



LOGICS OF UNION ACTION IN CHILE

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ABSTRACT

The acute crisis Chile faces at present has made the subjects of democratic alternatives and reconstruction a source of renewed concern. With regard to the latter, greater emphasis is being placed on perspectives upholding the need for the so-called "concertation" between the different social and political groups, with an aim to ensure adequate conditions of governability for a country that will remain under strong political and social tensions in the future, mainly as a result of the legacy of the authoritarian regime. From this perspective, we shall attempt to analyse the present situation of the trade union movement, its recent historical antecedents and its possible future evolution. Some of the questions that arise are: What were the logics of union action in the past? Will trade unions constitute one of the fundamental hubs of social and political "concertation" in Chile? What course of action will they choose to follow? What type of relations will they establish with the entrepreneurs and the political system? What social orientation will characterize union activity in the future? In the first section, we outline some of the elements that must be taken into account in order to establish a diagnosis of trade unionism, both in its present and pre-1973 situation. In the second section, a prospective analysis of union activity is developed. In both cases the aim is to set forth tentative hypotheses and to provide some possible interpretations of the trade union phenomenon, and on no account to present an airtight case. Lastly, we should like to point out that this study does not contemplate agricultural or rural unionism. This subject has a specificity and complexity of its own, and will be analyzed in future research.

RESUMEN

La aguda crisis por la que atraviesa Chile en la actualidad ha hecho rebrotar con fuerza los temas de las alternativas y la reconstrucción democrática. Dentro de este último, parecen desarrollarse con énfasis aquellas perspectivas que enfatizan la necesidad de la concertación entre los diversos actores sociales y políticos, de modo de asegurar condiciones de gobernabilidad a un país que, principalmente como resultado de las herencias que le deja el régimen autoritario, seguirá sometido en el futuro a fuertes tensiones políticas y sociales. Es en esa perspectiva que intentamos analizar la situación actual del movimiento sindical, sus antecedentes históricos recientes y su posible evolución futura. ¿Cuáles fueron las lógicas de acción sindical del sindicalismo en el pasado? ¿Se constituirá el movimiento sindical en uno de los ejes fundamentales de esa búsqueda concertación social y política en Chile? ¿Cuáles serán las orientaciones para la acción sindical, el tipo de relación con los empresarios y con el sistema político y la orientación societal que caracterizarán el movimiento sindical en el futuro? En una primera sección, reseñamos algunos elementos para un diagnóstico del sindicalismo, tanto de su situación actual como de aquella previa a 1973. En la segunda sección se desarrolla un análisis prospectivo del movimiento sindical. En ambos casos se trata de plantear hipótesis tentativas y de sugerir algunas posibles interpretaciones del fenómeno sindical, más que de intentar demostraciones rigurosas. Por último, cabe mencionar que en este trabajo no nos hemos referido al sindicalismo agrícola o campesino, a pesar de su enorme importancia. Dada su especificidad y complejidad optamos por diferir su análisis para futuros estudios.

I. UNIONISM IN CHILE: ELEMENTS FOR A DIAGNOSIS

1. The global situation of unionism after 1973

The main features characterizing the situation of unionism in the post-1973 decade have been the decline of its historical volume, the loss of an important part of its capacity to act on behalf of its affiliates, and the limitation of its role as an active participant in the national political system. This has come about due to the confluence of many causes, such as the government's severely restrictive policy vis-à-vis the unions and their leaders; the results of the application of an economic model which led to heavy unemployment and disindustrialization; a labour legislation that left the workers unprotected and allowed only the limited expression of certain interests in the economic sphere, related to the specific situation of each enterprise; and the diffusion of ideological propaganda aimed at destroying the principles of collective solidarity and favouring an individualistic outlook 1/.

A clear picture of the impact suffered by unionism under the military government, in quantitative terms, is provided by the comparative figures of union affiliation and employment for the years 1973 and 1983.

Between 1973 and 1983 the percentage of the unionized labour force fell from 27% to under 8%, that is to less than a third of the previous level. It is also illustrative to note that while in 1973 there were almost 10 times more unionized than unemployed workers, in 1983 the number of unemployed was more than three times that of unionized workers.

This fall in the rate of union membership in the labour force is the result of three inter-reinforcing factors. First is the high rate of unemployment, which rose from approximately 6% in the 1965-72 period to 32% in 1983 (Table 2), causing what we can call the "unemployment effect". Increased rates of unemployment, inasmuch as they involve the dismissal of previously unionized workers, produce a direct reduction in the rate of union membership in the labour force.

Secondly, there is what can be called the "employment composition effect". As a result of neo-liberal government economic policies, there was a relative decline in the levels of employment (and production) in the goods-producing sectors (mining, industry, construction, electricity, gas and water) and in transport, which were the most heavily unionized, while levels of employment showed a relative growth in the least unionized sectors such as commerce, finance and services (Table 1) 2/, 3/. It should be noted that the shrinking sectors, industry and construction in particular, had been the more stable and dynamic affiliates of the Central Unica de Trabajadores (CUT), the principal national trade union confederation up to 1973.

Lastly, the third factor is what we can call the "organizational weakening effect", which is the reduction in the "rate of union membership among those employed" in each of the different sectors under consideration (Table 1). This decline in the rate of unionization in the various sectors is a result of political and legal constraints on union association, but

it is also due to the unions' difficulties in providing an effective response to the demands of their members in the post-1973 economic and socio-political situation. This leads us to conclude that the decline in union membership includes a certain element of demobilization that accompanies and is related to the aforementioned structural and institutional conditions, and affects the disposition toward union membership 4/.

Although these three factors reinforce each other in bringing about the drop in the rate of union membership in the labour force to less than a third of the previous total, as mentioned above 5/, it is interesting to make a distinction between them for example when analysing a possible future evolution of the labour force unionization rate. As we shall discuss below, while it would be possible to counteract the "organizational weakening effect" rather quickly in a context of democratic reconstruction, the severe economic restrictions that will certainly persist throughout the eighties would make the reversal of both the "unemployment effect" and the "employment composition effect" a much slower and more difficult process. It is significant to observe that these two effects alone have made the rate of labour force unionization fall to almost half its previous level over the past decade.

The decline of trade unionism coincides with a deterioration in the workers' economic situation. In this regard, it is useful to point out that while in the 1965-1972 period, the purchasing power of the salaries expanded at a 6.5% annual rate, and the average unemployment

Table 1. PROPORTION OF UNION AFFILIATES IN RELATION TO THE EMPLOYED POPULATION FOR THE YEARS
1973 AND 1983, ACCORDING TO CHOSEN SECTORS (EXCLUDES THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR).
(IN THOUSANDS OF PERSONS)

Sector	1973			1983			Rate of relative unionization (6):(3) (7)
	N° of persons employed (1)	Union affiliates (2)	Rate of unionization (2):(1) (3)	N° of persons employed (4)	Union affiliates (5)	Rate of unionization (5):(4) (6)	
Mining	104.6	81.6	78.0	58.1	47.9	82.3	1.1
Industry	545.0	280.1	51.4	379.3	98.1	25.8	0.5
Construction	163.9	54.8	32.9	85.7	8.5	9.9	0.3
Gas, water and electricity	29.7	16.7	56.1	21.4	10.0	46.6	0.8
Trade and finance	427.2	116.2	27.2	645.5	53.2	8.2	0.3
Transport	199.9	83.3	41.6	180.5	44.0	24.4	0.6
Social and personal services	920.9	47.9	5.2	1.260.4	35.4	2.8	0.5
T O T A L S:	2.391.2	679.9	28.4	2.630.9	297.2	11.3	0.4

Source: Patricio Frías: "Dimensiones cuantitativas de la afiliación sindical", CED, 1984, draft.

level was 5.7%, throughout the 1974-1984 decade effective salaries have decreased at a yearly rate of 1%, with a sharp drop between 1972 and 1975, a gradual recovery during 1976-1982 and again a reduction in 1983, while the average unemployment level has reached a 19.0% (Table 2).

However, it is necessary to temper the pessimistic diagnosis with regard to trade unionism by pointing out that it is still strong in some key sectors such as mining (especially copper) and the large gas, water and electricity enterprises. Even in the cases of industry and transport -despite their sharp decline- the rate of union membership is still higher than the Latin American averages. Thus, although the process of fragmentation has been serious, urban and mining trade unionism remains a noteworthy factor in social and economic relations. Especially so if we consider that their degree of organization is greater than that of any other social sector in the country.

It is also important to mention that the sectoral relative importance of affiliation persists, and the mining (copper and coal), basic services (gas, water and electricity), industry and transport unions are still the principal mainstays of union organization. Trade unionism also preserves its character of an institution linked to the more formalized sector of the economy, by concentrating -with the exception of construction and commerce- in unions at the enterprise and inter-enterprise levels (Table 3); thus trade unionism continues to play an active role in the principal production relations of society.

Table 2. WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT, 1965-1983
(in percentages)

Period	Annual growth rate of real wages (1)	Average unemployment rate (2)
1965-72	6,5	5,7
1974	-19,2	9,2
1975	- 3,2	16,5
1976	2,9	20,3
1977	10,4	18,6
1978	6,4	17,9
1979	8,3	17,3
1980	8,4	17,2
1981	9,0	15,6
1982	0,0	27,0
1983	- 9,4	32,0

Source: René Cortázar: "Derechos laborales y desarrollo: desafíos y tensiones"; in CIEPLAN, Reconstrucción Económica para la Democracia, Ed. Aconcagua, 1983.

Table 3. EMPLOYED AND UNIONIZED POPULATION ACCORDING TO TYPES OF UNION ORGANIZATION, BY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY (EXCLUDING AGRICULTURE) 1983

Sector	Workers organized in the following types of unions:					Rate of affiliation	
	Employed population	Enterprise	Inter-enterprise	Independent	Transitory		Total
Mining	58,125	46,720	65	1,000	94	47,879	82.3
Industry	379,341	87,791	9,887	183	208	98,069	25.8
Construction	85,658	1,278	370	33	6,872	8,553	9.9
Electricity	21,441	6,400	3,602	-	-	10,002	46.6
Trade and finance	645,491	28,358	3,757	21,072	47	53,234	8.2
Transport and communications	180,493	21,088	9,616	9,460	3,877	44,041	24.4
Community, social and personal services	1,260,390	25,041	3,731	3,889	2,768	35,429	2.8
Not well specified	-	836	283	559	259	1,937	-
T O T A L S:	2,630,939	217,512	31,311	36,196	14,125	299,144	11.3

Source: Patricio Frías: "Dimensiones cuantitativas de la afiliación sindical", CED, 1984; draft.

Definitions:

Enterprise unions: Group together workers belonging to the same enterprise.

Inter-enterprise unions: Group together workers of at least three different enterprises, requiring a minimum number of 75 workers for its constitution.

Independent unions: Group together workers not dependent on an employer, and require a minimum of 25 affiliates.

Transitory Unions: Group together workers in the same activity; these were initially formed in the construction sector, but later on they were extended to shipping workers, and their purpose is to provide jobs for their current or future associates, under conditions previously contracted with the different employers.

These facts allow us to affirm that, notwithstanding the setbacks it has suffered, the structural profile of trade unionism has tended to persist, albeit in a context of heavily reduced affiliation and the loss of socio-political influence.

Thus, the present situation of the unions shows that, despite the restrictions to which they are subjected, some abiding factors such as those we have mentioned have helped to mitigate their disruption and have allowed them to maintain links with their traditional forms of activity. Another aiding factor is the activation of relations with political parties of the opposition since 1981.

Clear evidence that trade unionism has survived the crisis is provided by the sustained effort on the part of the unions to defend the working conditions of their associates during the post-1973 period. It is also manifest in the regrouping of approximately 32 confederations and federations out of the 130 existing at the moment of the military takeover. At a national level, the creation of more global organizations (National Confederations), despite the heavy restrictions imposed on their sphere of influence, represented one of the first public oppositions of government policies and the impugnation of the regime itself. These organizations were also the first to promote the 1983 and 1984 social mobilizations known as "national protests".

Consequently, despite the conditions of fragmentation and exclusion to which social organizations have been subjected, trade unionism has managed to persist throughout the decade, making its presence felt in labour

relations and in political relations on a global scale.

2. The specific logics of union action

Although the preceding analysis gives a true picture of several aspects of the overall situation of trade unionism, especially with regard to the structural aspects, a more thorough analysis requires us to transcend the general vision of these conditions, particularly if our aim is to provide the basis for a prospective outlook. It is necessary to link the structural perspective to the analysis of the specific logics of behaviour of the labor movement as a social actor.

One of the most important points to be considered is that, from a sociological point of view, trade unionism cannot be described as a homogeneous actor. In fact, the economic structure is made up of very diverse labour situations in terms of their relationship with the investment process, technical progress, the evolution of professional qualifications, of the labour markets, employment and salary levels and the degree of monopoly of firms, among other factors. Additionally, the type of relations with the management, the State and the political system generate different conditions and demands on union activities. These factors lead to the establishment of distinctive logics of action which must be taken into account 6/.

These logics will be examined in the light of five variables: the type of prevailing union action; the orientation given to union objectives; the relations established with the management of the enterprises; the type

of links with the political system including the relationship with political parties, and the global social projects or orientations expressed by the union strategies.

Let us now consider the role played by these variables in two contexts: the situation prior to 1973, in order to examine the more specific union strategies up to the moment of the military takeover; and the post-1973 period, so as to analyse the changes that have taken place since then. In this way, we shall attempt to gather together the necessary elements which will permit us to carry out a prospective analysis later on, based not only on the overall situation of unionism, but also on an evaluation of the more specific processes taking place within the unions themselves.

a) Logics of union action prior to 1973

In the phase prior to the military regime and since the 40s, at least two types of overall union logics can be clearly identified. On the one hand, that observed in general in the modern-monopolistic sectors, which was developed in its purest form in the great State-owned production and services enterprises; these constituted not only a modern sector of the economy, but were also the instruments through which the State attempted to exert its role in conducting development. The other is a logic which was implemented principally in the medium and small enterprise sectors. To this group belong most enterprises in the manufacturing industry and construction sectors. They have less monopoly

power, and in general, have an inferior level of technology and are less capital intensive than those in the modern monopolistic sector. We can also include in this group -with some differences- the unions of the Public Administration officials and those of some sectors of Commerce 7/. The banking sector can be considered an intermediate case. The two segments considered not only differ from an economic point of view, but also represent different social situations in the broader sense of the term.

In the case of the modern monopolistic sector, the traditional tendency of unions was to give preference to labour relations at the enterprise level. Their aim was to gain certain benefits for their affiliates, such as better salaries, employment and working conditions, and to hold some degree of influence in the process of decision-making. In the great majority, these improvements could be obtained at the enterprise level. Let us keep in mind that, in general, these were modern technology and strongly capital intensive units, with high levels of productivity. They could therefore ensure work and salary conditions far above those of the average Chilean standards. As they were also usually monopolistic or highly oligopolistic enterprises, they tended to coincide with the industry or sector, or to account for a large part of its production. Their monopolistic nature allowed them to "transfer" to the consumer, in the form of higher prices, at least part of the cost entailed by the benefits gained by the workers. In the case of State-owned enterprises, these benefits frequently resulted in a reduction of public revenue. The latter had to

be compensated through increases in taxes, reductions in public expenditure, or increases in the deficit. These constituted the mechanisms through which the costs of the collective agreements were "transferred" at least partially to other sectors of society. The workers of this sector were also favoured by the stability inherent to government-supported jobs and the fact of belonging to economically strategic institutions; as these represented the State's "key" investments, their priority afforded them a greater degree of manoeuvrability vis-à-vis the changing general conditions of the economy.

Moreover, within the modern monopolistic sector, the technical and management levels constitute, in general, a modern technocracy, favourable to the development of industrial relations; this was particularly the case in the public sector.

Therefore unions of the steel industry, oil, electric power, state-owned copper mines, telecommunications, air and sea transport enterprises, as well as those of many of the large private concerns, were not in general particularly interested in extra and supra-enterprise federative coalitions. This tendency was enhanced by the fact that, in most cases, the structure of these unions made them equivalent to a national trade union, with enough power of their own to make themselves heard in Parliament and the central government, where decisions beyond the area of influence of management were made. The role of the unions was thus of a predominantly corporative nature, blending into the general bureaucratic organization of the enterprise. However, this does not mean to say that no relations existed with federative

or confederative bodies, such as CUT (Central Unica de Trabajadores) up to 1973, or with the political parties, because these were always kept up; but the fact remains that union organizations of this type were only very mildly supportive of CUT and, in some cases, relations were almost nonexistent. Neither does it mean that there was no conflict between the unions and the managements, but this occurred within a relationship defined more in terms of integration than confrontation. On the whole, negotiations were based on a rationale of upward mobility, both at the professional and social levels, by means of improved salaries and assistance, where the underlying idea of belonging to a technically qualified middle stratum played an important role (Table 4).

In general, there was a greater relative tendency to support political gradualism -either centrist or leftist- in this union sector, although during some stages leftist radicalism also found an attentive audience. This was partly due to the fact that often gradualist political proposals were more in tune with the experience of positive social mobility in this sector, whereas radicalization was linked with the anticipation of a crisis in this mobility. Additionally, in this segment, and despite their great importance, the political parties did not completely subordinate the trade unions, because these upheld their corporate interests forcefully. This was very clear during the Unidad Popular (Allende's government), where leftist sectors in the copper industries confronted the government administration in terms of their local claims 8/. We are not suggesting that there was a "structural determinism" in the political af-

filiation of the union leaders, we are simply recognizing the weight that this aspect might have had on the political configuration of this type of unionism.

Lastly, the global social projects of this sector (or its social orientation) were mainly focused on provoking social change, and development was defined above all by an emphasis on bringing about the modernization of the economic system whereas democratization was sought by means of a sustained increase in social mobility.

In the second case, represented by the trade unionism of the sectors of medium and small enterprises, the Public Administration and Commerce, union action was based mainly on a strategy of confrontation, rather than integration, between the enterprise management or owners and the unions. Unlike the previous case, the general tendency here -with some exceptions, of course- was for the union not to integrate into the enterprise's general organization. Consequently, only a limited corporative spirit existed, which was stronger among the administration's employees and technicians than among the blue collar workers. The latter typically formed unions to confront the owners, and the union itself was frequently built up on the ashes of the battle against the owners, who opposed the idea. The concept of "industrial relations", as part of management strategy, existed only in relatively larger, more modern and impersonal enterprises; in most of the others, a policy of exclusion or of authoritarian paternalism prevailed.

The financial weakness of the enterprises, who held no monopolist

power and were therefore unable to "transfer" to the consumers, via higher prices, the cost of the benefits obtained through union battles, added to the weakness of the trade unions, who were small in number and fragile in organization, made the latter favour federative strategies in order to obtain benefits, especially with regard to salaries. This rationale was followed both to obtain agreements at the industry or sector level concerning economic benefits for its affiliates, 9/ and also to gain influence in governmental and parliamentary circles, where decisions involving important macro-economic variables, such as those related to the management of an inflationary economy, were made. Thus, although a large proportion of the collective agreements were signed at the firm level, federative action was perceived in fact as an essential instrument to participate in the definition of the global framework of these negotiations. This tendency toward federative action persisted despite the difficulties to implement it. For this reason, the more important federations by branches (textiles, metallurgy, leather and footwear, graphic industry, bakery, construction, etc.) were developed in this sector. Some of them even managed to establish minimum salary scales common to the same branch. The aforementioned sectors were the basis of CUT activities up to 1973.

In this sector, and in connexion with the above, the influence of the political parties was decisive, in that they were the principal intermediaries vis-à-vis the political system and the State. In this case, the confrontational stance of the leftist parties was more akin to the situa-

tion of unionist exclusion, which is why they normally had greater influence than the centrist parties. Even so, the latter also developed considerably in this segment. At the same time, the parties became a veritable "backbone" 10/ of unionism in this sector, and for this reason their predominance acquired greater weight than in the former sector. This was particularly noticeable in the federations and in CUT 11/.

The day-to-day orientation of union action was to fight to establish minimum working conditions, ensure the observance of labour laws by the employers and improve the standard of living, which was sought with a permanent reference to State action and intervention; but its societal orientation was aimed mainly at obtaining social change, upholding the idea of "substantive democratization", which meant giving greater social power to the unions, in order to widen the scope of the political system and promote structural reforms which were conceived as strongly anti-capitalistic. This was encouraged by the political parties, especially those of the left but also by some of the ones of the center, both of which had strong roots in these sectors.

In the case of the Public Administration officials, who acted through associations because they were not allowed to unionize, the logic followed was similar to the above as regards federative action and the reference to global economic policies, from a position of corporative weakness. This explains the importance of ANEF (Asociación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales) and its role within CUT. The same is applicable, although with some variations, to CEPCH, which grouped together some commercial sec-

tors and employees from the private area.

To summarize, then, Chilean trade unionism was characterized mainly by a strategy based on a logic of industrial relations in the modern monopolistic sector, and more specifically in the key State-owned production and services units; and by a strategy based mainly on the struggle (usually at a sectoral and sometimes at a national level) for basic working conditions and improved standards of living in most of the manufacturing and construction sectors, including, up to a certain point, the public and commercial sectors as well. This distinction is obviously not a rigid one, and does not mean to imply that no superposition, interchange or variations of the two approaches took place, along the economic or political cycles.

Even though it is very difficult to produce precise estimates we believe that about one third of the unionized labor force could be classified as belonging to the modern-monopolistic sector 12/.

In any event, the two different logics were developed within a framework common in many aspects to them both. For example, in both cases trade unionism played an active role within an institutional political system, and also many of their claims and struggles were processed through political channels; it was only on very few occasions that a tendency to break off with the institutional political system was expressed, which illustrates the decisive importance of the mediating role played by the political parties in union activities. The "industrial cordons" established up to 1972-73 attempted to express a more independent line of action, based

on the idea of a "dual" or "alternative" power; however, their experience was too short-lived and sectoral (mainly in the sector of small manufacturing enterprises which had not been included in the area of "social property") to believe that it had a significant penetration in unionism as a whole.

CUT -the main organization at the national level- derived its relative strength from its ability to represent the multidimensional aspects of union activity, by uniting institutional activities and social mobilization to attain progress in more specific claims for workers' rights, and including in the latter both the corporative rationale of the more modern sectors and the fight for general work and standard of living conditions. However, CUT was clearly more representative of the second logic than the former, in terms of the type of action it carried out, the orientation given to union action, its relations with the political system and the characteristics of its social orientation, all of which partly account for its limited representativity (Table 4).

Another influencing factor, in the sense that it also limited the representativity of the CUT, was its excessive dependence on the political parties, which led to it being hyper-politicized, especially during the last years of its existence 13/.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the distinction we have made between the first and second sectors is an attempt to devise two global and inclusive groups only in which the described logics of union action are observed. As we mentioned before, these two sectors could be

divided up in several subsectors, with different orientations, mechanisms for relating with the political system, and social projects. However, our contention is that these additional divisions do not alter the basic understanding of the two main logics as the dominant modes which define union action.

As in all typologies, this one is also based on a degree of oversimplification, because certain segments adjust better than others to the defined categories, and there are some whose classification is uncertain. However, what is lost in terms of specific detail is gained by providing a comprehensive and relatively simple picture of the situation.

As an example, and in connection with the above, the classic distinction between blue- and white-collar unionism, a legal classification but which was important in establishing the separate identities and conflicting interests between these segments, does not seem to us to be more inclusive than the typology we have used here. In effect, although blue-collar and white-collar workers showed **differentiated behaviours**, these did not provoke a break in the overall corporate enterprise logic or the federative logic with reference to global policies, because their confrontations took place within these two dominant approaches. This derived from the fact that the social situation of the white- and blue-collar workers and their position in the economic structure was more homogeneous in each of the groups we have mentioned than was the case according to their legal category. Exceptions can obviously be pointed out, but in our view these would not invalidate our hypothesis.

All things considered, we can say that our reasoning is more rigorously applicable to industrial (basic and manufacturing) and mining unionism, which are the most important union sectors in the country.

It excludes agriculture or rural unions, even though these showed similar traits to those of the second sector. In turn, the public administration presented the specific characteristics of the public bureaucracy and employee unionism, which should be taken into consideration in a more detailed analysis. However, ANEF (Agrupación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales -National Association of Public Employees) traditionally followed the CUT model and formed part of it, which brought it closer to industrial unionism, thus reflecting its deteriorated social and economic condition.

Lastly, the unionism of commerce, equivalent in dimension to that of small or medium-sized enterprises, even though representing very heterogeneous and disperse segments, once it managed to get organized, did so according to a federative logic and became involved in a political struggle similar to that of industrial and even CUT unionism.

b) Post-1973 logics of union action

The point now is to establish whether these logics are still in force and, consequently, whether the current orientations of union action are similar to those of the past. In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine the global socio-economic and political context in which union activity is inserted.

Table 4. PRE-1973 LOGICS OF UNION ACTION

Sector	Prevailing type of action	Prevailing union orientation	Prevailing type of relations with the management or owner	Prevailing mechanisms for relating with the political system	Prevailing social projects (social orientation)
Modern monopolistic	Enterprise industrial relations	Professional and socio-economic mobility	Integration	Directly and through parties	Social change emphasizing the modernization of the economic system and increasing social mobility
Medium and small enterprises, the Public Administration, Commerce and the National Confederation (CUT)	Tendency towards Federative action, with reference to sectoral and national policies	Struggle to establish basic working conditions and improve the standard of living with reference to State action	Exclusion and confrontation	Federations, confederations, CUT and political parties	Left and in a smaller proportion the center, with a greater tendency towards political radicalism

First, the national political system has disintegrated to an extreme where relations between the social organizations and the State are practically nonexistent. This has resulted in the dismemberment of the mechanisms of social and political participation, i.e., of the common ground where diverse union practices could converge. Thus, the realm of State and macro-political matters tends to acquire its own sphere of development, setting a distance between itself and the sphere of work relations at the factory or services level. The relations between the unions and the political system, which in the past were mediated by the political parties and the higher union organizations, especially the CUT, have been carried out very weakly -at least in the first nine years of the military regime- by national Confederations, the so-called union "groups" and, on a lesser scale, by the Catholic Church (Tables 4 and 5).

Secondly, the economic model applied, which provoked a rise in unemployment from a historical 6% to an almost 20% average in the 1974-1983 period, increased the number of sectors that were excluded from unionism and generated a vast contingent of sub-employed persons, thus contributing to the weakening of the unions' bargaining position. The changes in the structure of production and employment provoked a loss of dynamism in sectors such as industry and construction, where unionism had traditionally been strong, thus limiting its potentiality. At the same time, the expansion of other sectors, such as trade and services, did not provide the necessary conditions to develop new unionist forces (Table 1).

Additionally, the evolution of salaries during the last decade has

basically been the result of official readjustment policies applied by the government, which have been particularly restrictive 14/. Such is the case that the effective average salaries in the 1974-1983 period are 20% lower than in 1970, thus impoverishing the entire working class.

In the pre-1973 period the workers of the modern monopolistic sector usually attained special conditions, above the average found in the labour market. During the past decade, however, a certain homogeneity has been developing, in the sense that during most of that period both the workers of this sector and those working in what we have called the medium and small enterprises sector, have had to depend on the government's official readjustment policies.

Thirdly, the logic of exclusion with respect to unions on the part of entrepreneurs, which in the pre-1973 period had tended to exist only in medium and small enterprises, became practically the standing rule in labour relations, thus affecting the systems of "industrial relations" that had matured in the modern State sector and in the more rationalized private concerns. In this way, the role of the union as an active participant in corporative affairs became ineffectual (Tables 4 and 5).

Fourthly, labour laws were enforced that confined labour relations to their most restricted limits.

The changes in the labour legislation, among other aspects, reduced the coverage of the minimum wages, drastically limited the legal provisions ensuring greater work stability, cut down the compensation payments

for dismissals, and concentrated negotiations exclusively at the firm level, thus curtailing the participation of large sectors of workers.

These economic and socio-political changes have brought about, among other aspects, an increase in the sectors excluded from union activity; a weakening of the links between the high rank union leaders and the local workers; a weakening of collective solidarity; a stratification and pinpointing of claims and conflicts, and a reduced vision of national or sectoral economic and political events which serve as reference points to orient the actions of the local unions.

This set of elements, both structural and political, have contributed to a change in the logic of action of unions.

In the sectors of the medium and small enterprises, the pre-1973 tendency towards a federative type of union action was restricted to defending limited corporative interests at the enterprise level, or job level, and dispersion increased thus restricting the capacity of the unions to act on behalf of the working class as a whole. This same situation can be observed in the public sector and among the commerce and services unions. In the modern monopolistic sector, although union activity at the enterprise level subsisted, this was frequently obstructed by a tendency to segment and stratify its efforts, thus affecting its consistency as an integrating body.

These same factors have contributed to a change in the prevailing union orientation in the modern monopolistic sector, from a search for greater professional and socio-economic mobility to the mere defense of

the previously acquired status, whereas in the case of the medium and small enterprises, union orientation changed from the struggle to establish basic working conditions and improved standards of living to a simply defensive strategy aimed at avoiding, or at least reducing, the critical deterioration in salaries and working conditions, the dismissals and the disintegration of the unions (Tables 4 and 5).

It goes without saying that unionism throughout this decade, due to the extremely weak position in which it was placed, has been basically incapable of mitigating the deterioration in the workers' living conditions provoked by the economic policies.

In both sectors, relations with the management, either in public or private enterprises, evolve -as we have mentioned- towards greater degrees of exclusion, restricting the practice of integrated industrial relations in the modern monopolistic sector and neutralizing the activity of the unions of the medium and small enterprises. In this way, the relations between union and enterprise were restricted almost solely to certain narrow economic aspects, closely related to the process of collective bargaining (Table 5).

Lastly, the lack of an open political system and the restrictions imposed on their strategic weight, made the unions of the modern monopolistic sector lose their ability to establish a direct relationship with the system of public decisions, on the basis of their own strength.

In the case of the unions of the medium and small enterprises, the weakening of federative action and the outlawing of political parties, prac-

tically effaced the mechanisms through which they could approach the political system.

Consequently, political and State relations at the global social level, in both cases, was deferred to what the "national groups" -and latterly the confederations that arose from them- as well as the Catholic Church and other supporting institutions could offer as intermediaries, with all the limitations this implied. In this way, relations with the political system became more fragile and fragmented, creating a tendency to separate the specific union claims from the more global political positions.

It was only after several years that the parties of the centre and left started to have a more active role in both of these sectors. During this process, the centrist parties showed some advancement, maintaining their influence in the modern monopolistic sector and improving it in the medium and small enterprise sector. At the same time, at the level of the National Confederations, and in contrast with CUT tradition, the presence of union leaders belonging to centrist political parties prevailed both within the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT - National Workers' Command) and the Central Democrática de Trabajadores (CDT - Democratic Workers' Confederation) the two main national union bodies.

Nonetheless, the reanimation of the parties and of the national confederations does not seem to have been able to overcome the disarticulation produced between the struggle of the rank-and-file and the political action of the leaders. In effect, at the national level, and at a

very early stage, the perception that the deterioration of salaries, unemployment, social indicators and labour institutionality were part of one single and coherent process, intimately linked to the nature of the prevailing regime and provoking the weakening and fragmentation of the social organizations, made the national union leaders follow a course of public confrontation of the government, with a union orientation predominantly focused towards seeking a change in the political regime (Table 5). But, unlike what happened in the pre-1973 period and due to the considerable segmentation of union action, it was not possible to achieve thematic continuity between the political action of the higher echelons and the defensive struggle of the rank-and-file. Thus, trade unions at the firm level have found themselves involved in a sometimes desperate struggle to defend specific corporate interests, be it either to preserve a certain "status" or basic labour rights, whereas the national confederations and the leaders of the local confederations and federations are immersed above all in an almost purely political action (referring to the general power of society and the State).

Tension between the struggle for specific benefits and the wider political dimension is not new in itself, because it has always existed. The difference lies in the fact that this tension used to be expressed -as we mentioned before- within an institutional political system, which was in general capable of processing the more serious tensions arising from its relations with the modern monopolistic and the medium and small enterprise sectors, and where the national union organizations played a role.

This meant that the national political and the more specific local aspects could be brought together, either in global social projects of modernization or of social and political change.

This difficulty of the more global union projects to unify action within a heterogeneous and strongly segmented rank-and-file has tended to make unionism lose the mixed (social and political) character it once had, and to create a division between its defensive or vindictory stance vis-à-vis private or public employers and its role in the national political system.

To sum up, after analysing the evolution of union logics, it is observed that the structural and political changes that have taken place during the military regime and their specific effects, produced, beyond the quantitative results (decreased union membership, unemployment, impoverishment of the workers, etc.), important effects on the two global systems of union action, which tended to become fragmented and acquire a mainly defensive orientation. Consequently, neither the corporate logic of the large enterprise nor the vindictory federative and nationally-referred logic of the medium and small enterprise, were strengthened.

Instead, what happened in the first case was the "freezing" or regression of the "industrial relations" logic and its modernizing tendency, to assume a defensive stand against a decline in status; in the other, the federative and political struggle to establish "conquests" gave way to fragmentary battles against being excluded from the economic system.

In spite of the transformations that occurred in the productive

structure, we estimate that the modern monopolistic sector continued to encompass nearly one third of the unionized workers 12/.

But, the most important feature seems to have been the dissolving of the unions' traditional principles of integration, which were not replaced by others with sufficient consistency to last. As we have mentioned, the articulation between the different global orientations regarding society and the claims of the rank-and-file, which was attained within and between the two systems of union action at the political level, and with a common orientation towards social and political change (social projects), gave way to a diffuse relationship between the struggle to survive or preserve acquired status on the one hand, and the attempts of the union leaders to provoke a change in the political regime on the other.

The above leads us to believe that the surmounting of the so-called "crisis of unionism" and the role of unionism itself in the future, will be determined not only by its capacity to overcome structural limitations or the dismemberment of its systems of action, but above all by its ability to define new principles of integration or to recover the traditional ones it lost.

The question is, then, what type of unionist integration principles are arising from the current trends of union action in the modern monopolistic sectors and those of the medium and small enterprise?

We shall attempt to make a prospective reflection in this regard.

Table 5. POST-1973 LOGICS OF UNION ACTION

Sector	Prevailing type of action	Prevailing union orientation	Prevailing type of relations with the management or owner	Prevailing mechanisms relating with the political system	Presence of political parties of the:	Prevailing global social projects in the short term (social orientation)
1. Modern monopolistic	Negotiation and action at the enterprise level, on the basis of stratified claims.	Defense of acquired "status"	Dependent participation or exclusion (restricted industrial relations)	Limited relations. Direct and through National Confederations, Churches, supporting Institutions.	Center that retain their importance, and reduction of the left.	Anti-authoritarianism and restoration of economic and political roles.
2. Sector of medium and small enterprises, the Public Administration and Commerce	Negotiation and limited action at the enterprise level	Defense against the acute deterioration of working conditions, dismissals and the disintegration of the unions.	Deepening of exclusion (neutrality of the unions)	Limited relations through National Confederations, Churches, supporting Institutions.	Center and left, with a similar evolution.	Anti-authoritarianism and inclusion in the economic and political spheres.
3. National Confederations	Open impugnement of the regime.	Change of government	No relationship with enterprises	Attempts to establish relations directly and through the mediation of political parties, Churches, International Workers Organizations and foreign governments.	Center more than of the left	Restitution of the political system and removal of the authoritarian regime.

II. ELEMENTS FOR A PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF UNIONISM

1. Political logic versus autonomous confrontational logic: two global options for the integration and orientation of the labor movement

In this second section we shall analyse some of the elements conditioning the possible evolution of Chilean unionism in the future. As in the previous section, we shall attempt to reach some hypotheses regarding specific union strategies that might emerge, i.e., we shall refer to the type of union action and orientation, the type of relationship with entrepreneurs, the relationship with the political system and the prevailing social orientation.

In order to develop this analysis it is first necessary to describe the context in which these specific strategies acquire meaning and articulation. This context will be defined in terms of the possible alternative global approaches that unionism may adopt to envisage itself as an institution and its task. In other words, which governing principles will orient its activity.

We feel that unionism today is subject to mounting tension due to the resurgence of two trends of global orientation which had traditionally been present in the past. The first is one we shall conventionally call "political", whose aim is to recover, as an integrating principle of unionism, its role as an active agent in a negotiated political system, where its corporate and class interests can be attained in a context of social and political plurality, and where certain basic agreements and balances

in power can be negotiated. In other words, this orientation seeks to obtain an explicit or implicit understanding or consent among the different political forces and social sectors, regarding the conditions that would regulate their relationships, so as to assure governability in a democratic context. This orientation thus attempts to reinstate political relations as the space in which to negotiate corporate claims and the global social projects of the workers as a social group.

This first global orientation includes positions ranging from the simple adherence to the basic idea of participating in a negotiated political system, to those favouring institutionalized "concertation"^{15/} between the different social and political organizations, which would lead to their formal participation in the structuring and implementation of public policies in a new democratic regime.

Although this "political logic" was fully operational in past union activities, it has undergone important modifications over the past 12 years as a result of the "lessons" of the authoritarian experience for political activity as a whole.^{16/} On the one hand, the collapse of the democratic regime, with its sequel of violation of basic rights, and the regression, or historical involution, of the sustained political and socio-economic progress of the preceding decades, has led to a specific reassessment of democratic institutionality on the part of the left and centre political tendencies. This same radical regression -which was not even conceivable in the past- has also led to a reappraisal of the need for the main social and political groups to reach certain agreements regarding the political regime and the socio-economic

system as a pre-requisite to ensure the stability of a democratic regime.

Naturally, a democratic regime can, in principle, include in its midst sectors who do not uphold any of these basic agreements, if they in effect behave according to the "democratic rules of the game". However, during a process of democratic reconstruction in a context of maximum economic, social and political fragility -such as is sure to be the case in Chile- made worse by the acute polarization undergone in the period immediately preceding the collapse of democracy and its sequel of traumatic effects in diverse sectors of society, it is difficult to conceive that it might be possible to build a stable democracy unless a substantial proportion of the principal social and political agents converge towards some fundamental agreements concerning the political regime and the socio-economic system.

Lastly, although this "political" logic is expressed more clearly nowadays in Chile in the activity of the union leaders, it cannot be considered a purely "summit" orientation because, as we mentioned before, it is characterized by an attempt to unite the specific labour claims with those concerning the political regime and the more general realm of the relations of power in society. Therefore, it does not constitute an opposition between the logic of the summit and that of the baseline, but rather identifies with a position that acknowledges the ambit of the nation and the composition of its classes, with their respective interplay of forces, as the space where union strategies must be priorily carried out 17/.

A second re-emerging global orientation, although less extensive

and noticeable than the first, is one that attempts to recover as an integration principle for action, or as a global focus, what we shall call an "autonomous confrontational" approach. This represents the most defensive components of class-consciousness, which is why we shall also identify it as "autonomous class-defensive". This orientation has arisen partly as a reaction against the exclusion to which the working class and the popular sector have been subjected over the past decade, and upholds above all a principle of community identity and self-protection vis-à-vis other social classes. Its main characteristic is the mistrust of the co-existence of class interests within a negotiated political system, which is viewed as a means of domination by the capitalist classes. According to this viewpoint, a negotiated or agreed upon political system would necessarily bring as a result the "freezing" of the prevailing conflicts and asymmetries, which would make any attempt to create situations of counterbalances of power and mutual control doomed to failure. This viewpoint appears to derive from an ideological principle whereby the "hegemony" of the working class over the political system must be guaranteed prior to the reinstatement of said system, instead of it being obtained in the course of "political class relations" within the system itself. Thus its "autonomous" sense 18/.

At present, the "political" orientation seems to be more widespread, especially at the higher and intermediate levels of unionism. This is expressed by a growing tendency to try to develop strategies of so-called social and political "concertation" to face the authoritarian regime and even

eventual sequences of redemocratization. However, it is by no means clear whether the concept of "concertation" always has the same meaning, or whether this meaning corresponds to a "political" logic such as we have defined here.

In fact, this term is often used to indicate precisely a "class-defensive" type of autonomy, inasmuch as it presumes to limit the field of "concertation" solely to the "popular" sector, which goes against the inter-class notion which substantially defines the "political" outlook.

The term "concertation" is also attributed frequently to the search for basic agreements aimed simply at obtaining a higher degree of openness in the authoritarian regime, although not oriented towards building up a negotiated political system in the future. In neither of these cases is it possible to directly associate these concepts of "concertation" with the development of what we have called the "political" logic.

In this way, even when the confrontational stance, especially in its class-oriented dimension, does not appear clearly expressed in specific union organizations as such, our hypothesis is that it is present in the tension-provoking debates that take place among an important faction of them. Thus, the debate on social and political "concertation" at the leadership or base levels tends to generate schisms and fragmentations derived from the clash between these two basic orientations.

Consequently, we believe that neither the use of a language that appears to be more "political" than "autonomous confrontational", nor the relative progress of the so-called "concertation" theses, should make us

presume that there is no friction between the orientations we have mentioned, in the development of these or other processes.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the class-oriented autonomy perspective has a strong historical precedent within some of the political parties that most influence union action, and that this does not appear to have been overcome.

The two options (political and autonomous-confrontational) represent principles of integration and action which, as we mentioned before, have always been present in Chilean unionism.

Both global approaches, or poles of reference, in fact coexisted in the different segments of Chilean unionism and also (albeit with considerable tension) within the same segment or organization. In fact, throughout history the different union organizations, to a greater or lesser extent, fluctuated from one pole of reference to the other. However, the most relevant fact is that both orientations managed to join forces under the pre-eminence of the "political" orientation and did not break out into alternative union movements, which was a decisive factor in their strength as a social movement in the framework of the so-called "State of compromise".

Consequently, the importance of the resurgence of these principles lies not only in the fact that they show renewed dimensions, but also in that it is an open question whether they will be able to join forces and which of the two will eventually get to play the leading role.

In the current situation, a schism seems to be building up between one principle and the other. According to our hypothesis, this derives, on the one hand, from the fact that a basically "defensive" dimension of class identity has developed more extensively than before in some union segments. Indeed, the fear of compromise and subordination, and the systematic damage to their interests, has led these segments to adopt a class consciousness which has become radicalized mainly through the opposition to the authoritarian experience; this is expressed by protecting and reaffirming certain "class" values as such, detached from the concept of class relations, thus making them lose their political scope and reducing their dimension to a cultural (value)level. Therefore, today more than ever, many unionists perceive society less as a common ground for dispute and more as a world segmented into isolated classes.

On the other hand, in the more "politically"-inclined segments (in the sense used here, i.e. those promoting a more "relation-oriented" concept of the social classes and their conflicts), the union leaders have concentrated mainly on an effort of global opposition to the political regime, and have had difficulties to express the symbolic and cultural elements that reflect the exclusion and disintegration of the world of the baseline workers, as well as their claims for day-to-day material subsistence.

Consequently, our hypothesis is that the effective rearticulation of these two principles of integration, and the avoidance of drastically divorced or even openly conflicting union strategies, is by no means yet

assured.

In short, what is still unresolved is whether there will be a resurgence of a unionism capable of encompassing a multidimensional effort under a dominant "political" logic, or whether it will become segmented into two, basically unidimensional, types of unionism. In the latter case, polarization and confrontation would eventually occur between the two sectors. It should be made clear that this polarization does not correspond to the current discrepancies between the different national confederations (CNT and CDT), as both of these belong to what we have called the "political" position.

We shall now attempt to make a prospective analysis of some of the elements and processes that can influence the definition of the options for union orientation.

2. Factors and processes that will influence the options of union orientation

The importance and relative predominance that the two integrating principles of union action might acquire, and their possible articulation or dissociation will, in our opinion, not be alien to the evolution of the proposals set forth by the different political groups in the country, or to the sequence of political (and economic) contexts through which the country will eventually transit in the near future 19/. These are the aspects we analyze below.

a) The strategies and conceptions of the political parties.

The role of the political parties, as we have seen, continues to

be of primary importance in the definition of union orientations. Due to their intrinsic nature, one tends to think that they should favour the articulation of the union options, with the "political" approach governing the "autonomous" one. However, this is not necessarily the case. For instance, the orientation we have called "autonomous class-defensive" or "autonomous confrontational" might show greater flexibility towards accepting the conduction of the "political" orientation if the political strategies and conceptions were also to evolve in that direction, particularly in some parties or factions of parties. As far as the left is concerned, this would require resolving certain matters that hold them in check at present; in particular, those related to certain ideological uses and traditions of Chilean Marxism, which assume a reductionist expression, tending to view politics as a "war" rather than as a system of social relations built up on the basis of accepting the inevitable counterbalances of power.

At the same time, the possible hegemony of politics over the autonomous confrontational approach will also be conditioned by the strategy followed by the forces at the political centre, in terms of their favouring the creation of pluralist spaces, in order to reduce the risk of the autonomous branch deepening its segregation and isolation as a result of the a priori exclusion of union sectors from the sphere of political negotiation.

b) The future political scenarios

But the relative weight of either unionist orientation will not depend solely on the options chosen by the political forces that represent

them, but will also be decisively influenced by the characteristics of the evolving global socio-political contexts through which the country will transit in the near future. This makes it necessary to consider some hypotheses regarding these contexts and the relations between the forces that operate within them. To this aim, we suggest making a brief analysis -simply as an exercise- of two possible situations, each with different dynamics, which can have different forms of influence on the predominance and articulation of the two previously described orientations.

1. Extension of the present regime

This hypothesis (estimated as highly probable by the political analysts) is based on the decision announced by the government authorities to honour the deadline established by the 1980 Constitution to convoke a plebiscite to decide whether the current head of government should continue or not in office. In this case, we believe that the "political" orientation will be put to the test in its capacity to act as an integrating axis of union action, in terms of its success in contributing to consolidate some feasible form of political and social coalition, capable of confronting the regime and forcing it to negotiate, either in terms of shorter deadlines for its replacement, or in obtaining a greater degree of open political participation that would allow the opposition to strengthen its position and influence in the political scene.

Therefore, the "political" dimension will have prevalence over the "autonomous" approach if and when the union sectors representing it manage to play a central role in strategies such as those of so-called social and

political "concertation", and as long as these acquire credibility as feasible options for social mobilization. Conversely, if the space for the "concertation" is too restricted, ineffective or unstable, and it is not possible to modify the current inertia of the businessmen and other sectors (which would thus neutralize the rhythm of mobilization that the "political" tendencies might try to promote), the "autonomous" orientations will undoubtedly increase their criticism of "concertation" strategies and reaffirm the need for "class autonomy" as the driving force for action. Consequently, the "autonomous" approach will acquire greater or lesser relative strength depending on the headway made in the attainment of greater political space. Indeed, should the regime become more rigid, and no progress be made in establishing a coalition that favours political negotiations in which unionism can play a role of effective importance, the autonomous stand -which is naturally of a more confrontational nature- will find the grounds to legitimize its position in the face of the failure of other options.

2. Withdrawal of the regime

In this second situation it is possible to visualize two alternatives:

2.1. Withdrawal, and replacement by a civilian-military coalition, of a decidedly conservative and continuistic nature

This would simply be a delegate administration of the current regime, transferred to a less personalized political context by integrating

a group of "trustworthy" civilians. Although this situation could be as restricted as the former one, it is possible that greater political activity might be generated by the sole fact of its occurrence, as this would involve the weakening of the "1989 option" upheld by the government at present. This weakening, should it occur, would generate a context in which the orientations we have conventionally called "political" might gain greater relative effectiveness, which in turn would promote better conditions for the development of social or political negotiation efforts.

As a result of the preceding concurrence, social mobilization governed by political rules might appear more feasible, which, if looked upon as an effective mechanism of political change, would eventually reduce the expansion of the autonomous tendencies. However, it is unlikely that this would prevent the persistence of an "autonomous-confrontationist" pole because, among other factors, in these conditions the unblocking of the "political arena" would naturally be a slow, uncertain, and complicated process.

2.2. Withdrawal, with cession of power to an independent coalition which would put in motion a process of transition towards democracy.

This scenario, which might have a centre-right or centre-left profile, or a coalition including all these tendencies, will naturally have different characteristics depending on each case. However, it is interesting to stress that it would be a context in which the initiative would be placed in the hands of a coalition independent from the present regime, thus constituting a new type of government alternative.

In this case, one of the important points will be the inclusion capacity of the chosen coalition, particularly with regard to union interests. In other words, whether it will be able to ensure the progressive restitution of an open institutional political system. If the latter is clearly defined as an objective, this system might act as a mediator of union demands, thus enabling them to be processed in a legitimate and recognized sphere of negotiation. The same can happen with regard to the interests of the different political forces, although some of them -depending on the tendencies included in the coalition- might not be represented therein.

Consequently, in a context where the political system is capable of incorporating different political forces and diverse interests, we believe that the "political" orientation will progressively represent the best option to become the articulating force of union action, with the possibility of extending its field of action towards the economic and social spheres, in order to try to reach substantive agreements with other sectors, as well as to implement effective governing mechanisms. Conversely, if the political system is perceived as closed or restricted, this can strengthen the position of the autonomous and more confrontational orientations, based on the mistrust of the legitimacy and representativeness of the political system, and provide the necessary motivation for them to operate outside that system.

In conclusion, it can be said that the options for unionist orientation will be strongly conditioned by "external" factors. These will depend

on the evolution of the political forces in the near future, which will give rise to different contexts, only some of which seem favourable to the eventual predominance of the "political" tendency, whereas others can lead to the persistence of recurrently unresolved imbalances and tensions between this orientation and the autonomous confrontational approach.

It must be remembered that the situations we have outlined are only hypothetical examples, and that they can occur sequentially and not necessarily as antagonistic alternatives.

Finally, if in the preceding scenarios we have stressed the degree of "openness" as a determining factor for the development of the "political" thesis, it is because we believe this one to be the crucial variable, even though other determinants may acquire importance under certain historical circumstances.

c) Tensions induced by the economic crisis

At the economic level, matters such as having to choose between employment priorities and recovering the purchasing power of wages, and deciding between a policy of accumulation or one of consumption, will make their mark on the future scenarios.

For instance, it will be necessary to generate a sizeable amount of resources in order to repay the foreign debt, which will leave a very narrow margin for local reactivation and economic growth. This makes it very difficult to think, in the present circumstances, of projections for growth in the medium term higher than 4%.

The proposed figures for expansion in the level of activity will,

in turn, conflict with the need to reduce unemployment -which at present affects 30% of the labor force- as quickly as possible. Rates of growth such as those we have mentioned would create only a negligible number of jobs over those required to absorb the normal increase in the labour force 20/.

On the other hand, any attempt to increase the number of jobs at a faster rate as a result of greater economic growth would involve generating enough foreign currency to meet the demands of this expanded level of activity. This in turn would lead to a devaluation, or to the modification of other trade policies. Either alternative would tend to provoke a rise in inflation and a decline in the purchasing power of wages 21/. Likewise, the public sector will be faced with the conflicting choice between designing its budget either to finance programmes that would mitigate the dramatic unemployment situation, or to increase the public sector's depressed purchasing power of wages. This is the reason why we consider that one of the fundamental economic dilemmas in the future will be the choice between recovering the levels of employment versus restoring the purchasing power of the wages.

This dilemma, which in general was not present in Latin America during the seventies, due to the easier access to foreign financial resources at that time, can lead to conflicting interests and become a source of contention between the unionized workers -who seek to increase the purchasing power of their wages- and the unemployed workers, constituted in their majority by marginal groups ("pobladores") and workers of the infor-

mal urban sector.

These conflicting interests would make unionism lose part of its capacity to represent the interests of the working class as a whole, due to the tension that would build up between the employed and the unemployed workers, which could reach significant levels.

Another source of grave tension will arise between the aim to recover the current deteriorated levels of consumption and the extremely low rates of investment. It will not be possible to attain both objectives simultaneously, in a satisfactory manner, within the framework of an economy restricted by the need to honour the country's substantial foreign debt.

This restricted economic situation will present serious difficulties for the development of the "political" option, by limiting the "inclusion" capacity of the socio-economic system, which in turn will complicate the implementation of strategies seeking to integrate the marginalized sectors.

One of the most critical points for the "political" option of unionism, when formulating its strategies, will be to try to strike a fair balance between the demands of the unionized workers within its ranks and those derived from its relations with the enterprises, the State and the non-organized sectors. Consequently, the legitimacy it may gain as a course of action will depend on a complex interplay of negotiated agreements. This challenge requires there to be mechanisms within unionism which will allow agreements to be established, and also its cohesion as an institution, thus making it possible to present coherent and stable positions to its inter-

locutors. At this level, the heterogeneity of situations that segment both workers and enterprises, derived from their different positions in the labor markets, their various levels of productivity and their diverse contexts of dynamism, stagnation or crisis, are sure to be a source of hindrance to the formulation of union policies at a global and national level. In fact, although the country's severe economic crisis has served to close the gap, unifying towards the bottom, between most of the segments of the labour market, the fact remains that different positions are held both within and between economic sectors which, in a generally depressed context, tends to generate corporate and individualistic defensive behaviour between the different segments of workers. These attitudes may become manifest, in certain cases, by opposing the pleas of the "concertationist" union leaders for global solidarity and support for national policies aimed at the progressive surmounting of the crisis.

At the same time, the more depressed sectors of the labor market can exert pressure to obtain a favourable solution to their situation at a rate or rhythm that might be hard to meet in the context of the general priorities, the resources involved and the balance required in all negotiated processes. In both cases, the tendencies opposing the insertion of unionism in a scheme of negotiated politico-institutional regulations can find grounds for development, either by demanding the immediate restoration of all the usurped rights, or by insisting on certain unnegotiable conditions that can prevent the indispensable basic agreements from being reached.

Lastly, an additional impact on unionism derived from the acute economic crisis which has accumulated over the past decade, stems from the fact that for a fairly long period of time, there will be higher rates of unemployment and lower relative levels of employment in the goods-producing sector, as compared to those of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies. Therefore, even if the sectoral rates of union affiliation of those workers employed should make a swift comeback to the level of the sixties, the combined "unemployment effect" and the "employment composition effect" 22/ will make the rates of unionization of the total labor force continue to be lower than those of that decade.

3. Guiding principles and their articulation with the specific action strategies of the different segments of unionism

According to our hypothesis -examined in the previous points- the tension between the approach favouring a "political" stance and that based on a logic of "class-defensive autonomy" is making its mark on the global context of union action at present and will continue to do so in the near future, even during the eventual transition towards democracy.

However this tension is not only expressed in terms of a confrontation between the global orientations of unionism, but -as we mentioned before- also affects the groups in which union action is distinctive. We refer to those situated in the modern monopolistic sector and to those in the medium and small enterprise sector, as well as in the National Union Confederations.

With these considerations in mind, we can formulate the following prospective hypotheses regarding the behaviour of both union groups vis-à-vis the two alternative orientations:

a) Unionism in the modern monopolistic sector

1. It is highly likely that this sector will tend, in the near future and during an eventual democratization phase, to favour a "political" logic rather than one of autonomous confrontation, because (off and on) it was basically this global approach that oriented its activities in the past, especially in its relations with respect to the State and the enterprise.

2. This tendency to favour the "political" approach can obtain the necessary backing especially if the "político-concertation" strategy promotes a revaluation of the "key" role in economic development of the State and private enterprises of this sector, that can play an active role in a strategy of national accumulation.

We suggest, therefore, that if the "political" orientation can guarantee the strategic role of the modern monopolistic enterprises or, in other words, dissipate the threat of their deterioration -ever-present under the current regime- this will be a decisive factor to swing the balance in favour of their commitment to a "concertation" strategy under the banner of the "political" logic.

3. Given the magnitude of the current economic restrictions, the consequences of which we presume will continue to make themselves felt in the near future -including the period of democratic transition- the pre-

vailing union orientation of this sector will surely be to obtain the guarantee that it will recover its upward mobility in exchange for its commitment to a "political" logic. Especially in a democratic phase, this can be negotiated by means of a "stability pact" that would safeguard the gradual restoration of its professional and socio-economic status.

4. The reactivation of the unions' integrating role in a system of industrial relations at the enterprise level will probably also be an important conditioning factor to adopt a "political" stand guided by a negotiating strategy. We believe it very possible that these unions will demand, as compensation for their support, that negotiations should include matters such as a move towards the model of integrated industrial relations, in order to overcome the conditions of exclusion. Their support of the "political" position will probably be associated even more directly in a phase of democratic transition, with demanding the direct participation of the unions in the running of the enterprises, particularly in those areas where they traditionally played a very active role (personnel, welfare, technical promotion, etc).

5. Lastly, according to our hypothesis, it is unlikely that a logic of "autonomous confrontation", such as it has been defined in the previous section, should prevail in this sector, either in the more immediate phases or during a process of democratic transition, not only because of the historical tradition of this sector, but also due to its central position in the context of political or economic negotiations. However, if no guarantees are provided for its strategic role, or its status

is perceived as unfavourable, this can give rise, in any of the considered stages, to misgivings concerning the suitability of supporting political negotiations as the basis for union action. In this event, there could be a tendency opposing the "political" approach, and favouring the adoption of strongly defensive corporate behaviour, that in practice could find points in common with the supporters of the "autonomous-confrontational" approach.

b) Unionism in the medium and small enterprise sector, the public administration and commerce

1. In this sector, our hypothesis is that there will be a greater propensity for tension to arise between the two approaches of union orientation, which will tend to compete as possible alternatives in the different scenarios, both in the immediate future and in the phase of democratic transition, as well as during its consolidation. The reason for this is the more radical heterogeneity and segmentation of this sector, which makes it more difficult to envisage the favourable outcome of negotiations which, due to their intrinsic nature, will be carried out at a "macro" economic and political level in the short and medium term. At the same time, the conditions of greater exclusion can generate radicalized behaviours in specific contexts that will conflict with the global "political" strategies.

2. Consequently, the two global orientations will tend to come into confrontation at the enterprise, federative and national levels, regarding the legitimacy of the sectoral or national policies that either tendency

might decide to promote.

3. In the segments of this sector where the "political" or bargaining stance prevails, the predominant union orientation will surely be to participate in the progressive creation of conditions to institute social and especially political negotiations of a global character. This would be an interclass type of negotiation, aimed at obtaining, after the change of the current regime, the gradual economic and political re-inclusion of the workers of this sector, in terms of reestablishing employment, wage and investment conditions by means of agreements reached at a sectoral or national level.

Conversely, where the "autonomous-confrontational" approach prevails, it is probable that the dominant union orientation will be of a much more segmented and vindicatory nature, detached from, or even opposed to, a process of inter-class global negotiation: in some sectors, this can rapidly turn into a typical "baseline strife" against the system (Table 6), especially in the more deteriorated segments of the small and medium enterprise, in the blue-collar workers and the informal services sectors. This is due to the fact that these segments are more likely to perceive themselves as excluded, either totally or partially, from the spheres of labour and political relations, because of the difficulty to provide a rapid solution to the discriminatory measures to which this sector has been exposed.

4. Consistent with the above, while in the first case relations

at the enterprise level would be characterized by gradual efforts to reach agreements with management, serving as a basis for political, and then more global "concertations", in the second, these relations would probably tend towards confrontation with management, not only in the more immediate contexts but also in the stages of democratic transition.

5. Consequently, two social orientations would be confronted more radically in this sector than in the modern monopolistic one, with the choice between an approach favouring the progressive and probably negotiated restoration of the necessary economic and politico-institutional conditions to reinsert the workers into society, and a global approach of "class-defensive autonomy", which will insist on withdrawing into a strategy of non-alliance in order to protect the workers from the risk of compromise with the State and enterprise; that is, opposed to the establishment of social relations based on negotiated institutionalization processes and derived from a more exclusive perception of social and political aspects.

c) The National Union Confederations

With regard to the National Union Confederations, the "pro-concertation" activities observed at present in these institutions 23/, suggest that they would probably continue to favour a global "political" approach rather than one of "class defensive autonomy" 24/. In a latter stage of political transition towards democracy this position would surely be reinforced by the need to re-include the union forces into the political system. We believe that this rationality can give a more global meaning to the

action of the Confederation, even though they may maintain their ideological disparities and organize themselves around those disparities.

This does not preclude the possibility of Confederations being created on the basis of a global logic of autonomy and with a "class-defensive" social orientation, under certain socio-political circumstances. However, we think it more likely that this situation might arise in certain baseline groups, who would perhaps find expression in different national associations, without constituting the dominant line in any of those existing today, which are almost certain to be those that will persist in the near future. We suggest, however, that this "baseline" tendency might find a sympathetic audience in the more radicalized sectors of some parties, especially -although not exclusively- in those of the left; these in turn would probably attempt to transmit and magnify this orientation in the national confederations, challenging them permanently to examine their role in politics and in social negotiation, and warning them against the risks of compromise, that can neutralize the class autonomy of unionism before, during and after the process of democratic transition.

These radicalized sectors could also find resonance in certain segments of the urban popular world. Due to the difficulty in obtaining fast relief for the massive unemployment, lack of housing and other similar problems which have been accumulating over the entire past decade, if these sectors should fail to find representation in organizations at a national level, they would naturally feel excluded from the processes of negotiation, and would be unlikely to acknowledge the legitimacy of the agreements

reached therein.

Should those sectors, even if few in number, join together, either directly among themselves or through parties or factions of parties, they could become a social force in their own right, marked by the sign of marginality, and their presence on the political scene could prove to be highly conflictive if the agreements reached in a process of negotiation did not (effectively or in their perception) include their interests.

Whether these "centrifugal" forces manage or not to counteract the integrating forces of political or social negotiation will, as we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, depend fundamentally on the evolution of the proposals and the relative power of the different political groups existing in the country, and on the characteristics of the evolution of the socio-political and economic scenarios. But above all, it will depend on the capacity of the systems of negotiation to attain legitimacy in the unions and the marginal sector, and this is directly linked, among other aspects, to their capacity to offer them representation.

Table 6. HYPOTHESES REGARDING THE GLOBAL LOGICS OF UNION ACTION IN A PROCESS OF TRANSITION TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY

Sector	Prevailing type of action	Prevailing union orientation	Prevailing type of relationship with the management or owner	Prevailing mechanisms for relating with the political system	Prevailing social orientation
Modern monopolistic	Enterprise industrial relations	Agreed upon stability of professional and socio-economic status, as a transition strategy aimed at restoring upward mobility.	Integration and contracted relations in the framework of global negotiation	Direct and through political parties	Economic re-inclusion in society, in the framework of social and political negotiation
<u>POLITICAL LOGIC</u>					
Medium and small enterprise sector, Public Administration, Commerce and National Confederations.	a) Federative, with reference to sectoral and national policies	a) Social and political negotiation to establish basic working conditions and improved standards of living, in the framework of a strategy favouring the economic re-inclusion of the workers, as a whole, in society.	a) Integration and agreed upon relations in the framework of global negotiation.	a) Federations, National Confederations, Political Parties.	a) Economic and political re-inclusion in society, in the framework of social and political negotiation.
	a) Federative, with reference to sectoral and national policies	b) Demand for specific benefits detached from the process of global "confrontation", which can lead to open confrontation of the system in some sectors at the baseline level.	b) Exclusion and confrontation.	b) Federations, National Confederations, Political Parties.	b) Class-defensive struggle
<u>AUTONOMOUS - CONFRONTATIONAL LOGIC</u>					

N O T E S

- 1/ Campero, G. and J.A. Valenzuela (1984), El movimiento sindical en el régimen militar chileno: 1973-1981. Estudios ILET.
- 2/ To this change in the composition of employment by sectors should be added the changes in distribution as per types of occupation. The relative increase in self-employed workers as compared to employees, also forms part of the impact of the "employment effect" on the rate of unionization of the labor force.
- 3/ The only exception is the mining sector; although it has marginally increased its unionization rate, it represents under 3% of the employed population.
- 4/ When changes started to occur in the composition of employment, certain pro-government groups believed that an increase in the rates of unionization of those employed in the new "key" sectors linked to exports, trade and services could be attained; that is, that there would be an "organizational strengthening" which would compensate the aforementioned negative effects. However, this never came about.
- 5/ The mathematical relationship between the three mentioned "effects" and the rate of unionization of the labor force is set out in equations (1) and (2). In order to simplify our exposition, we have assumed that only two sectors exist: goods production (B) and trade, transport and services (C).

$$(1) \quad t^F = (1 - d) t^\circ$$

$$(2) \quad t^\circ = \theta t_B^\circ + (1 - \theta) t_C^\circ$$

where,

t^F = rate of unionization of the labor force;

t° = rate of unionization of the employed workers;

d = rate of unemployment;

t_i° = rate of unionization of the employed workers in any given "i" sector (in our case, either sectors B or C);

θ = proportion of the total number of employed workers working in sector B.

From equation (1) we can conclude that, for a certain rate of unionization of the employed workers, the higher the rate of unemployment, the lower the rate of unionization of the labor force. This is what we call the "unemployment effect". Equation (2), in turn, indicates that the rate of total affiliation of those employed will be higher, the higher the proportion of those working in the sector with the largest rate of relative affiliation. This is what we call the "employment composition effect". Lastly, from equation (2) we can also conclude that the evolution of the total rate of affiliation will be a direct function of the evolution of the different rates of sectoral affiliation, which we will call the "organizational weakening effect".

6/ A Touraine (1966), Huachipato et Lota, Ed. CNRS.

7/ We have incorporated the public administration sector simply because our aim is to describe very global tendencies; as is well known, this

sector did not have the legal right to unionize, so its officials formed their own associations within the different services. We are also aware that services of the public administration are not the same as a production enterprise and that the workers of this sector correspond mainly to "white collar" employees, with only a marginal number of "blue collar" workers, who perform the lowest tasks in these services. However, this segment acted in fact almost like a union and was always very akin to CUT (Central Unica de Trabajadores) unionism, representing a socio-economic condition that some have called the "collar and tie proletariat". The case of Commerce is quite similar, in that its workers present the same depressed socio-economic characteristics, but in this case in the private sector.

8/ J. Zapata (1975), "Los mineros de Chuquicamata: productores o proletarios?", México, El Colegio de México, Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios Sociológicos No. 13, and (1976), "Las relaciones entre el movimiento obrero y el gobierno de Salvador Allende", México, El Colegio de México, Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios Sociológicos No. 4.

9/ The presumption existed that, on the basis of sectoral agreements, the enterprises could respond better to the demands of the unions; and that unions count on much better economic and organizational resources at the sectoral level than at the enterprise level.

10/ M.A. Garretón (1984), Dictaduras y Democratización, FLACSO.

- 11/ A. Angell (1972), Partidos Políticos y Movimiento Obrero en Chile, Ed. ERA. G. Fallabela (1980), "Labor under authoritarian regimes: the Chilean union movement, 1973-1979", University of Sussex, thesis.
- 12/ Although we are aware that our grouping of sectors only allows for a rough outline, because it includes diversified situations within each sector which cannot be disaggregated, we consider as belonging to the "modern monopolistic" sector the union affiliates working in: oil and natural gas production, extraction of metal minerals, basic metal industries, electricity, gas and steam, transport and storage, communications, hydraulic works and water provision, financial establishments and insurance. The remaining activities were catalogued in the medium and small enterprise sector.
- 13/ J. Barría (1971), Historia de la CUT, Ediciones Prensa Latinoamericana. A. Cuevas (1983), "La experiencia de la CUT (1953-1973): una visión crítica", Chile-América No. 84-85, January-March.
- 14/ R. Cortázar (1983), "Derechos laborales y desarrollo: Desafíos y tensiones", in CIEPLAN, Reconstrucción económica para la democracia, Ed. Aconcagua.
- 15/ We use the term "concertation" in its broad meaning of socio-political negotiation and do not refer necessarily to corporatist type of arrangements. We include its double dimension of pressure and dialogue among actors with different interests.
- 16/ A. Foxley, (1982), "Condiciones para una democracia estable", Colección Estudios CIEPLAN 9, December. A. Flisfisch (1983), "Consenso,

pacto, proyecto y estabilidad democrática", Documento de Trabajo No. 8, CED. E. Boenninger (1983), "La concertación política y social: problemas y exigencias de la consolidación democrática", Documento de Trabajo No. 9, CED. G. Campero (1984), "Trabajadores, empresarios y concertación social para la democracia", Materiales para Discusión No. 48, CED. Barrera, M. (1984), "La demanda democrática de los trabajadores chilenos", Documento de Trabajo No. 15, CED. Ruiz, J. and J. Ruiz (1984), "Concertación social: un camino posible y necesario", Materiales para Discusión No. 43, CED.

17/ However, within this common and global notion of "political" action, there are coexisting and sometimes superimposed tendencies, some of which attempt to use this type of action as a basis to represent the "working class" as a general social category, and others that identify more with a corporate-professional outlook, nearer to the idea of joining together to defend group interests or to increase their negotiating power.

18/ This class-defensive autonomy can eventually be associated with another, more corporate, type of autonomy, which is not defined by its relationship with a particular social class, but by principles defending a specific laboural position (which can be of a wage, technical, bureaucratic, etc., nature) that does not want to run the risk of adhering to collective policies or solidarities, whose results appear uncertain. However, in practice both can coincide, upholding defensive rather than "political" (in the sense used here) contentions, and opposing negotiated interclass forms of action.

- 19/ Valenzuela, S. (1983), "Movimientos obreros y sistemas políticos: un análisis conceptual y tipológico", in Desarrollo Económico, vol. 23, No. 31, October-December.
- 20/ J.P. Arellano (1984), "Una nota sobre las causas del desempleo en Chile", Colección Estudios CIEPLAN 14, September.
- 21/ R. Cortázar (1984), "Restricción externa, desempleo y salarios reales: perspectivas y conflictos", Colección Estudios CIEPLAN 14, September.
- 22/ It is always possible, albeit with great difficulty, to try to compensate the weakening impact of the "unemployment effect" and the "employment composition effect" by attempting to increase the union affiliation of the employed workers in the different sectors above the rates observed in 1973.
- 23/ We refer to the dialogues between the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT - National Workers' Command) and the leaders of the Confederación de la Producción y el Comercio (CPC - Production and Trade Confederation), and to those of the Central Democrática de Trabajadores (CDT - Democratic Workers Confederation) with CPC and other corporate bodies within the so-called multi-union association.
- 24/ It seems quite suggestive that the development of the political logic has run parallel to a strong increase in the proportion of union leaders from the modern monopolistic sector now occupying the higher positions of the Comando Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT) and

the Central Democrática de Trabajadores (CDT), in comparison with the representation they had in the past in the leadership of CUT.

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