

## Political impact of Venezuela leaving CAN on regional integration (2007-2023)

*Impacto político de la salida de Venezuela de la CAN en la integración regional (2007-2023)*

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

### ABSTRACT

The departure of Venezuela from the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) in 2007 generated a considerable impact on the political integration processes of the Latin American region. The objective of the study is to reveal the impact of Venezuela's departure from the Andean Community of Nations on the political integration processes of the Latin American region between 2007 and 2023. The research uses a qualitative approach. The research is documentary type, using the review of specialized literature as the main tool. Bibliographic, historical and exegetical methods are used. Analysis and synthesis of information is applied. A case study design is used. The results reveal that Venezuela's departure from the CAN generated significant changes in the political alliances of the region. It is concluded that, from a political perspective, Venezuela's departure from the CAN represented a turning point in the regional integration processes

**Keywords:** CAN; alliances; integration; policies; regional

### RESUMEN

La salida de Venezuela de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones (CAN) en 2007 generó un impacto considerable en los procesos de integración política de la región latinoamericana. El objetivo del estudio es develar el impacto de la salida de Venezuela de la Comunidad Andina de Naciones en los procesos de integración política de la región latinoamericana entre 2007 y 2023. La investigación emplea un enfoque cualitativo. La investigación es de tipo documental, utilizando como principal herramienta la revisión de literatura especializada. Se utilizan métodos bibliográficos, históricos y exegeticos. Se aplica el análisis y síntesis de información. Se emplea un diseño de estudio de caso. Los resultados revelan que la salida de Venezuela de la CAN generó cambios significativos en las alianzas políticas de la región. Se concluye que, desde una perspectiva política, la salida de Venezuela de la CAN representó un punto de inflexión en los procesos de integración regional.

**Palabras clave:** CAN; alianzas; integración; políticas; regional

## INTRODUCTION

Venezuela's departure from the CAN cannot be understood without considering the complex international policy agenda of President Hugo Chávez administration. His vision of a regional alternative integration, based on principles of solidarity, cooperation and anti-imperialism, disagreed with the objectives and structure of the CAN.

From the point of view of the international policy agenda of Chavez administration, the issue is extremely complex due to the plurality of the integration area: entry into Mercosur, the creation of alternative agreements such as ALBA, as well as novel assistance and cooperative proposals, such as the “Milagro” Mission, “Banco del Sur” or the Telesur television station. These issues are completed with the dynamic continental agenda, in particular with the South American Community of Nations, which configure a highly uncertain scheme for the future of the Andean Community and Venezuela's participation in it (Sainz, 2007).

It is clear that Chávez's strategy sought to transcend the boundaries of the CAN and build a new regional architecture based on his ideological principles of solidarity and cooperation. However, this vision contrasted with the objectives and structure of the CAN, which generated tensions and made it difficult for Venezuela to coexist within the alliance. Venezuela's decision to leave the CAN in 2006 was the culmination of a complex process, influenced by Chávez's international policy agenda and his search for an alternative regional integration.

At the multilateral level, participation in the globalized system seeks to manage the benefits of international cooperation and access to broader markets. At the same time, regionalism, through agreements and alliances with neighboring countries or countries with similar ideologies, allows us to enhance comparative advantages and strengthen security and peace in the region. It is important to note that these two approaches are not independent, but rather complement and reinforce each other.

In the context of Latin American political integration, changes in reality are complex and difficult to predict. This complexity is mainly due to the multidimensional nature of the regional integration issue, which encompasses political, economic, social and cultural aspects.

Based on this idea, the search for political success requires a comprehensive approach that combines participation in the multilateral system with the development of regional strategies, allowing for the synergy between the global and the regional, since it is the key to achieving sustainable development and lasting peace.

Venezuela's leave-taking from the CAN in 2006 marked a significant milestone in the political dynamics of Latin America between 2007 and 2023. This event generated a considerable impact on regional integration, affecting trade relations, cooperation within the alliance. This decision, led by President Hugo Chávez, had repercussions on political integration, affecting regional cooperation relations. Although Venezuela's leave-taking temporarily weakened the cohesion of the CAN, it also generated opportunities for the remaining member countries, such as Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, to seek new alliances and bilateral agreements.

It should be noted that the Andean Community (CAN), made up of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, is a leading international organization in integration on the continent, working to improve the quality of life of 115 million Andean citizens (General Secretariat of the Andean Community, 2021).

The CAN could provide the region with a better insertion into globalization, assuming a unanimous position before the international community on multiple issues of interest to us. Andean integration should be viable and possible because the member countries share cultural, social, historical, linguistic, economic, political, and other aspects (Arroyave -Quintero, 2019).

At another point related to the topic of study, in an investigation carried out by Palermo (2021) entitled "Political ideology and commercial exchange in the regional integration of Venezuela with the CAN and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in the times of the Fifth Republic", he places ideology on the scene as a factor that, no matter how much it is attempted to isolate from the integration mechanisms, is present in one way or another, mainly because in Latin America the unification engine still depends proportionally on the executive power of the nations.

This research quantitatively analyzed, on the one hand, the relevance that the government political ideology of the V Venezuelan Republic had within the CAN and MERCOSUR and, on the other, the commercial development that Venezuela developed with both blocks during 20 years of study. Among the results obtained for the political ideology, it stands out: in the CAN, the presence of the unipolar extra-community trade agreement of member countries of the CAN (ACEU) causes the Regional Integration absence of Venezuela in the Andean Community (IRV), while in MERCOSUR it is the presence of Diplomatic Frictions (FD) that causes the absence IRV.

The preceding study is considered a significant contribution to research for two main reasons: first, the focus on the political perspective, which is fundamental to this research and a crucial aspect for understanding the impact of the Fifth Republic on Latin American regional integration. Second, Hugo Chávez's ideology could be a determining factor in the repercussions that the Fifth Republic had on the development of regional integration.

Another contribution is an interesting study carried out by Zepeda and Sánchez (2020), which provides a historical, political and social overview of the Regional Integration System called the CAN. It aims to understand the long road that the Andean subregion has traveled to consolidate its integration within the framework of the Andean Pact, now the Andean Community. This block has historically been characterized by a lack of visibility in the nations that comprise it and a limited extension of its benefits to citizens, which is projected into a deficit of democratic planning in the design of social programs and a deficit also in institutionalization. This compilation work then presents the results of the documentary recapitulation.

The above study provides a historical, political and social overview of the CAN, analyzing the history, politics and society of the CAN from its creation to the present, contextualizing Venezuela's leave-taking in 2006.

Currently, the CAN is faced with the opportunity to implement regulations that allow progress in regional integration, beyond the commercial field, and that are essential to strengthen its objective of improving the living standard and balanced development of the member countries inhabitants through integration, economic and social cooperation (Coral, et al., 2023). Below are stated some of the political positions considering a regional integration crisis:

Starting with political positions, they are diverse taking into account a regional integration crisis. Each country has its approach and strategy to address this situation. These positions can be: pro-integration, leadership, confrontation, pressure, solidarity, pragmatic or nationalist (Zelicovich , 2020), (Taborri , 2024). The choice of a political position depends on the interests and objectives of each country, as well as its vision of regional integration and the benefits it can generate.

The pro-integration position is characterized by supporting and promoting regional integration as a way to confront the crisis. These countries seek to strengthen ties of cooperation, improve policy coordination and promote economic and social integration among countries in the region.

On the other hand, the leadership position implies assuming a leading role in the regional integration crisis management. These countries seek to lead efforts to find solutions, recommend measures and coordinate actions among the affected countries (Arriaza, 2023; Goldman, 2021).

The confrontational position is characterized by adopting an adverse and oppositional stance towards the regional integration crisis. These countries consider that the crisis is the result of failures in the integration mechanisms, and they seek to hold other countries or institutions responsible for the situation (León and Contreras, 2020; Rubio, 2021).

Another position is the pressure position, the president exerts pressure on member countries affected by the crisis to take concrete and effective measures to address it (Álvarez, 2021) (Rojo, 2021), using diplomatic and economic tools to influence their decisions.

The solidarity position is based on support and cooperation between countries in the region affected by the integration crisis. These countries are committed to providing help and assistance to those facing greater difficulties, either through the transfer of economic resources, technical cooperation or the exchange of experiences (Lara, 2021; Lechini , 2022). Finally, the pragmatic position is characterized by adopting a stance based on the search for effective and realistic solutions to address the regional integration crisis (Barrenengoa et al., 2020).

Regional integration crises test the cohesion and commitment of member countries to the integration project. In this context, the political positions adopted by the different actors are crucial in determining the course of the crisis and its eventual resolution. However, Venezuela's foreign policy before Hugo Chávez became president in 1999 was characterized by a democratic, pragmatic and open orientation to the international scene. During this period, the South American country maintained diplomatic relations with a wide range of nations.

Nevertheless, with the election of Hugo Chavez to the presidency in 1999, significant changes occurred in Venezuelan foreign policy. Chavez brought with him a more ideological vision of international relations, emphasizing a socialist and anti-American approach.

For Romero (2010), Venezuela went through a “revolutionary situation,” which led to the foreign policy of President Chavez’s government not being the same as those that preceded it. Indeed, Venezuela’s activism can be observed in three dimensions: in the management of bilateral relations, multilateral relations, and transnational relations.

These changes in Venezuela's foreign policy had a significant impact on the dynamics of international relations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Venezuela became a key player in promoting a progressive approach in the region, which generated tensions with countries that maintained more traditional relations with the United States.

In April 2006, Venezuela announced its removal from the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) after being a member for thirty-three years. President Hugo Chávez said that politics should prevail over economics, and since the CAN had been conceived under neoliberal schemes to benefit elites and transnational corporations, Venezuela could not continue to be part of the organization. By that date, the MERCOSUR had already approved Venezuela's membership application. The idea of favoring politics over economics in integration agreements had already been promoted by Chávez.

In another scenario, since the restoration of democracy in 1958, Venezuelan foreign policy has had the following objectives: “maintaining stable relations with the United States, containing the possibility of authoritarianism and other non-democratic political forms in Latin America and the Caribbean, and preserving the country's borders” (Romero, 2007).

At the regional level, Venezuela was in favor of integration and became a reliable partner for the United States, thanks to its democratic stability and its status as a reliable supplier of oil, and its active foreign policy was characterized by maintaining peaceful negotiations with neighboring countries.

In this context, Chavez would change the foundations of Venezuelan foreign policy by confronting the United States, supporting participatory democracy, socialism and the anti-imperialist struggle, calling for a multipolar world and developing a confrontational diplomacy that would generate strong tensions with the United States and other countries in the region, in addition to openly intervening in the internal affairs of other Latin American countries.

In short, for Chavez regional integration was not limited to proposing a trade alliance, but was an instrument to promote non-capitalist integration of peoples, socialism and confrontation with the United States, using ideological affinities as the dominant driving force of integration.

In a report by the Social Communicator Hernandez (2006), of the newspaper El País, the president of Venezuela Hugo Chavez Frías on April 6, 2006, reiterates the removal of the aforementioned country from the Andean Community of Nations. In international news, the newspaper reports: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced on Wednesday that his country will abandon the CAN, since this South American integration mechanism "has died" after two of its members, Colombia and Peru, signed bilateral free trade agreements with the



United States. According to Chavez, the Andean Community "is of no use to the Indians, the blacks, and the poor."

The CAN is made up of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela and it is the successor to the Andean Pact, a union that was born in the 1960s. After announcing Venezuela's removal from the CAN, Chavez issued a warning to the other major integration system of the subcontinent, the Mercosur, which last year accepted Venezuela as a full member. "If Mercosur is not restructured appropriately, the same thing will happen to it as to the CAN: it will die," he predicted.

"The Andean Community was a big lie. It was already dead before, but now they have finished it off with the signing of these agreements with the North American empire," said Chavez in 2006 during a meeting in Paraguay with the president of that country, Nicanor Duarte, and the presidents of Bolivia, Evo Morales, and Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez.

Continuing with the above, adds Chavez, who was the president of the CAN: "the mechanism only defends the interests of each country elites and of the transnational companies. "It does not serve the Indians, the blacks and the poor," adds Hernandez (2006): "the Venezuelan ruler responds in this way to the bilateral free trade pacts promoted by Washington." "They could not impose the Free Trade Agreement for the Americas (FTAA), but they are getting some countries to sign mini-FTAAs. And in these circumstances, what is the point of staying in the CAN," said Chavez when offering explanations for his decision. Regarding the above, Venezuela's leave-taking from the CAN has had a significant political impact in the region, since it has generated divisions between the member countries, weakened the cohesion of the block and put the future of regional integration at risk.

Hence, the importance of carrying out this study with the aim of analyzing the impact of Venezuela's leave-taking from the Andean Community of Nations on the political integration processes of the Latin American region between 2007 and 2023. Carrying out an in-depth analysis of Venezuela's leaving lies in the need to understand how a change in the membership of a regional organization can alter the political and strategic dynamics at the continental level. Venezuela's departure from the CAN generated a series of challenges and opportunities both for the remaining member countries and for Venezuela itself. In addition, it had an impact on the way in which other alliances and regional actors, such as the MERCOSUR and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), interacted in the South America political scenario.

Within this context, the ongoing research is fully supported, as it aims to identify emerging patterns or trends in regional integration processes, to analyze whether Venezuela's leaving can be considered a representative or exceptional case in the context of regional integration. In addition, it explores whether there are lessons learned or recommendations derived from Venezuela's experience that can be applicable to other regional integration processes in Latin America.

## METHOD

In order to achieve the objective recommended by this research, the qualitative approach will be used according to Katayama (2014) the qualitative, Aranzamendi (2015). Regarding the type of research, a documentary research will be carried out Gómez (2010) based on the review of bibliographical sources, using an analytical-theoretical approach and applying the inductive-deductive method in order to collect information and data on international law, regulations and reports related to the Andean Community of Nationals, agreements, resolutions, treaties among others. The research is framed in the types of case studies by Tantaleán (2016). The bibliographical research method, (Armas, 2017). The bibliographic method allowed the review and selection of books, articles and scientific journals, to delve deeper into the subject and to perform the phenomenon analysis of study. Also, the historical method (Ramos, 1999) was used to understand what happened throughout history, that is, since the creation of the CAN, the reasons for its departure from Venezuela, and the impact on political integration in the period 2007 to 2022 will be analyzed.

Likewise, the exegetic method was used, which is an interpretation method used in the study of legal texts (Alston, 2017, p. 92). This allowed a grammatical and literal interpretation of the CAN's normative provisions for member countries, their evolution, therefore, a comparison of the laws will be made over time. Similarly, the Molina Analysis and Synthesis method (2017), for the observation and examination of the particular fact ( Alston , 2017).

In the research process, secondary sources were used consisting of information obtained from the General Secretariat of the Andean Community and the OEC for data on Venezuela, the International Monetary Fund, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Bank, official documents, scientific journals and databases that have compiled and structured crucial data, press articles, reports, analysis on Venezuela's departure from the CAN, scientific journals, bibliographic databases Scielo , Dialnet , Scopus, Google Scholar, among others.

The techniques and instruments used allowed gathering relevant information from secondary sources (such as books, magazines, and scientific articles) on Venezuela's exit from the Andean Community of Nations and its impact on political and economic integration during the period 2007-2022. The interviews conducted by Lanuez and Fernández (2014) with the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, between 2004 and 2009, with various specialists, aimed to understand and analyze the reasons behind Venezuela's decision to leave the CAN.

Finally, to analyze the qualitative information, ATLAS.ti was used , which facilitates the organization, analysis and visualization of data. In addition, it is a valuable tool for research on the impact of Venezuela's departure from the CAN, as it facilitates the organization, analysis and visualization of data, which can help to obtain a deep and meaningful understanding of the interviews.

## RESULTS

Following Venezuela's exit from the Andean Community of Nations, significant changes have occurred in the region's political alliances. These changes have had an impact on regional cooperation, affecting the political dynamics and relations within the Andean Community (Gómez, 2022; Fairlie et al., 2021). An internal factor in the political dynamics of the CAN is the consolidation of democracies and the dichotomy of struggle between liberal and conservative governments (Pizzorno, 2023; López and Ponte, 2023). The table below explains the political-party dynamics in the Andean Community of Nations from 2000 to 2023. Based on the analysis of the table and the specialized literature, the main factors that have contributed to the reconfiguration of the political landscape of the CAN will be identified, including Venezuela's departure, the democracies consolidation and the dichotomy between liberal and conservative governments.

**Table 1**

*Andean Community of Nations country Presidents from 2000 to 2023 by period and political party*

Andean Community of Nations Country Presidents from 2000 to 2023 by period and political party					
Country	Period	President	Political Ideology	Political chances	Diplomatic Position Towards the CAN
Ecuador	2000-2003	Gustavo Novoa Bejarano	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2003-2005	Lucio Gutiérrez Borbua	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2005-2007	Alfredo Palacio González	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2007-2017	Rafael Vicente Correa Delgado	Progressive	Political alternation	Active participation
	2007-2021	Lenin Voltaire Moreno Garcés	Liberal	Political alternation	Active participation
	2021-2023	Guillermo Alberto Lazo Mendoza	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
Bolivia	2001	Jorge Quiroga Ramírez	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2002-2013	Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2003-2005	Carlos Mesa Gisbert	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2005-2006	Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2006 - 2019	Evo Morales Ayma	Progressive	Political alternation	Active participation
	2019-2020	Jeanine Áñez Chávez	Liberal	Political alternation	Active participation
Perú	2020	Luis Arce Catacora	Progressive	Political alternation	Active participation
	2001-2006	Alejandro Celestino Toledo Manrique	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2006-2011	Alan Gabriel Ludwig García Pérez	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2011-2016	Ollanta Moisés Humala Tasso	Progressive	Political alternation	Active participation
	2016-2018	Pedro Pablo Kuczynski Godard	Liberal	Political alternation	Active participation
	2018-2020	Martín Alberto Viscarra Cornejo	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2020-2021	Francisco Rafael Sagasti Hochhausler	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2021-2022	José Pedro Castillo Terrones	Progressive	Political succession	Active participation
Colombia	2022	Dina Ercilia Boluarte Segarra	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2000 - 2002	Andrés Pastrana Arango	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2002 - 2010	Álvaro Uribe Vélez	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2010 - 2018	Juan Manuel Santos Calderón	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
	2018 - 2022	Iván Duque Márquez	Liberal	Political succession	Active participation
Venezuela	2022	Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego	Progressive	Political alternation	Active participation
	1999-2013	Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías	Progressive	Political alternation	Distancing
	2013	Nicolás Maduro Moros	Progressive	Political succession	Distancing

The analysis of Table 1 reflects that the majority of the CAN presidents during the period 2000-2023 have been of liberal ideology, where the growing trend is towards political alternation in the region, with several countries experiencing changes of governments of different parties and ideologies. These countries have mostly maintained an active participation in the CAN, with different levels of commitment and enthusiasm.



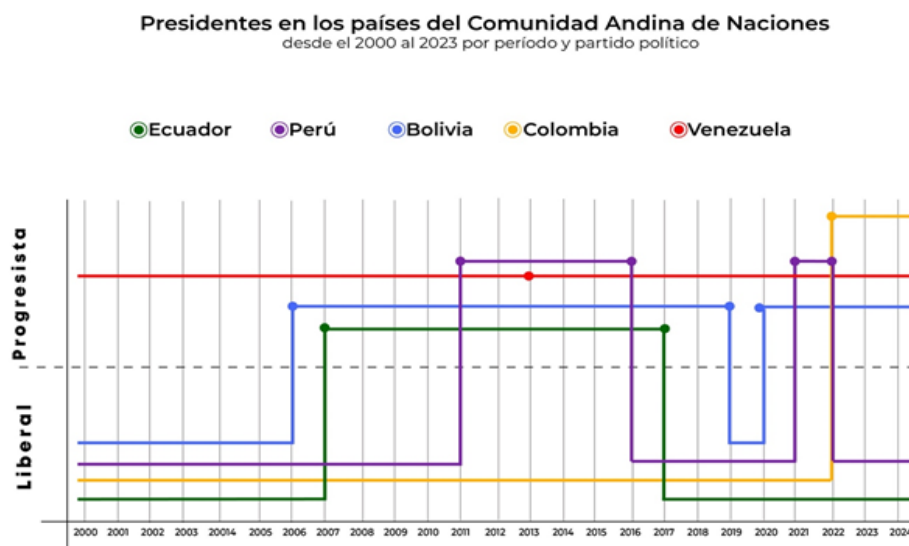
### *The political-ideological dynamics from 2000 to 2020 in the Andean Community of Nations*

In the political context prior to 2000 in the CAN, a series of changes and transformations were experienced. In the 1990s, several countries in the region experienced transitions towards democracy after authoritarian periods (Briceño, 2023). These transitions had a significant impact on the political and ideological dynamics of the region. During this time, there was an increase in the demand for greater democratic openness and a renewal of the political agenda, oriented towards issues such as social inclusion, justice and citizen participation. These demands drove changes in the political systems of many Andean countries and laid the groundwork for subsequent events in the 2000s.

The first decade of the 2000s witnessed important political and social changes in the CAN. In several countries of the region, there was significant progress towards the consolidation of democracy, with the election of democratic governments and the promotion of human rights. At the same time, social inclusion policies were implemented and efforts were made to reduce poverty and inequality. In addition, in some cases, constitutional reforms were carried out that sought to strengthen citizen participation and guarantee political stability. These changes had a notable impact on the political and ideological dynamics of the region, giving rise to new political movements and the reconfiguration of the dominant ideological currents in the CAN.

**Figure 1**

*Presidents in the countries of the Andean Community of Nations (from 2000 to 2023 by period and political party).*



Over the long period from 2000 to 2020 shown in Figure 1, a changing political landscape has been observed within the CAN, characterized by the fluctuation between different predominant ideologies. This analysis, supported by research such as that of Briceño, et al. (2020), and Lombana and Cabeza (2023), reveals a complex and changing dynamic that

has significantly influenced the policies implemented by the governments of the member countries and the evolution of the CAN itself.

It is important to note that these fluctuating ideologies have had a significant impact on the CAN dynamics and the direction of its evolution. The political decisions taken by the governments of the member countries have reflected these trends, influencing the effectiveness of the organization and its capacity to meet its objectives of promoting economic and social development in the Andean region.

Regarding Hugo Chávez Frías' role before and after Venezuela's departure from the CAN: Before Venezuela's departure from the CAN, Hugo Chávez Frías played a key role in strengthening 21st-century socialism in the country. Through his government, he implemented policies that promoted social equality and economic justice. He sought to establish a socialist system based on citizen participation and equal opportunities (Quintero, 2022). In addition, he focused on reducing inequality and poverty through the implementation of social programs and the nationalization of companies and natural resources.

In addition to strengthening 21st-century socialism, Hugo Chávez Frías carried out the nationalization of companies and natural resources as part of his role prior to Venezuela's departure from the CAN. Through this policy, the government acquired state control of various strategic industries, such as oil, telecommunications, electricity, and steel (Leguizamón and Domínguez, 2024). This measure sought to guarantee control of resources and their direct benefit to the Venezuelan people, as well as the reduction of foreign influence in the country's economy. Nationalization also aimed to improve the distribution of wealth and generate resources for social programs (Cooper, 2022).

After Venezuela's departure from the CAN, Hugo Chávez Frías continued to play an active political role: Instead of focusing exclusively on regional integration through the CAN, Chávez turned his attention to Latin American integration as a whole. He sought to strengthen the unity of Latin American countries and promote cooperation in various areas. This new strategy included seeking alliances with countries that do not belong to the CAN and the creation of new regional integration mechanisms (Cruz et al., 2023).

Following Venezuela's departure from the CAN in 2006, Hugo Chávez Frías reoriented his efforts toward promoting Latin American integration through various alternative initiatives and institutions (Andreis, 2023). He sought to strengthen economic, political, and social ties between countries in the region. He promoted the creation of regional organizations such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Through these initiatives, Chávez sought to foster mutual cooperation and strengthen Latin America's position on the international stage.

### **Interviews and conferences analysis with Hugo Chavez Frías on the CAN and Integration in Latin America**

The following is an analysis of the ideas and proposals of former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías regarding the CAN and Latin American integration. To do so, interviews and lectures given by the Bolivarian leader at different times in his political career will be examined:

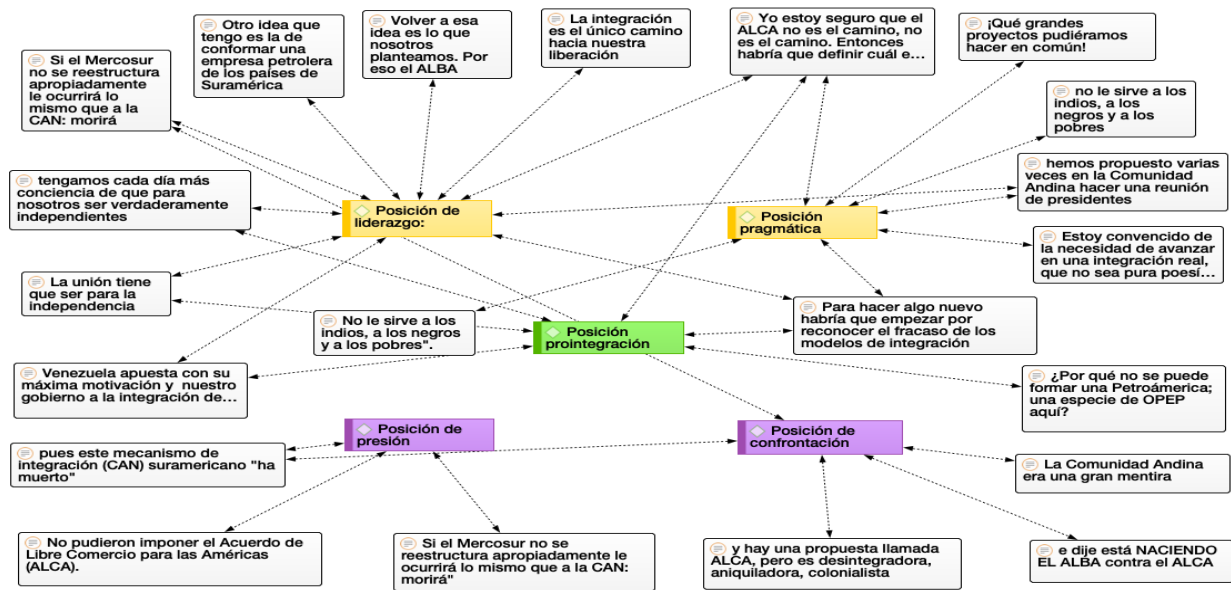
**Table 2***Vision of Latin American Integration for President Hugo Chávez*

Country	Date	Event	Mode	Fountain
Venezuela	2004	Interview: Duhalde and Chavez spoke about South American and Latin American integration	Interview	The Universe Newspaper (2004)
Venezuela	2004	Interview	Interview	Frias, HC (2004)
Brazil	2004	Lecture by President Chavez on Latin American integration at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro	Conference	Sardiño , A. (2004) Rebelión.org Website.
Venezuela	2005	Article from Sin Permiso Magazine. By Manuel Cabieses 08/09/2005	Interview	Cobieses , M (2005) Sinpermiso Weekly electronic journal.
Venezuela	2006	Statement to the Spanish newspaper “El País”: Hugo Chavez withdraws Venezuela from the CAN	Press conference	Hernandez, C. (2006)
Cuba	2007	Petrocaribe Summit in 2007	Conference	Chavez, H. (2007).
Brazil	2008	Following the signing of the UNASUR constitutive treaty in 2008	Conference	Chavez, H. (2008).
Bolivia	2009	Fifth Summit of the Americas	Conference	Chavez, H. (2009)

In order to interpret Table 2, it is essential to understand Hugo Chávez's vision of Latin American integration. He considered integration to be a historical imperative to achieve unity, independence and social justice in the region. His vision had fundamental bases, among which he describes unity as the main element to overcome the differences between Latin American countries. Economic and political independence since through integration, Latin America could free itself from the domination of foreign powers and build its own development model, based on regional cooperation and complementarity. And finally, social justice as the ultimate goal since integration should be at the service of the people, seeking the eradication of poverty, inequality and social exclusion. It can be concluded that Hugo Chávez's vision of Latin American integration was an ambitious project that sought to transform the region. Below in Figure 2, the analysis of the interviews, ATLAS,ti .

**Figure 2**

### Interviews analysis with President Hugo Chavez



For the interpretation of figure 4, Hugo Chávez's vision of regional integration as a fundamental process for the liberation and development of Latin America is reflected. Chávez would be in the leadership position, convinced that regional unity would only be achieved with strong and committed leadership. For Chávez, integration should be based on solidarity and cooperation between peoples, not on economic competition. The position of solidarity is highlighted in the mental map as a fundamental pillar of the Chavista vision.

## DISCUSSION

The CAN internal political dynamics of the following Venezuela's departure were shaped by a notable ideological and political tension between progressive and liberal governments within the Andean region. This dichotomy reflected not only differences in the economic and social policies of the member states, but also in their approaches to regional integration. Progressive governments tended to promote greater cooperation and solidarity among Andean countries, while liberal ones preferred a more pragmatic, trade-focused approach. This ideological divide generated significant obstacles to decision-making and policy implementation within the CAN, often leading to stagnation in integration efforts.

Furthermore, Hugo Chávez's charismatic and energetic leadership exerted a notable influence on the political dynamics of the CAN during this period. Known for his anti-imperialist rhetoric and a vision of "21<sup>st</sup> century socialism", Chávez openly challenged established structures and policies at both the national and regional levels. Ultimately, Venezuela's departure left a leadership emptiness in the CAN and contributed to further fragmentation within the Andean region.

During the study period, the absence of ideological coincidences between the member countries of the CAN and Venezuela was evident, which resulted in a complex and challenging dynamic for regional integration. Instead of aligning themselves in ideological terms, certain

waves of predominance of regional leaderships emerged, where each member country sought to advance its own interests and priorities in the field of integration.

Another fundamental aspect that stands out in the analysis of Hugo Chávez's leadership before, during and after Venezuela's departure from the CAN is his position of confrontation and constant pressure, as well as his continued criticism of the integration processes that had been developing in past decades.

His speeches and public statements reflected a deep skepticism towards current integration models, especially those promoted by multilateral organizations such as the CAN. His critical and challenging stance not only had an impact on regional politics, but also contributed to reconfiguring the political and economic landscape of Latin America as a whole. Although his leadership and legacy continue to be the subject of debate and controversy, it is undeniable that Hugo Chávez left an indelible mark on the contemporary history of Latin America, especially with regard to regional integration and the struggle for autonomy and sovereignty of the Latin American peoples.

Ultimately, the financial support of the Venezuelan oil industry and Chavez's political skill allowed him to consolidate his position as an influential regional leader and a key figure on the Latin American political stage.

## CONCLUSIONS

At the political level, the internal political dynamics of the CAN following Venezuela's departure were characterized by a notable tension between progressive and liberal governments in the Andean region. This discrepancy reflected differences in both economic and social policies and approaches to regional integration. While progressives advocated greater cooperation and solidarity among Andean countries, liberals preferred a pragmatic approach focused on trade. This ideological division generated significant obstacles to decision-making and policy implementation within the CAN, sometimes leading to stagnation in integration efforts.

Hugo Chávez's charismatic leadership exerted a notable influence on the political dynamics of the CAN. Chávez openly challenged established political and economic structures, advocating a vision of "21st century socialism." His departure from the CAN not only reflected irreconcilable differences with other members on political and ideological issues, but also illustrated his strategy to strengthen his influence in other regional political and economic arenas.

The lack of ideological commonalities between the member countries of the CAN and Venezuela complicated regional integration. A great regional leadership dominance emerged, with each country seeking to advance its interests. Integration efforts focused on harmonizing trade policies and cooperation in areas such as infrastructure and energy. However, ideological differences and divergent national agendas hindered the effective implementation of integration measures.



Despite some progress in economic and trade integration, challenges remain due to ideological differences and a lack of coordination among member countries. On the other hand, Hugo Chávez managed his leadership in the CAN to consolidate his withdrawal and expand his influence through the Mercosur, promoting an alternative vision of development based on solidarity and regional cooperation.

Ultimately, the future of the CAN will depend on its ability to adapt to new realities and find innovative solutions to the challenges it faces. Regional integration remains an indispensable tool for the economic and social development of the Andean countries, and the CAN has the potential to become a key player in building a more prosperous and equitable future for the region.

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