 2007, p. 206).

It is also important to consider the scalar arrangements of the FTAA and ALBA, which portray the space within which social forces and counter social forces are at play. ALBA, although a regional arrangement, has stretched its influence into several scalar planes, even the smallest plane of ethnic communities that are able to voice their needs and concerns within the regional agreement. ALBA has much more support from several scalar constructions because of the fact that it is an agreement *for* the people and made *by* the people (Fernando Bossi, 2009), harnessing more support than the FTAA which is appealing only to the transnational managerial class through its business friendly environment.

ALBA is without doubt a strong step towards a different world, one that stands up to neo-liberalism and US hegemony that has been prevalent within Latin America and the Caribbean for decades. It is definitely a shining example to the nations of the world, of a cooperative development that does not exploit and exclude, but unites and ensures social development for all states and peoples.

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