

VENEZUELA'S IDEOLOGY IN MERCOSUR SINCE THE QCA, 2006–2023

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Abstract

Horizontal ideology is a factor that has been attempted to isolate from the region's integration mechanisms, but in one way or another it is present, mainly because in Latin America the engine of unification still depends proportionally on the executive power of the nations. The objective of this article is to demonstrate quantitatively how the political ideology of the Fifth Republic government influenced Venezuela's accession, permanence, or denunciation of MERCOSUR in order to verify whether it was the political ideology of Venezuela's international social order during the Fifth Republic that caused the country's integrationist instability within the mechanism between 2006 and 2021. To this end, we used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of the Crisp Sets type, using $irv = f(ci, fd, acem, aceu)$ as the analysis function, where the dependent variable is Venezuela's regional integration (*irv*) and the independent variable is political ideology with four ideological fronts (ideological convergence (*ci*); diplomatic friction (*fd*); multipolar extra-community trade agreement (*acem*); unipolar extra-community trade agreement (*aceu*). With QCA, it was possible to determine which of these ideological fronts was the cause of changes in the dependent variable (*irv*). The result obtained was that the presence of DF has been the cause of the absence of IRV, with a consistency equal to 1 and a coverage of 0.20 (low). Therefore, it is not possible to guarantee that DF is a sufficient condition for IRV to occur within MERCOSUR under the government of the Fifth Republic.

Keywords: Ideology, politics, Venezuela, MERCOSUR, QCA, Fifth Republic.

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RECEIVED: 09-02-2026 / ACCEPTED: 11-05-2026 / PUBLISHED: 30-06-2026

How to quote: Palermo, B (2026). Venezuela's ideology in Mercosur since the QCA, 2006-2023. *Almanaque*, 48, 81 - 102. <https://doi.org/10.58479/almanaque.2026.98>



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POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL ORDER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM OF VENEZUELA

A country's foreign policy is considered a public policy directed at the international arena, with the purpose of stimulating or transforming conditions that contribute to the nation's security and economic well-being and, in the case of Latin America, also facilitating development policies (Bernal, 2017). This foreign policy is often a reflection of domestic policy (Boersner, 2009; Bustamante, 2007). In this sense, governments are responsible for creating, maintaining, modifying, rejecting, or contradicting them when there is a change in the executive branch (Giacalone, 2011). Based on this assertion, Lasagna (1995, in Giacalone, 2011, p.103) argues that "foreign policy is reformulated according to the ideology of the new regime."

In Venezuela, since the arrival of the Fifth Republic, the approach in the discourse of its leaders has been that they would not seek to continue the work done by previous governments, but rather would carry out a revolution (Boersner, 2009; Romero, 2003). This revolution would not only encompass internal political aspects, but would also involve changes in international relations and the way the country integrates itself. In this regard, Rodríguez (2010, p. 195) points out that since the beginning of Chávez's government, there has been a "...marked difference with the neoliberal economic model, and, as expressed in the 1999 Constitution, the construction of a social democracy, not representative but participatory, of a social economy, not of competition but of solidarity."

Despite this, in terms of foreign policy, the break with the past was not complete, retaining diplomatic aspects inherited from the Fourth Republic (presidentialism, petrodplomacy, exceptionalism, and oversizing; Bernal, 2017, p. 246) and adding at different times novel characteristics such as the vision of a multipolar world, Bolivarian socialism, and the vision of holistic integration. In relation to regional union, before Hugo Chávez became president, Venezuela gave greater importance to economic aspects in its Latin American integration. However, with his arrival in power, priority was given not to trade issues but to political ones, using regional unification, according to Martínez (2011, p.112), as "a mechanism to promote his leftist ideology and confrontation with the United States."

Against this backdrop, Hugo Chávez attempted to promote Simón Bolívar's dream of a greater homeland for the Latin American region in contemporary times. However, unlike the era of the independence fighters, the "great colonizer" of this era, according to Chávez, is mainly the US government (Rinke, 2015 and Bernal, 2017). Therefore, in order to confront it and

not be intimidated by its colossal power, countries from Mexico to Argentina must integrate (Bustamante, 2007). It is under this philosophy that Chavista Venezuela began to play a relevant role in the search for the long-dreamed-of Latin American union, and from its inception, it showed signs of doing so from a profound ideology that would encompass political, social, and economic aspects in favor of defending the peripheral peoples of the continent and against the hegemonic pretensions of the northern nation (the US).

Consequently, the foreign policy of Chávez and later Maduro viewed the region and the world as divided into two poles (Ceresole in Mansilla, 2015), with, on the one hand, those nations that sympathized with their ideology (especially its anti-hegemonic nature) and, on the other, countries that remained on the sidelines of his defiant stance against the US (Bustamante, 2007, and Bernal, 2017). This attitude led some academics to classify the Venezuelan president as a “disintegrator” and promoter of a new cold war on the continent (Malamud, 2006; Ramírez and Viera, 2006, and Bernal, 2017).

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY: QCA

This article focuses on political ideology. Its objective is to quantitatively demonstrate how the independent variable (political ideology of the Fifth Republic government) influenced Venezuela's accession to, continued membership of, or withdrawal from MERCOSUR (dependent variable). Accordingly, four ideological measurement units were segregated: ideological convergence (ic); diplomatic friction (df); multipolar extra-community trade agreement (mecta); and unipolar extra-community trade agreement (uecta) in order to determine which of these ideological fronts caused changes in the dependent variable (IRV). To do this, the tool used is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)¹, of the Crisp Sets type². The first step is to develop a data matrix based on information obtained from secondary sources (document review, academic or theoretical postulates, and historical facts). Next, the matrix is calibrated³ and finally, the calibrated data matrix is submitted to the fs/QCA version 3.0 software, which generates a report analyzing the causality between variables.

1 Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): a comparative study tool developed by Charles Ragin in 1987, understood as a set of configurational techniques that enable an effective approach to causality in social sciences when explaining variation in a result of interest (Center for Sociological Research, 2017).

2 Crisp Sets: use of dichotomous variables (presence or, in logical terms, true=1 and absence or, in logical terms, false=0) (Rosati and Chazarreta, 2017).

3 Calibration: the researcher assigns scores to cases to reflect whether or not they are members of a set. (Hirzalla, n.d.). In other words, calibration determines whether a variable is present or absent for the occurrence of a given condition.

Table 1. Calibration criteria for qualitative variables

Variables	Definition of variables	Unit of measurement
Political ideology	<p>Political ideology: ideology becomes inherently political when it is decisive in the dispute over <i>social order</i>. The way in which societies establish certain orders—hierarchies, distribution of duties and obligations, privileges and sanctions, mechanisms of production and distribution, social mobility, distribution of roles in general—results from and requires a belief system that legitimizes it (Moreno, 2015).</p>	<p>Ideological convergence = <i>present</i> if all the governments of the member countries of the economic bloc are compatible with the ideological position of the Venezuelan government; <i>absent</i> if any of the governments of the member countries of the economic bloc is incompatible with the ideological position of the Venezuelan government (Santarén, 2012).</p>
		<p>Unipolar extra-community trade agreement = <i>present</i> if any of the partner countries have free trade agreements with the United States of America; <i>absent</i> if none of the partner countries have free trade agreements with the United States of America (Ramírez and Viera, 2006; Gómez, 2015).</p>
		<p>Diplomatic friction = <i>present</i> if Venezuela has diplomatic tensions with at least one of the partner countries; <i>absent</i> if Venezuela has cordial diplomatic relations with all partner countries (Cobo, 2008; Gómez, 2015).</p>
		<p>Multipolar extra-community trade agreement = <i>present</i> if any of the partner countries have trade agreements with third countries (except the US); <i>absent</i> if none of the partner countries have trade agreements with third countries (Sasaki, 2012).</p>
Regional integration of Venezuela	<p>Regional integration: an attempt to rebuild eroded national borders at a higher level. It can therefore be interpreted as a protectionist maneuver by states that cannot guarantee their interests and objectives on their own and seek to do so in conjunction with others (Malamud, 2011, p. 219).</p>	<p>Regional integration = <i>present</i>, if it is a full member of the economic bloc; <i>absent</i>, if it denounces the integration agreement or if it is suspended as a full member (Urruchurtu, 2014).</p>

Source: own elaboration based on data compiled by various authors cited above.

It is important to mention that the software presents three possible solutions⁴. This article incorporates the simplest of all (parsimonious solution), because Ariza and Gandini (2012, p.508) stipulate that this type of solution “is based on the understanding that the fewer factors we

4 The first is the complex solution, which assumes that all configurations without cases have produced the

need to explain a phenomenon, the closer we are to the core of its causal mechanisms.” In view of the above, and after reviewing the literature, Table 1 the scoring criteria for the established qualitative variables are compiled, using $irv = f(ci, fd, acem, aceu)$ as the analysis function, where the dependent variable is Venezuela's regional integration (*irv*) and the independent variables are political ideology with four ideological fronts (*ci*, *fd*, *acem*, *aceu*).

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF VENEZUELA IN THE SOUTHERN COMMON MARKET (MERCOSUR)

MERCOSUR has been an integration mechanism that follows a pattern of unification similar to that of traditional theory, where the aim is: first, free trade between the parties; second, to consolidate a common external tariff vis-à-vis third parties; and then to create a common market (parts of the stages of integration according to Balassa, 1964). That is why it was contradictory that the Venezuelan government, which claims that the region will never integrate economically (Chávez, 2005 in Rinaldi, 2006), would once again adhere to a mercantilist mechanism (Ramírez and Viera, 2006). In any case, Venezuela signed its protocol of accession to MERCOSUR in 2006, achieving full membership in 2012 and resulting in its suspension in 2017. Given these integrationist ups and downs, the QCA is used below to analyze the ideological causality (according to the variables studied) of the changing status of the Bolivarian nation:

IDEOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE (ci)

The ideological positions of the different political parties to which the presidents of the MERCOSUR member countries belonged from 2006 to 2023 were compiled (Table 2), reflecting that Venezuela is the only country that has not changed its ideological position on the horizontal left-wing spectrum. For the other four nations, there was alternation between presidents of left-wing, centrist, and right-wing ideologies. Therefore, when quantifying the variable according to the pre-established evaluation criteria, the result was that, out of the 18 years of studies, there was a coincidence of ideological positions with the other leaders of MERCOSUR member countries for four years. Therefore, the variable is considered present and equal to 1. For the remaining years, there is no total alignment between the ideologies of the horizontal political spectrum, so it is considered absent and equal to 0 (Table 7).

absence of the result of interest (Pérez, 2007). The second is the intermediate solution, which assumes that only some of the configurations without cases would have produced the presence of the result of interest (Pérez, 2007); and the third is the parsimonious solution, which assumes that all configurations without cases would have produced the presence of the result of interest (Pérez, 2007).

DIPLOMATIC FRICTIONS (fd)

Since Venezuela signed the treaty to join MERCOSUR in 2006, certain friction has begun to arise with some partner countries, specifically at the legislative and technical level, which led to the postponement of its full membership (González, 2008). At the executive level, Venezuela's diplomatic friction with MERCOSUR during the Chávez administration was expressed more in "speeches" than in "countermeasures" due to differences between partners.

Years	Argentina			Brazil			Paraguay			Uruguay			Venezuela		
	President	Political party	Ideological position	President	Political party	Ideological position	President	Political party	Ideological position	President	Political party	Ideological position	President	Political party	Ideological position
2006	Néstor Kirchner	Front for Victory	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Nicanor Duarte Frutos	Colorado Party	Right	Tabaré Vázquez	Broad Front	Left	Hugo Chávez	MVR	Left
2007	Néstor Kirchner	Front for Victory	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Nicanor Duarte Frutos	Colorado Party	Right	Tabaré Vázquez	Broad Front	Left	Hugo Chávez	PSUV	Left
2008	Cristina Fernández	Front for Victory	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Nicanor Duarte Frutos	Colorado Party	Right	Tabaré Vázquez	Broad Front	Left	Hugo Chávez	PSUV	Left
2009	Cristina Fernández	Front for Victory	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Fernando Lugo	Guasú Front	Left	Tabaré Vázquez	Broad Front	Left	Hugo Chávez	PSUV	Left
2010	Cristina Fernández	Front for Victory	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Fernando Lugo	Guasú Front	Left	José Mujica	Broad Front	Left	Hugo Chávez	PSUV	Left

VENEZUELA'S IDEOLOGY IN MERCOSUR SINCE THE QCA, 2006-2023

2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Mauricio Macri	Mauricio Macri	Mauricio Macri	Cristina Fernández	Cristina Fernández	Cristina Fernández	Cristina Fernández	Cristina Fernández
Republican Proposal	Republican Proposal	Republican Proposal	Front for Victory	Front for Victory	Front for Victory	Front for Victory	Front for Victory
Right	Right	Right	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left
Michel Temer	Michel Temer	Michel Temer	Dilma Rousseff	Dilma Rousseff	Dilma Rousseff	Dilma Rousseff	Dilma Rousseff
Brazilian Democratic Movement	Brazilian Democratic Movement	Brazilian Democratic Movement	Workers' Party	Workers' Party	Workers' Party	Workers' Party	Workers' Party
Center	Center	Center	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left
Horacio Cartes	Horacio Cartes	Horacio Cartes	Horacio Cartes	Horacio Cartes	Federico Franco	Fernando Lugo	Fernando Lugo
Colorado Party	Colorado Party	Colorado Party	Colorado Party	Colorado Party	Authentic Radical Liberal Party	Guasú Front	Guasú Front
Right	Right	Right	Right	Right	Right	Left	Left
Tabaré Vázquez	Tabaré Vázquez	Tabaré Vázquez	José Mujica	José Mujica	José Mujica	José Mujica	José Mujica
Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front	Broad Front
Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left
Nicolás Maduro	Nicolás Maduro	Nicolás Maduro	Nicolás Maduro	Nicolás Maduro	Nicolás Maduro	Hugo Chávez	Hugo Chávez
PSUV	PSUV	PSUV	PSUV	PSUV	PSUV	PSUV	PSUV
Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left

2019	Maurício Macri	Republican Proposal	Right	Jair Bolsonaro	Liberal Party	Right	Mario Abdo Benítez	Colorado Party	Right	Tabaré Vázquez	Broad Front	Left	Nicolás Maduro	PSUV	Left
2020	Alberto Fernández	Justicialist Party	Left	Jair Bolsonaro	Liberal Party	Right	Mario Abdo Benítez	Colorado Party	Right	Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou	National Party	Right	Nicolás Maduro	PSUV	Left
2021	Alberto Fernández	Justicialist Party	Left	Jair Bolsonaro	Liberal Party	Right	Mario Abdo Benítez	Colorado Party	Right	Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou	National Party	Right	Nicolás Maduro	PSUV	Left
2022	Alberto Fernández	Justicialist Party	Left	Jair Bolsonaro	Liberal Party	Right	Mario Abdo Benítez	Colorado Party	Right	Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou	National Party	Right	Nicolás Maduro	PSUV	Left
2023	Alberto Fernández	Justicialist Party	Left	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Workers' Party	Left	Mario Abdo Benítez	Colorado Party	Right	Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou	National Party	Right	Nicolás Maduro	PSUV	Left

Source: prepared by the author based on data compiled from the CIDOB database; Alcántara, M. (2004);

Note: some years may be subdivided into two presidential terms.

Consequently, Venezuela's participation and performance during Chávez's government within the bloc was marked by confrontations with parliamentarians from other nations (González, 2008), the intention to "reform" the mechanism by giving it greater political and social content "so that it would not end up like the CAN" (Malamud, 2006), and expectations of commercial opportunities due to Venezuela's opening up to MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019), giving Venezuela a certain degree of prominence in the joint foreign policy of the integration mechanism, but which in Maduro's time ends up being undermined by the changes in the other leaders' terms of office, by internal democratic questioning, by the Bolivarian country's failure to comply with regional regulations, and by the asymmetry of the Venezuelan economic model (Fernández, 2019). Against this backdrop, the various circumstances (according to different sources) that have caused friction in Venezuela's inter-state relations with the different MERCOSUR countries were compiled (Table 3).

Table 3 reflects the cases that have generated diplomatic friction between Venezuela and each MERCOSUR partner during the term of the Fifth Republic of Venezuela, highlighting: first, Paraguay is the country with the greatest bilateral tension in the 18 years of the study, even during the term of the leftist Fernando Lugo (2008-2012), because right-wing parliamentarians had a majority in the Paraguayan Congress, blocking Venezuela's formal entry into MERCOSUR until 2012, when Paraguay was suspended from the bloc. Second, until 2011, Venezuela did not experience any diplomatic friction at the executive level with its other MERCOSUR partners, only with Brazil and Paraguay at the technical and legislative levels, but since 2012 the picture has begun to change (first with Paraguay), then with Argentina and Uruguay (2015), and finally with Brazil (2016). Third, starting in 2016, the Venezuelan government began to have constant diplomatic friction with all MERCOSUR member countries, both those on the left (Uruguay) and those on the right (Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay), moving in the early years from soft power measures (ideological confrontational speeches, diplomatic notes of concern, etc.) to hard power measures (suspension of MERCOSUR membership, non-recognition of presidential legitimacy (from 2019) and the internal democratic system, etc.).

Fourth, since 2016, differences have emerged between Venezuela's socialist economic model and those of the other MERCOSUR member countries (which are liberal in nature), as Venezuela has failed to fully adapt its domestic legislation to regional regulations within the permitted four-year period (2012-2016) and, given its national and international crisis, is still far from being able to do so. Finally, in the following years, bilateral relations deteriorated to the point that by 2019, relations had reached a critical point. -2016) and, given its national and international crisis, is still far from being able to do so. Finally, in the following years, bilateral relations deteriorated to the point that by 2020, all partner countries did not recognize Nicolás Maduro as president of Venezuela (a situation that changed with Argentina with the arrival of the Fernández government and with Brazil with the return of the Lula da Silva government). Taking into account the previous overview, and for the purposes of using the QCA, we proceed to quantify the variable, diplomatic frictions (Table 7), obtaining as a result that for the 18 years of the study, only in one of them (2014) were diplomatic relations cordial with all the countries of the southern bloc and, therefore, were absent = 0; However, for the other 17 years, there was a divergence with at least one of the four countries, and consequently, diplomatic friction was present = 1.

3. Diplomatic friction between Venezuela and other MERCOSUR countries				
	Venezuela – Argentina	Venezuela – Brazil	Venezuela – Paraguay	Venezuela – Uruguay
2006	No evidence of diplomatic friction found	Opposition to the ratification of Venezuela's entry into MERCOSUR by Brazil's social democratic (PSDB) and democratic (DEM) parties due to Chávez's anti-democratic positions (Martínez, 2011)	Opposition to the ratification of Venezuela's entry into MERCOSUR by the Paraguayan Congress, which was dominated by center and right-wing parties, who claimed that Chávez's anti-democratic positions were a threat to the integrationist bloc (Martínez, 2015; Fernández, 2019)	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.
2007	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	The Brazilian Congress continues to withhold approval of Venezuela's ratification as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2011).	The Paraguayan Congress continues to fail to approve the ratification of Venezuela's entry as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2015; Fernández, 2019).	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.
2008	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	Brazilian Congress continues to fail to approve ratification of Venezuela's entry as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2011)	The Paraguayan Congress continued to fail to approve the ratification of Venezuela's entry as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2015; Fernández, 2019).	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.
2009	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	Paraguayan Congress continued to fail to approve the ratification of Venezuela's entry as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2011; Fernández, 2019)	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found
2010	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	In 2010, the Paraguayan Congress again rejected Venezuela's accession (Martínez, 2011).	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found
2011	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	The Paraguayan Congress continued to refuse to ratify Venezuela's accession as a full member of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2015; Fernández, 2019).	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found

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2012	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	Withdrawal of Venezuelan ambassador following the impeachment of Paraguayan President Fernando Lugo and cessation of oil shipments (Fernández, 2019; elnuevogerald.com, 2012).	No evidence of diplomatic friction found
2013	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.	Like the position of the Organization of American States, Paraguay considered it prudent to recount the votes in the close presidential election, in which Nicolás Maduro was elected (abc.com.py, 2013).	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found
2014	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found
2015	Macri (new Argentine president) states that at the next Mercosur meeting he would request "the application of the Democratic Charter to Venezuela" and expresses his opposition to the government of Nicolás Maduro (Fernández, 2019)	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	No evidence of diplomatic friction was found	Maduro refers to the Uruguayan government as "cowards" for their position on US foreign policy (Alfonso, 2015); Tabaré Vázquez's second term as president did not enjoy the same support given to Hugo Chávez, and he gradually distanced himself from Maduro (Fernández, 2019)

2016	<p>The Venezuelan government claims that there is a "triple alliance" of the "extreme right" in the south of the continent, made up of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, to try to obstruct its pro tempore presidency of Mercosur, which it assumed despite opposition from those countries (Agencias EFE, 2016); Joint statement by the foreign ministers of Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay expressing their support for constitutional procedures, such as the recall referendum on Nicolás Maduro (infobae.com, 2016). Complaint against Venezuela for failing to comply with internal rules relating to the economic and commercial functioning of Mercosur (Fernández, 2019). The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay agreed not to transfer the pro tempore presidency of Mercosur to Venezuela (Fernández, 2019)</p>	<p>The Venezuelan government claims that there is a "triple alliance" of the "extreme right" in the south of the continent, made up of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, to try to obstruct its pro tempore presidency of Mercosur, which it assumed despite the opposition of those countries (Agencias EFE, 2016); José Serra, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs (after Dilma Rousseff's impeachment), accused the ALBA countries of making false statements (questioning Rousseff's impeachment) and urged them not to interfere in Brazilian internal political affairs (radicaleslibres.es, 2016); Venezuela withdraws its ambassador and freezes relations with Brazil following Rousseff's impeachment (elnacional.com, 2016); Complaint against Venezuela for failing to comply with internal rules relating to the economic and commercial functioning of MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019); The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay agreed not to transfer the pro tempore presidency of Mercosur to Venezuela (Fernández, 2019).</p>	<p>The Paraguayan ambassador to the OAS, Eliza Ruíz Díaz, asked the OAS to urge Venezuela to hold a recall referendum on Nicolás Maduro (ultimahora.com, 2016); The Venezuelan government claims that there is a "triple alliance" of the "extreme right" in the south of the continent, made up of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, to try to obstruct its pro tempore presidency of Mercosur, which it assumed despite the opposition of those countries (Agencias EFE, 2016); Paraguay freezes diplomatic relations due to offensive statements by Nicolás Maduro against the Paraguayan government (abc.com.py, 2016); Complaint against Venezuela for failing to comply with internal rules regarding the economic and commercial functioning of Mercosur (Fernández, 2019); The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay agreed not to transfer the pro tempore presidency of Mercosur to Venezuela (Fernández, 2019).</p>	<p>Joint statement by the foreign ministers of Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay expressing their support for constitutional procedures, such as the recall referendum on Nicolás Maduro (infobae.com, 2016); Complaint against Venezuela for failing to comply with internal rules relating to the economic and commercial functioning of Mercosur (Fernández, 2019); The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay agreed not to transfer the pro tempore presidency of Mercosur to Venezuela (Fernández, 2019)</p>
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VENEZUELA'S IDEOLOGY IN MERCOSUR SINCE THE QCA, 2006-2023

2017	<p>Creation of the Lima Group with the aim of establishing initiatives to safeguard democratic institutions in Venezuela in a peaceful manner (Chaves, 2020); In August 2017, MERCOSUR suspended Venezuela's membership (Alexéenko and Pyatakov, 2019); Argentina announced that it did not recognize the results of the elections for the National Constituent Assembly of Venezuela (Pardo, 2017).</p>	<p>Creation of the Lima Group with the aim of establishing initiatives to peacefully safeguard democratic institutions in Venezuela (Chaves, 2020); In August 2017, MERCOSUR suspended Venezuela's membership (Alexéenko and Pyatakov, 2019). Brazil announces that it does not recognize the results of the Venezuelan National Constituent Assembly elections (Pardo, 2017).</p>	<p>Creation of the Lima Group with the aim of establishing initiatives to peacefully safeguard democratic institutions in Venezuela (Chaves, 2020); In August 2017, MERCOSUR suspended Venezuela's membership (Alexéenko and Pyatakov, 2019).</p>	<p>In August 2017, MERCOSUR suspended Venezuela's membership (Alexéenko and Pyatakov, 2019).</p>
2018	<p>The Lima Group rejects Venezuela's presidential elections (Telesurtv.net, 2018); some countries in the Lima Group, including Argentina, with the support of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, formally request that the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigate alleged crimes against humanity committed in Venezuela by the Maduro government (Chaves, 2020); Venezuela remains suspended from MERCOSUR; The Organization of American States (OAS), with Uruguay voting in favor, approved a resolution that rejects the presidential elections in Venezuela and the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro as re-elected president (Rodríguez, 2018)</p>	<p>The Lima Group rejects Venezuela's presidential elections (Telesurtv.net, 2018); Venezuela remains suspended from MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019); The Organization of American States (OAS), with Brazil voting in favor, approved a resolution that rejects the presidential elections in Venezuela and the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro as re-elected president (Rodríguez, 2018).</p>	<p>Lima Group rejects Venezuelan presidential elections (Telesurtv.net, 2018); some countries in the Lima Group, including Paraguay, with the support of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, formally requested the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged crimes against humanity committed in Venezuela by the Maduro government (Chaves, 2020); Venezuela remains suspended from MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019). The Organization of American States (OAS), with Uruguay voting in favor, approved a resolution that rejects the presidential elections in Venezuela and the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro as re-elected president (Rodríguez, 2018).</p>	<p>Venezuela remains suspended from MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019).</p>

<p>2019</p>	<p>The Government of the Argentine Republic recognizes Deputy Juan Guaidó as Acting President of Venezuela (Press Release No. 017/19, Argentine Foreign Ministry).</p>	<p>Brazil recognizes Guaidó as interim president of Venezuela (Embassy of the "Venezuelan interim government" in Brazil, 2019); in February, the Maduro government closes the shared border (BBC, 2019). The ambassador of the "Venezuelan interim government," María Teresa Blandria, is recognized as Venezuela's Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Representative (Embassy of the "Venezuelan interim government" in Brazil, 2019)</p>	<p>Paraguay recognizes Guaidó as interim president of Venezuela (OAS, 2019); the Government of the Republic of Paraguay breaks diplomatic relations with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, 2019)</p>	<p>Venezuela remains suspended from MERCOSUR (Fernández, 2019)</p>
<p>2020</p>	<p>Rejected the ban on Deputy Juan Guaidó entering the Venezuelan National Assembly (Twitter account of Argentine Foreign Minister @felipe_sola, 2020)</p>	<p>Rejected the ban on Deputy Juan Guaidó entering the Venezuelan National Assembly (Brazilian Foreign Minister's Twitter (@ernestofaraujo, in Infobae, 2020)</p>	<p>The Paraguayan government questions the "violent repression" exercised by Nicolás Maduro against opposition deputies of the Venezuelan National Assembly, who were unable to enter Parliament during the session in which new authorities were to be elected (@ARivasPalacios on hoy.com.py).</p>	<p>Uruguayan Foreign Minister Francisco Bustillo declares that Nicolás Maduro's government is a dictatorship (Luzzi, 2020); President Luis Lacalle expresses his support for Juan Guaido (@LuisLacallePou, in Infobae, 2020)</p>

VENEZUELA'S IDEOLOGY IN MERCOSUR SINCE THE QCA, 2006-2023

2021	<p>No evidence of diplomatic friction was found, but rather diplomatic reconciliation. For example: Argentina withdraws from the Lima Group and from the lawsuit filed against the Venezuelan government before the International Criminal Court (Press Release No. 092/21, Argentine Foreign Ministry).</p>	<p>The Brazilian government, through its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto Araujo, reaffirms its support for the "interim Venezuelan government of Juan Guaido" (@ernestofaraujo, 2021).</p>	<p>At the VI CELAC Summit, the President of Paraguay refuses to recognize the government of Nicolás Maduro (Diario Gestión, 2021). Conflict begins over \$300 million debt owed by Paraguay's state oil companies to Venezuela, Petropar, and Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA).</p>	<p>Uruguay does not recognize the legitimacy of Venezuela's new Assembly (Press release No. 2/21, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay); Foreign Minister Francisco Bustillo, at the 51st General Assembly of the OAS, votes for the holding of 'free' elections in Venezuela and Nicaragua (EFE agencies, 2022); At the VI CELAC Summit, the President of Uruguay refuses to recognize the government of Nicolás Maduro (Diario Gestión, 2021).</p>
2022	<p>No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.</p>	<p>The Brazilian government continues to support the "interim Venezuelan government of Juan Guaido."</p>	<p>The conflict over the \$300 million debt owed by Paraguay's state oil companies to Venezuela, Petropar, and Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA) continues.</p>	<p>In November 2022, Uruguay resumed talks with the Venezuelan government, which had been partially suspended. President Lacalle appointed Eber da Rosa as ambassador and asked Nicolás Maduro's government to recognize him as its diplomatic representative in Caracas.</p>
2023	<p>No evidence of diplomatic friction was found.</p>	<p>No evidence of diplomatic friction was found; on the contrary, there was evidence of diplomatic reconciliation. In January 2023, Brazil and Venezuela resumed diplomatic relations after they were severed in 2019 during the administration of former President Jair Bolsonaro (mppre.gob.ve, 2023).</p>	<p>In July 2023, Paraguayan President Mario Abdo Benítez stated at the Third EU-CELAC Summit that the oil debt to Venezuela is not overdue.</p>	<p>On June 16, 2023, after fluctuations in its relationship with Venezuela, the government of Luis Lacalle Pou officially announced the appointment of a Uruguayan ambassador to the country, marking the reestablishment of diplomatic relations after seven years. Nicolás Maduro received the credentials presented by the Uruguayan ambassador, Eber Da Rosa Vázquez.</p>

Source: own elaboration based on the compilation of several authors cited.

MULTIPOLAR EXTRACOMMUNITY TRADE AGREEMENT (acem)

Of the five countries in the bloc, Venezuela is the country with the most extra-zone economic treaties, most of which were signed before its formal and full entry into MERCOSUR. For the other members, in general terms, the countries have signed trade agreements with third parties jointly, with some exceptions (Table 4), which has led some authors to consider that the bloc's negotiating power with third parties is diminishing, even though the signing of such agreements requires the prior authorization of the other members (Martínez, 2015; Bouzas, 2004, in Martínez, 2015).

Table 4. MERCOSUR multipolar extra-community trade agreement (acem – without the US)

Years	Argentina	Brazil	Paraguay	Uruguay	Venezuela
2006	ACP Chile; ACP Mexico	ACP Guyana; ACP Suriname; ACP Mexico	ACP Mexico	FTA Mexico	ACP Trinidad and Tobago; ACP Nicaragua; ACP Honduras; ACP Guyana; ACP Guatemala; ACP El Salvador; ACP Costa Rica; ACP Chile; ACP CARICOM; ALBA membership

VENEZUELA'S IDEOLOGY IN MERCOSUR SINCE THE QCA, 2006-2023

2007					Previous treaties in force	
2008						
2009						
2010						
2011	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaty in force	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force + ACP Colombia; TCP Bolivia; Venezuela Cooperation Framework Agreement	
2012					Previous treaties in force + ACP Peru	
2013						
2014						
2015	Previous treaties in force + Chile FTA	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaty in force	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force	
2016						Previous treaties in force + Chile FTA
2017						
2018	Previous treaties in force + Chile FTA					
2019	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force	Membership suspended		
2020	Previous treaties in force + AAE Paraguay	Previous treaties in force + SAA Brazil				
2021						
2022	Previous treaties in force	Previous treaties in force				
2023						

*Treaties signed in years prior to 2006 but in force for that year.

Source: own elaboration based on data compiled from the OAS Foreign Trade Information System (SICE) and CONAPRI (at connectamericas.com). FTA (Free Trade Agreement); PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement); EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement)

When quantifying the variable, multipolar extra-community trade agreement (acem), which aims to investigate whether the presence of bilateral trade agreements with third countries (except the US) of partner nations has affected Venezuela's regional integration status with MERCOSUR, the result obtained (Table 7) was that since Venezuela joined MERCOSUR (2006)

until it became a full member, it had signed extra-community trade agreements with third countries, specifically with the Caribbean region and other Latin American nations. For their part, the other members also signed trade agreements individually with other countries in the Latin American region. Therefore, for the 18 years of the study, the *acem* variable is present = 1.

UNIPOLAR EXTRACOMMUNITY TRADE AGREEMENT (*aceu*)

In MERCOSUR, according to González (2007, p.7), the Bolivarian country's objective in joining was to “rearrange the South American geostrategic board, within the framework of the ideological debate that has dominated Venezuelan foreign policy and the confrontation with the United States.” However, for its southern partners, this attempt to reorganize the international system under a “confrontation” with the US power was not a joint foreign policy position of MERCOSUR (Martínez, 2015), although each partner country has its own cautious foreign policy toward the US in defense of its own interests (e.g., rejection of the FTAA proposal at the Fourth Summit of the Americas in 2005), this does not mean that they seek enmity with the Americans. Uruguay even attempted a free trade agreement with the United States that did not come to fruition (Malamud, 2006; González, 2007).

Years	Argentina	Brazil	Paraguay	Uruguay	Venezuela
2006	No currency	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu
2007	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2008	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2009	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2010	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2011	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2012	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2013	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2014	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu
2015	Without a home	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2016	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu
2017	Without aceu	Without aceu	Without aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2018	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2019	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2020	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2021	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2022	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended
2023	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	No aceu	Suspended

Source: own elaboration based on data compiled from the OAS Foreign Trade Information System (SICE); FTAs (Free Trade Agreements).

Table 5 compiles information on the *aceu* variable for MERCOSUR member countries, showing that in the 16 years covered by the study, none of the southern partners signed a trade agreement with the US. Uruguay, which at one point showed an intention to do so, ultimately did not consolidate it (Malamud, 2006). For the rest of the countries, especially Argentina and Brazil, free trade agreements with the US are not a priority on their integrationist agendas, particularly because the US maintains protectionist policies that run counter to the national interests of the southern countries (Speech by Lula Da Silva and Néstor Kirchner at the 2005 Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Barcelona, 2005). In recent years, despite the ideological shift to the political right, the southern countries still do not have this type of free trade agreement with the US. Given these circumstances, when quantifying the study variable, it turned out that for all the years of study, none of the MERCOSUR member countries signed a trade agreement with the US. Therefore, for all countries, the result is absent and the variable *aceu* = 0 (Table 7).

REGIONAL INTEGRATION VENEZUELA (*irv*)

⁵Venezuela's bid to join the Mercosur integration bloc is a geostrategic move intended to achieve greater cohesion between the Venezuelan government's ideological and economic factors (González, 2007; Ellner, 2009; Martínez, 2015; Fernández, 2019), given that at that time, most of the presidents who were members of the mechanism shared some features of Venezuelan foreign policy, although not to the same extent, especially with regard to the conflict with the US (Ellner, 2009; Martínez, 2015).

However, the previous context was not sufficient for the Bolivarian country to fully join MERCOSUR, despite signing its accession protocol on July 4, 2006. The congresses, assemblies, and/or parliaments of each MERCOSUR member country had to ratify the application for membership in order for Venezuela to be legally considered a full member; otherwise, it would only have a voice in the organization, but no vote (González, 2007). It took six years to resolve this legal issue, as the Paraguayan Congress rejected the ratification of the accession protocol year after year (Table 3). It was not until 2012, due to the overthrow of Paraguayan President Fernando Lugo, that Paraguay was suspended from MERCOSUR for non-compliance with the Ushuaia Protocol (Fernández, 2019). Thanks to the fact that the parliaments of the other three members (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay) had already ratified Venezuela's accession, the Bolivarian country was finally able to join the integrationist bloc.

5 Ideational factors: these are actors' representations of an event, process, etc. (Hudson, 2005, in Giacalone, 2011, p. 103). Ideational elements are understood to be ideas, perceptions, and values of a purely personal, intersubjective nature, derived from social imaginaries, etc. (Caballero, 2011, p. 46).

Years	Venezuela
2006	No membership = absent
2007	No membership = absent
2008	No membership = absent
2009	No membership = absent
2010	No membership = absent
2011	No membership = absent
2012	With membership = present
2013	With membership = present
2014	With membership = present
2015	With membership = present
2016	With membership = present
2017	Membership suspended = absent
2018	Membership suspended = absent
2019	Membership suspended = absent
2020	Membership suspended = absent
2021	Membership suspended = absent
2022	Membership suspended = absent
2023	Membership suspended = absent

Source: own elaboration based on compiled data.

In fact, during Nicolás Maduro's administration, it was once again the failure to comply with the Ushuaia Protocol that led to Venezuela's formal suspension from the mechanism. The democratic situation worsened in 2017 when a crisis arose in the Bolivarian country's internal constitutional order, mainly between the legislative and judicial branches of power (), which triggered a new National Constituent Assembly, which was not recognized by the MERCOSUR member countries (Fernández, 2019). Another important factor that contributed to the suspension of membership was Venezuela's regulatory non-compliance as a member state (Frenkel and Azzi, 2018). According to Eladio Loizaga, Paraguay's foreign minister, around "400 Mercosur resolutions and regulations had still not been incorporated by Venezuela into its legal system" (p. 92, in Fernández, 2019). For Bárcena, executive secretary of ECLAC, this was because the Venezuelan economic model is incompatible with that of the other MERCOSUR countries (p. 90, in Fernández, 2019).

Additionally, the Bolivarian nation only showed interest in joint negotiations when the approach was directed at countries with ideological affinity, while excluding itself from others (MERCOSUR-European Union, MERCOSUR-Pacific Alliance) (Briceño and Fernández, 2015 in

Fernández, 2019; Martínez, 2015). Finally, if we add to all the above considerations the loss of executive support that the country enjoyed during the Chávez years, with a series of presidents of different ideological leanings coming to power who not only considered Venezuela a threat to the mechanism but also an obstacle to its progress (Martínez, 2011; Fernández, 2019), the suspension of its full membership was inevitable.

In summary, since Maduro came to power, Venezuela's participation in MERCOSUR has been controversial, both in the media and empirically, from not being granted the pro tempore presidency of the mechanism in 2016 to its definitive suspension in 2017 due to the breakdown of democratic order, with Fernández (2019, p.104) his performance as a "period of stagnation, disinterest, and disintegration." Under the contexts described above and at the end of the QCA, the dependent variable (irv) was quantified, with the result that, of the 18 years of studies, the country was absent from the mechanism for 13 years, with a value = 0, either due to the non-ratification of its accession protocol by one of the States parties (2006-2011), due to a consensus on suspension linked to violations of democratic principles (2017-2021), or due to a lack of consensus among the presidents of the member countries on its reactivation (2022-2023). For the remaining five years, the Caribbean country did have full voting rights within MERCOSUR, so the irv variable is considered present=1 (Table 6).

COMPARATIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (QCA) OF MERCOSUR

The use of QCA in this analysis aimed to provide a quantitative basis for the ideological causality given in the accession, permanence, or denunciation of Venezuela's Fifth Republic in MERCOSUR. Accordingly, four ideological nuances (independent variables) were formulated: ideological convergence (ci), diplomatic friction (fd), multipolar extra-community trade agreements (acem), and unipolar extra-community trade agreements (aceu) in order to numerically substantiate which of these was necessary for Venezuela's regional integration during the Fifth Republic (irv, dependent variable), as well as whether any of these ideological variables have played in favor of or against its regional integration and, in this way, to verify the viability of the proposed hypothesis: the political ideology of the social order of Venezuela's international system during the Fifth Republic was the cause of the country's integrationist instability within the mechanism between 2006 and 2023. These qualitative variables were quantified in the previous sections according to the parameters pre-established in the academic review. Thus, the quantified results of these variables are summarized below:

Summary of qualitative ideological variables of MERCOSUR (qua					
Years	CI	FD	ACEM	ACEU	IRV
2006	0	1	1	0	0
2007	0	1	1	0	0
2008	0	1	1	0	0
2009	1	1	1	0	0
2010	1	1	1	0	0
2011	1	1	1	0	0
2012	1	1	1	0	1
2013	0	1	1	0	1
2014	0	0	1	0	1
2015	0	1	1	0	1
2016	0	1	1	0	1
2017	0	1	1	0	0
2018	0	1	1	0	0
2019	0	1	1	0	0
2020	0	1	1	0	0
2021	0	1	1	0	0
2022	0	1	1	0	0
2023	0	1	1	0	0

Source: own elaboration based on data compiled in sections 2 and 4. Note: for ease of use of QCA, the author recommends the use of simple nomenclature without special characters, accents, and in lowercase (Ragin, 2008 in Escott, 2018, p.60).

The next step was to enter the data matrix into the selected software, “fs/QCA version 3.0,” in order to automate the creation of the truth table, the calculation of Boolean operations, and logical minimization (given the number of variables). Figure 1 illustrates the simplest solution (parsimonious solution) obtained after submitting the calibrated data matrix (Table 7) to the QCA software. It shows that the function to be analyzed was $irv=f(ci, fd, acem, aceu)$, that is, it determines which independent variables (ci, fd, acem, aceu) are necessary and sufficient for the dependent variable irv (regional integration of Venezuela) to be generated. To do this, the software subjects the calibrated analysis matrix to a truth table, Boolean operations, and logical minimization.

The most literal interpretation of Figure 1 is that the absence of diplomatic friction ($\sim fd$) is the independent variable necessary for the presence of the dependent variable regional integration of Venezuela (IRV) during the government of the Fifth Republic in MERCOSUR. This has a consistency equal to 1 (consistency=1), because for all case configurations where fd is absent ($\sim fd$) irv is present, no case was generated in which diplomatic friction was absent and, in turn, Venezuela was also absent from the bloc (Table 7). Therefore, in terms of QCA under the parsimonious solution, it is 100% consistent that if fd is absent, irv will be present.

Now, the previous result obtained a coverage of 0.20 (low), because although there were 18 years of studies, Venezuela was only present ($irv=1$) in the bloc for 5 of them, and of those 5, only 1 of them meets the condition that the absence of fd will result in the presence of irv ($1/5=0.2$). Therefore, it is not possible to guarantee that the absence of the FD variable is a sufficient condition for the regional integration of Venezuela (irv) within MERCOSUR under the government of the Fifth Republic. In addition to what is reflected by the QCA, when evaluating the opinion of experts in relation to this, they also agree that given the disparity between Venezuela's economic model and that of its other partners, given that to date, the Venezuelan government continues to pursue regional integration that favors ideological political affinities, and given that its reactivation in MERCOSUR () depends on the other member countries, the recovery of its full membership is not foreseeable in the short term.

Figure 1. QCA analysis report for ideological variables in MERCOSUR

```

*****
*TRUTH TABLE ANALYSIS*
*****

File: C:/Users/Lenovo/Documents/Bersi/TESIS/BASE DE DATOS
Model: irv = f(ci, fd, acem, aceu)

Rows:      3

Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
True: 1-L

--- PARSIMONIOUS SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 1.000000

      raw      unique
      coverage  coverage  consistency
-----
~fd    0.200000   0.200000   1.000000
solution coverage: 0.200000
solution consistency: 1.000000
    
```

Source: own elaboration based on data collected in this research and submitted to fs/QCA version 3.0 software. Note: Quine–McCluskey algorithm, a method for simplifying Boolean functions developed by Willard Van Orman Quine and Edward J. McCluskey. It provides a deterministic method for achieving the minimum expression of a Boolean function (Jauregui et al., 2010, pp. 268).

As for the validity of the hypothesis, it was not possible to quantitatively verify that the political ideology of the international system promulgated by the government of the Fifth Republic of Venezuela, advocating a multipolar world, was the direct cause of Venezuela's suspension from MERCOSUR, because the independent variable produced by the methodological instrument as a necessary and sufficient condition (~fd) for the presence of IRV does not directly respond to anti-imperialist foreign policy circumstances. In short, under the QCA analysis, it can be affirmed that it was not Hugo Chávez's stance against US unipolarity, as continued by Nicolás Maduro, the leading ideological variable at the legal level (represented by aceu), that worked against Venezuela's regional integration with the southern market, but rather, from a legal point of view, they strictly responded to circumstances of a national and regional nature (breakdown of internal democratic order, regional regulatory disobedience in national legislation, and neglect of multilateral negotiations by the integrationist bloc vis-à-vis third parties).

Conclusion

Attempting to change the current international order for a developing country such as Venezuela is a titanic task that has resulted in a certain degree of international isolation, both because of its position of favoring alliances of ideological affinity and because of the international economic and political actions of other nations around the world. While, there are academics who argue that ideological content in integration processes is detrimental to their progress (Contreras, 2009; Urruchurtu, 2014), the truth is that the literature also shows that completely dispensing with it has not helped the integration blocs studied to progress either (Thoumi, 1993; Peña, 2014). Therefore, it can be inferred that Latin American regional integration needs a common political-ideological content, but not of a leftist or rightist nature, much less of imperialism and colonization, but rather an integrative vision of the path that must be followed and that the bloc wants to achieve, in order to understand integration in terms of Latin America for Latin Americans and returning the region's international relations to a higher level than that provided by the business opportunities derived from free trade. Finally, it has been mainly the supporters of right-wing political ideology who have hindered, both in the legislative and executive spheres, the foreign policy of the government of the Fifth Republic of Venezuela within MERCOSUR, worsening the situation with the end of the pink tide⁶ in the region.

6 New Left: due to various national and international factors, at the beginning of the 2000s, national and international circumstances were perfect for the emergence of left-wing governments in Latin America (for example in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela)... (Beverly 2012 in Solti, 2014, p.13).

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