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Politics of South-South Cooperation:
The Venezuelan Project in the Framework of the Bolivarian Diplomacy

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Abbreviations

- AEC: African Economic Community
- ALBA-TCP: The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America
- ALCA: Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas, also known as the Free Trade Area of the Americas FTAA
- APEC: Asia- Pacific Economic Cooperation
- ASA Summit: Africa-South America Summit
- ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- AU: African Union
- BAPA: Buenos Aires Plan of Action
- BRI: Belt and Road Initiative
- BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
- CCP: China's Communist Party
- CELAC: Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
- COPEI: Social Christian Party
- CRBV: Constitución de la Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela
- DAC: Development Assistance Committee
- DANIDA: Danish International Development Agency
- ELAM: Latin American School of Medicine
- Eximbank: The Export-Import Bank of China
- FDI: Foreign Direct Investment
- FEDECAMARAS: Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce
- FOCAC: Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- GNI: Gross National Income
- GNP: Gross National Product
- G-15: Group of the 15
- G-77: The Group of 77
- IBSA: India, Brazil, South Africa.
- IFI: International Financial Institutions
- IIRSA: Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- IOR-ARC: Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
- JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency
- JOCV: Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers
- LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean
- LAIA: Latin American Integration Association
- LDCs: Least Developed Countries
- LDP: Liberal Democratic Party of Japan
- Mercosur: Southern Common Market
- MOFCOM: Ministry of Commerce
- MoFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- MVR: Movimiento Quinta Republica
- NAM: Non-Aligned Movement
- NAM CSSTC: Non-Aligned Movement Center for South-South Technical Cooperation

- NGO: Non-government organization
- NIEO: New International Economic Order
- NIIO: New International Information Order
- NSC: North-South Cooperation
- OAS: Organization of American States
- ODA: Official Development Assistance
- OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- OOF: Other Official Flows
- PDVSA: Petroleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima
- PetroCaribe: PetroCaribe S.A
- ProSur: Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America
- PSUV: Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela
- SIDA: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- SEGIB: Secretaria General Iberoamericana
- SELA: Latin American Economic System
- SSC: South-South Cooperation
- U.K: United Kingdom
- UN: United Nations
- TICAD: Tokyo International Conference on African Development
- UEMOA: West African Economic and Monetary Union
- UNASUR: Union of South American Nations
- UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

- UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
- UNECLAC: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
- UNECOSOC: United Nations Economic and Social Council
- UNHRC: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- UNOSSC: United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
- URD: The Democratic Republican Union
- U.S: United States of America
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- ZPCAS: the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone

ABSTRACT

International cooperation is a powerful tool of states' foreign policy to achieve nations' sustainable development. In this framework, South-South Cooperation has emerged not only as a tool for development but also as a reflection of a different political model that prioritizes horizontality, solidarity, and respect for national agendas.

In this direction, Venezuela promoted during 2007-2013 a foreign policy cooperation towards Latin America and the Caribbean inspired by the precepts of South-South Cooperation, taking advantage of the gaps and demands of the region to create a new regional cooperation architecture seeking to strengthen the South as a global power bloc and advance in the consolidation of a multipolar world while reducing the influence of traditional cooperation schemes, especially those proposed by the United States and its allies.

Consequently, the purpose of this doctoral thesis is to show how Venezuela's foreign policy during the study period had disruptive elements, which turned it into an effective instrument for the achievement of national interests based fundamentally on political aspects, but which also generated positive impacts in the region allowing the country to position itself as an important emerging actor within the global cooperation system.

For this purpose, Venezuela's foreign policy, with a particular focus on South-South cooperation, is analyzed to understand the establishment of a set of initiatives that materialized in a new regional architecture (ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC) within which diverse cooperation projects were implemented, generating tangible results.

Likewise, the cooperation approaches promoted by China, as an emerging actor from the South, and Japan as a traditional donor, in the Latin American and Caribbean region are compared to obtain a better understanding of the diverse strategies promoted within the structures of international cooperation and thus aim at a more effective cooperation system.

Keywords: South-South Cooperation, Foreign Policy, Venezuela, Political Interests, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The greatest desideratum facing the world population, and especially developing countries, is to achieve sustainable development. Diverse development cooperation initiatives are driven by actors, such as international organizations, developed and developing countries, among others; however, there are still gaps to close.

In recent years the development landscape has witnessed the re-emergence of South-South Cooperation (SSC), which has gained relevance among developing countries. In this direction, this thesis studies the politics of SSC, focusing on institutions, ideas, interests, organizations, and vectors/schemes that characterized the cooperation approaches of the Global South, especially Venezuela, which is the main case study of this dissertation.

Current developments show that “SSC is not only a mechanism for cooperation, it may also be a tool for international projection and a philosophy of mutual support that includes political dialogue, trade, financial and technical cooperation, and the promotion of regional integration” (Byron & Laguardia Martines, 2021, p.33). Likewise, Braveboy (2009) argued that in recent years we had witnessed the revitalization of old subregional movements and the flourishing of new ones regarding SSC.

This modality of international cooperation implies an essentially political construction that aims to strengthen bilateral relations and form coalitions in multilateral forums, to obtain greater joint negotiating power (Lechini, 2014). Similarly, Surasky (2014) defines SSC “as a politically motivated process of reciprocal and equitable exchange of capacities carried out between countries of the South that are associated with the intention of promoting their development” (p.9).

Although understandings of South-South as a rather narrow set of technical cooperation modalities or a general political narrative appear throughout UN spaces, in practical terms, the working definition across UN entities of what is to be mainstreamed centers around the notion of cooperation among developing countries, and South-South Technical Cooperation is generally used as a shorthand to capture inter-state cooperation unfolding beyond North-South schemes (Haug, 2021).

Consequently, The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation suggests observing SSC as:

A broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional, or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise, and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. (UNOSSC, 2021)

At this point, it is necessary to highlight that based on the conceptualization provided by Benna (2019) and Adzaku (2021), this dissertation defines Global South as the group of developing countries or least developed countries, mainly located in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East. Therefore, the terms “Global South,” “South,” “developing countries,” and “emerging countries” used in this work are interchangeable.

In this context, Gray and Gills (2016) point out that there is a widespread sense today that the time is ripe for moving SSC once again onto the center stage of world politics and economics and a renewed interest in its historic promise to transform the world order. The recent economic and diplomatic achievements of several key countries of the Global South, and especially of China and the BRICS group more broadly, have given impetus to increasing debate and consideration of the potentialities of a new phase of challenge or construction of alternatives to the hegemonic and neo-colonial politics of the Global North.

Also, in the presence of a multipolar reality where the countries of the South are having more active participation in global dynamics, the SSC is starting to be considered as a financing mechanism that should play a catalyst role in the achievement of the development goals agreed by the international community (Singh 2010, OECD 2011, Kaul 2013), including the Sustainable Development Goals established in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the desired recovery post-Covid-19 pandemic (UN, 2015; Chaturvedi et al., 2021; UNDP, 2021).

However, while there have been some interesting debates¹ about emerging donors in recent years, authors like Quadir (2013) pointed out that not much research has yet been

[1] One of the most relevant debates about emerging donors in recent years has focused on the ongoing or potential convergence of China, as an emerging donor and SSC practitioner, with OECD-DAC standards promoted by traditional donors (Sieler, 2014; Kyburz & Chen, 2019; Dunford, 2020; Janus & Tang, 2021)

done on how they are affecting the traditional landscape of development assistance programs.

In this direction, the importance of studying the SSC promoted by countries such as Venezuela is evidenced, for example, in the report prepared by the United Nations (the UN) Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC) (2008), which estimated that development cooperation provided by this country in 2006/07 ranged between 1,16 and 2,5 billion dollars, a figure that would have been between 0.71% and 1.52% of the country's GDP and that placed it, together with Saudi Arabia and China, among the three main external non-OECD-DAC donors. Besides, Venezuela provided cooperation, in terms of GDP percentage, similar to OECD countries such as Denmark (0,82% - 2,8 billion dollars), Norway (0,88% - 3,9 billion dollars), Sweden (0,98% - 4,7 billion dollars), even though in net aid the numbers of these countries were higher (OECD, 2009).

Likewise, it is necessary to close the existing gap in SSC literature, which tends to emphasize the initiatives promoted by some actors, such as China and India, while neglecting others, such as Latin American and Caribbean countries (Kragelund, 2019). In this sense, Muhr (2016) pointed out that the Anglo-Saxon literature is, to some extent, blind to the developments taking place in Latin America, and when these initiatives are taken into account, scholars tend to omit the politicized nature of many of these initiatives.

Hence, the need to recognize the diversity and broad spectrum that SSC encompasses to overcome the limited economic and technical roles given to this modality of cooperation by different international actors, which distanced it from its original political roots and aspirations (Gosovic, 2018; Muhr, 2022).

Furthermore, the implications on the political dimension produced by this study can be of interest at a time when the majority of international organizations, including the UN, seem to be inclined towards adopting monetization as the standard for the SSC system following the model of traditional donor countries for measuring their international cooperation. “In such a scenario, the political dimension of the way international cooperation is measured and evaluated – including SSC – would likely be confined to academic discussions” (Lopes Corrêa, 2017, p.2).

Purpose of the study

Following these ideas and considering the relevance that the South-South relations are having in the political, economic, and cooperation fields, this thesis focuses on studying the political dimension of the SSC, taking as a case study Venezuela's foreign policy at the beginning of the 21st century, especially from 2007 to 2013², period where the Venezuelan foreign policy was framed into the Simon Bolivar National Project - First Socialist Development Plan.

For this purpose, the author defines the political dimension as all the processes of conflict, cooperation, negotiation, and relationship in making decisions about how resources are to be owned, used, produced, and distributed at the national and international levels, where it is possible to identify the political motivations that shape international cooperation.

In this way, the author inquiries about the SSC initiatives promoted by Venezuela in Latin America and the Caribbean region during the period 2007-2013 to understand the changes undertaken by President Hugo Chávez, and with this, reveal the agreements and contradictions that, within the implementation process, generated adhesions, and tensions in the continent.

These SSC initiatives promoted by Venezuela were backed up by a transformation, led by President Chavez, of the civil and military institutions and a broad population sector through an ideological and political preparation to make these an organized force. To do this, he based this transformation on the extensive knowledge of Latin American independence history and Venezuelan military art, the thoughts of Simón Bolívar and Francisco de Miranda, and the ideas of the Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro (Perera, n.d.). Sylvia and Danopoulos (2003) argued that Chavez's leadership was based on four critical aspects: 1) His charismatic appeal based on his defeat in the attempt of coup d'état in 1992 and his racial characteristics similar to the majority of the Venezuelan population; 2) His anti-colonialist rhetoric based on the libertarian ideas of Simon

² The author decided to take the study period from 2007 to 2013 since it coincides with the time frame of the third presidential period of the Chavez's administration, which, as readers will see in Chapter 3, was marked by a more radical approach to international politics, as well as more dynamic activism in cooperation than the two previous periods. This period also overlaps the time frame of the Plan of Social and Economic Development of the Nation - Simon Bolivar National Project. This development plan explicitly aimed to strengthen relations with groups of developing countries and South-South exchanges.

Bolívar; 3) The political coalition and organization achieved by the Chávez's Movimiento Quinta República (MVR) movement and the organized self-help committees (called Bolivarian Circles), and 4) Electoral support.

This leadership translated into a new Venezuela's foreign policy, which aimed from the beginning to achieve Venezuela's leadership in the OPEC and to spread President Chávez styled Bolivarianism throughout Latin America.

Also, Golinger (2008) affirmed that President Chávez openly defied the U.S government, trying to advance in universal access to health care and education, to reduce dependence on the economic system led by the U.S elites, and diversify Venezuela's production to meet human needs and promote human development, and to create an economic alliance between Latin American and Caribbean countries.

From these considerations, this study shows how the SSC promoted by Venezuela challenged the traditional structures and forms of cooperation, making visible the limitations of the traditional system in an increasingly multipolar world that demanded the emergence of new initiatives promoted by the diverse actors in the system: traditional donors, providers from the South, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

Consequently, the assessment of the cooperation initiatives promoted by Venezuela in the indicated period constitutes a relevant task since, among other arguments, they are the outcome of a new political model led by President Hugo Chavez, which not only challenged the axis of North-South relations but the idea of the liberal world that characterized Venezuelan foreign policy during the 20th century, which was largely influenced by U.S regional interests.

This change in Venezuela's foreign policy conception represented the break with the previous regional order, and it guided the SSC strategy towards Latin America and the Caribbean from 1999 to 2013, which was emulated by other regimes, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Honduras, and Nicaragua, among others, elected through popular vote in the region.

Therefore, the Bolivarian government (name inspired by the libertarian and integrationist thought of Simon Bolívar and used by President Chavez to refer to his government) developed SSC initiatives towards Latin America and the Caribbean that were supposed

to be based on new forms of associative relations relying on solidarity, complementation, and mutual understanding,

In this direction, the Venezuelan government publicly opposed the logic of the realist school, which establishes that North-South Cooperation (NSC) prioritizes self-interest related to political, economic, and security interests (Morgenthau, 1962; Baldwin, 1969; Diamond, 2004; Mughanda, 2011; Jain, 2014; Sen, 2018).

Proof of this was the creation of a new regional architecture based on organizations such as PetroCaribe, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA-TCP), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which heavily relied on political alliances and accentuated the differences between the North and the South, making visible all social, economic, and political demands of the developing countries.

The new regional dynamic incremented the divergences between the North and the South, while the latter was increasingly submerged in an independence movement against underdevelopment. Therefore, during the first two decades of the 21st century, the idea of the South, as well as their joint project, was strengthened (Prashad, 2012).

Empirical and registered evidence related to traditional forms of cooperation shows that between 2007-2013 an epistemic rupture took place, significantly driven by Venezuela's foreign policy, which invites us to reflect on the new characteristics that the political dimension acquires in the SSC strategy. It also highlights how Venezuela's initiatives revealed the contradictions between different models in the region, which generated blocs of power in constant conflict.

According to Corrales and Penfold (2011), “Venezuela under President Chávez became a world champion of foreign aid” (p.104). Estimates made by the Reality of Aid Management Committee (2010) regarding South-South development assistance outside of multilateral organizations (by non-OECD countries) show that Venezuela came to occupy one of the top positions in development aid as a percentage of the country's national income. Not just Venezuela's aid but also foreign direct investment peaked under President Chávez. In accordance with UNCTAD (2007), Venezuela's FDI³ in 2006

³ Venezuela's FDI concentrated on the hydrocarbon industry, particularly in the investment in refineries in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, and Uruguay, and gas pipelines in Colombia (UN-ECLAC, 2006, p. 15).

totaled 8 percent of its fixed capital, far above the country's percent average from 1990 to 2000.

Hence, it can be said that during Chavez's presidency, the rhetoric of the SSC, based on solidarity, complementarity, equity, and consensus-building and materialized with oil diplomacy, was a display of soft power in Latin America and the Caribbean and then, the mechanism to build strategic alliances with countries that subscribe to the South solidarity and anti-U.S. narrative (Bustamante & Sweig, 2008; Hayden, 2011).

In this context, there is the importance to define those relations of political, economic, and technical collaboration that had the initiatives promoted by the Bolivarian government between 2007 and 2013 and comprehend if the political dimension in the Venezuelan initiative for SSC constitutes the realpolitik that has disrupted unipolarism in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Consequently, the general objective of this study is to:

Establish theoretical implications on the political dimension of the South-South cooperation promoted by emerging donors based on Venezuela's cooperation modality from 2007 to 2013.

Research questions

This thesis seeks to incorporate new elements into the debate on the international cooperation system, based on the case study of Venezuela's SSC during President Hugo Chavez's government, especially during the period 2007-2013.

This case study attempts to evidence how, despite modern focuses on technical, economic, and multidimensional approaches, nowadays there are still states that heavily or purely rely on SSC as a way to promote political interests. Moreover, these states are generating significant impacts at the regional and global stages. SSC was born as political cooperation more than 60 years ago after the Bandung Conference and evolved as technical cooperation through the Buenos Aires Plan of Action at the end of the 1970s. It had a resurgence at the beginning of the century as an alternative source of financial flows and after the 2030 Agenda as a catalyst to foster sustainable developments.

Hence, the author addresses the following research questions:

1. What were the motivations of the Government of Venezuela to promote South-South cooperation initiatives from 2007 to 2013?
2. What were the ways of engagement through which Venezuela promoted South-South cooperation initiatives from 2007 to 2013?
3. What was the impact of Venezuela's South-South Cooperation initiatives at the regional and global levels from 2007 to 2013?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the South-South cooperation promoted by Venezuela and other emerging countries such as China, and the traditional cooperation of established donors such as Japan?

Significance of the study

There were several challenges and theoretical limitations to face when approaching this object of study since the specialized literature has not achieved a total consensus about the political dimension of the SSC. On the one hand, some SSC supporters defend the idea that emerging donors, and especially the BRICS group, represent the re-emergence of the Global South that aimed to generate a New International Economic Order in previous decades. However, others argue that the BRICS do not intend to challenge the status quo but aim to be part of it. Therefore, for them, there is an ongoing process of convergence between the BRICS group and the OECD-DAC system.

For example, Bello (2014) stood with the idea that the unipolar order led by the U.S. through its neoliberal model has come to an end with the appearance at the global stage of the BRICS bloc, considering this as a highly positive development for international politics.

Carey and Xiaoyun (2014) defended a middle position, arguing that even though the BRICS group had deepened collaboration between them and the rest of the Global South, these countries are also fully committed to the G20 Leaders process, in which other traditional powers like the U.S, France and the U.K participate. Consequently, this process will produce convergence between the BRICS and the OECD-DAC development models, as well as challenge and contestation.

On the other spectrum, Janus and Lixia (2020) pointed out that despite long-standing differences between China and the OECD-DAC model, there has been a growing overlap

between the aid activities of these actors across several areas of cooperation in recent years. In this process, there is an increasing level of convergence of ideas between China and OECD-DAC donors regarding international development, especially in relation to mutual benefit, development results, and the 2030 Agenda.

Similarly, Swiss (2021) argued that emerging donors respond to similar norms about how to be a donor country, as have the OECD-DAC countries, and as the changing development landscape evolves, donor countries are converging into a new set of ideas of what it means to be a donor, whether DAC or non-DAC

Likewise, Kragelund (2019) emphasized that despite institutions like the ALBA-TCP, led by Venezuela, none of the current SSC actors seek to change the overall system governing world affairs radically. Therefore, it seems that the main actors engaging in SSC, such as the BRICS group, benefit and promote the current neoliberal world order.

Based on this reality, sharing learned lessons is not only confined to the large developing countries such as the BRICS. The contemporary experiences of Asian, African, and South American countries have all added value to the development landscape.

Thus, the importance of empirically studying the SSC promoted by Venezuela between 2007-2013 is given not only by the interest in examining the growth, effectiveness, and impact of this modality of international cooperation but also to contrast whether or not the political dimension in this modality reproduces some of the criticisms frequently associated with NSC, such as the deepening of ideological models and intervention of the political-institutional system in the recipient country or other forms of paternalism in political relationships (Benzi & Zapata, 2013).

This concern constituted the fundamental reason why an attempt was made to deepen the empirical knowledge of SSC since it is understood that a research that allows the assessment and understanding of the political dimension within this modality of international cooperation can provide novel contributions that unveil if such criticism has a place in reality or not.

Additionally, researching SSC and the strategies followed by countries like Venezuela could help understand the challenge that has represented to the U.S. the turn to the left, understanding it as the election of left-oriented governments non-aligned with U.S policies, taken by the majority of Latin American countries at the beginning of the century,

which may have implied the break with its influence and regional development model. Therefore, this study aims to build a more appropriate narrative of the current context of SSC in Latin America and the Caribbean and make visible the political implications of this cooperation modality in achieving development and reducing inequalities in the region.

This emerging experience in Venezuela's foreign policy formulation with an emphasis on SSC represented a challenge to social and political scientists at the time of conceptualizing it (inside and outside the region), and new terms began to be tested to characterize it: post-liberal regionalism (Motta & Ríos, 2007; Sanahuja, 2008), post-hegemonic regionalism (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012), new strategic regionalism (Aponte García, 2014; Aponte García and Amézquita Puntiel, 2015), among others. Thus, Venezuela's SSC constitutes an excellent case study to verify the changes in the formulation of the country's foreign policy, which allowed it to emerge as an actor with regional and international projection supported by the strength provided by the country's oil resources, becoming a phenomenon with a strong political imprint and a plurality of meanings (Lengyel et al., 2010). These developmental initiatives manifested in different modalities and without unity regarding concepts and definitions. This is why "Venezuela's cooperation is understood in many ways depending on who looks at it" (Xalma, 2013, p.20).

Finally, this work intended to deepen knowledge in the effectiveness and relevance of the SSC and contribute to the understanding of the domestic and international political phenomenon represented by President Hugo Chávez.

Analytical Framework

This dissertation assumed the theoretical framework provided by Lancaster (2007) as the starting point to analyze the political dimension in the SSC based on the terms of ideas, political institutions, interests, and organizations. However, the author decided to use these terminologies, from now on called dimensions, as a way of characterization for cooperation models implemented by different states instead of assuming them as factors that shape cooperation policies, as Lancaster did in her book.

In this direction, the "ideas" refers to worldviews and principal beliefs shared by a significant part of the public and political elites that characterize cooperation processes.

The “political institutions” are those that establish the rules of the political dynamics. Among them: electoral rules, presidential systems, the role of the legislature, and semipublic entities such as state-supported NGOs.

The “interests” are related to the goals that the government aims to achieve through cooperation dynamics. For example: supporting commercial, strategic, and development purposes as well as national interest.

“Organizations” refers to the location within the government of the task related to a major function or program of government, in this case, related to the SSC initiatives undertaken by Venezuela under Chavez’s presidency.

Since Lancaster’s framework does not consider external organizations in her framework, the author decided to replicate the previous dimension at the regional and global levels to deepen the analysis. This addition is important since Venezuela, under the study period, was an active member in traditional organizations such as the UN system, the G77, and the NAM, as well as new regional entities such as ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. Therefore, the “regional organizations” dimension refers to the regional organisms in which Venezuela took part and promoted SSC initiatives.

Finally, the author also took into consideration the “vectors” dimension proposed by Kragelund (2019), who defined it as the way of engagement between two or more countries involved in South-South Cooperation, among these: Humanitarian assistance, trade, investment, migration, education, and global governance, in order to assess the ways Venezuela promoted SSC in the period under study. In this sense, this dimension helps to characterize the channels through which Venezuela provided SSC, which covered a broader scope than traditional NSC schemes (grants, loans, and technical assistance), ranging from oil supply with long-term finance to new ways of engagement such as social missions and peoples’ diplomacy.

Methodology

In order to approach the object of study, the methodological framework selected by the researcher is Grounded Theory, proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) and mainly implemented in Chapter 5 of this dissertation to analyze the majority of the data obtained through in-depth interviews and provide a resignification of Venezuela’s SSC during the

study period. This framework is designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that offer an exhaustive theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study.

Therefore, a descriptive and explicative investigation with a documentary design was implemented by the researcher in order to have information available in repositories of international organizations and universities, as well as in academic works specialized in international relations and development issues.

Subsequently, the author carried out fieldwork based on in-depth interviews to obtain information about the various practices and visions of Venezuela's SSC initiatives. The interviews were conducted with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of People's Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela who were in charge of executing Venezuela's foreign policy, other related ministries involved in the SSC's policy-making process, high-ranking military officials who were involved in the implementation of Venezuela's foreign policy, the legislative branch, professors and scholars from public and private national and international universities, research centers, think tanks, and the media.

Then, the information was analyzed and interpreted to establish the relationship between them. The application software Atlas.ti was used to code the information provided by the interviewees and generate the link between the information. In this sense, the approach was fundamentally qualitative, without denying the use of statistical data at specific moments of the investigation.

Based on Grounded Theory, the processes of obtention, development, and analysis of data and information followed the procedures described by Yu and Smith (2021), who explained the process in three phases, which take place sequentially.

The first phase includes two steps, and it starts from a broad pre-literature review and then shifts the wide-ranging research interests into more specific research aims. This phase considered and combined multiple aspects, such as the innovative value and practical value of the research problem, as well as previous empirical evidence.

The second phase was the essential part of the Grounded Theory research procedure that includes data collection and the three steps coding processes. Throughout these processes, theoretical sampling was carried out in each stage to further the study of identified categories from the previous steps until the emergent concepts or theoretical concepts were saturated.

The three steps coding processes are:

1. **Open Coding:** It is the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically. Its purpose is to give the analyst new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data.

In open coding, events/actions/interactions are compared with others for similarities and differences. They are also given conceptual labels. In this way, conceptually similar events/actions/interactions are grouped together to form categories and subcategories.

2. **Axial Coding:** In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories and the relationships tested against data. Also, further development of categories takes place, and one continues to look for indications of them.

At both the open and axial coding stages, the researcher also looks for negative cases. Having negative cases in the dataset helps the researcher improve the quality and validity of the Grounded Theory.

3. **Selective Coding:** Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a "core" dimension. This type of coding is likely to occur in the later phases of a study. The core dimension represents the central phenomenon of the study.

Data collection continues until the researcher has reached theoretical saturation, meaning that no additional data are being found whereby the researcher can develop properties of the dimension.

The third phase comprised a post-literature review and theory elaboration, which intends to elaborate the emergent substantive theories with existing formal theories and empirical studies. Subsequently, the post-literature review builds theoretical relationships between emergent substantive theories and extant formal theory. The association between existing theories with the grounded theoretical pattern may either expand the formal theory into a new domain or reinforce the Grounded Theory study's findings.

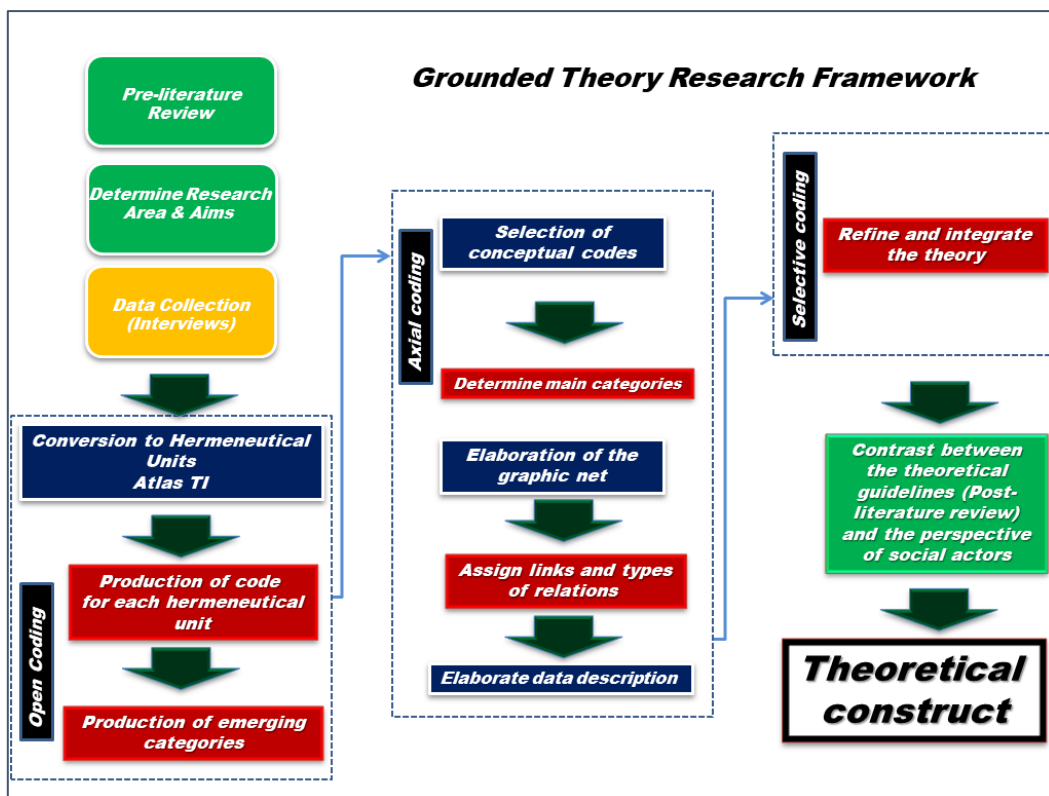
Glaser (2002) stated that research originality or creativity does not have to find new theories since most of them are already known in some way. However, extending existing theories and knowledge to yet unknown territory can constitute a prominent discovery. Therefore, conducting a post-literature review and establishing relationships between

substantive theories and previous studies can enhance Grounded Theory finding's credibility.

Thus, through Grounded Theory, the author searched for empirical data through an inductive process, following the ideas of Strauss (1970), using comparative analysis to create categories applying a coding process; this implied the development of an intensive process, where word by word, line by line, and paragraph by paragraph, was analyzed, developing categories and arriving at interpretations based on facts, phenomena, and data analyzed to proceed to formulate valid theoretical constructs for the phenomenon under study.

Figure 1 illustrates the Grounded Theory procedure used in this thesis:

Figure 1:



Source: Elaborated by the author based on Corbin and Straus (1990).

The author chose this methodological framework because authors like Tucker (2013) emphasized that this method stimulates theoretical objectivity by utilizing comparisons across a large volume of data, which gets around some of the concerns with bias in case study selection. Grounded Theory has the added value that it provides an impressive audit

trail that could be used to enhance transparency and diffusion of theory generating techniques.

Likewise, Becker (2012) stated that field research had made unique contributions to social sciences that would not be possible through the application of other methods. For instance, field research enables scientists to analyze events that have not previously been documented, and as Corbin and Strauss (2015) point out, it is highly conducive to theory production. Since Grounded Theory provides an innovative way to conduct this type of study, it could be a highly useful method for conducting field research in Political Science.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that comparative analysis can be used for social units of any size, including “nations or world regions.” Thus, in theory, Grounded Theory could be applied to questions within the international relations field or any research question in comparative politics.

Finally, Yu and Smith (2021) point out that Grounded Theory could be a valuable approach during the COVID-19 pandemic, as researchers seek flexible methodologies for studies. Yet, maintaining that depth and rigor will also be crucial within this application, and the framework can assist researchers in that way.

Structure of the Thesis

Aspiring to achieve a better comprehension by the readers of the contents and findings produced by this doctoral dissertation, the author decided to structure the thesis as follows:

The first two chapters present a detailed overview of the background and current dynamics of the development cooperation system, paying particular attention to SSC. Thus, in the first chapter, entitled “The International System for Development Cooperation,” the author provides a historical overview of the conception of development and the debates around development cooperation, as well as a review of the actors involved in economic cooperation for development and the channels of disbursement. In the final section of this chapter, current challenges are presented.

The second chapter, related to the “South-South Cooperation Approaches,” contains a characterization of the ideological and political origins of the SSC, its definition and evolution, as well as a comparison with the North-South Cooperation to present

minimally consensual aspects about what is understood by SSC as an instrument of foreign policy and development cooperation.

From chapters three to five, the author focuses on the main case study of this research addressing the research questions previously mentioned about Venezuela's SSC. The third chapter, "Venezuela's Foreign Policy in the context of the Bolivarian Diplomacy," analyzes two main aspects 1) a historical overview of the strategies and motivations of the Venezuelan foreign policy during Hugo Chavez's Presidency, dividing it into two periods, 1999-2006 and 2007-2013 and 2) Venezuela's foreign policy-making process during 2007-2013.

The fourth chapter, entitled "Venezuela's South-South Cooperation initiatives in the regional context," attempts to answer the research questions concerning the ways of engagement through which Venezuela promoted South-South cooperation initiatives and the impact of these at the regional and global levels from 2007 to 2013. For this purpose, the contents focus on the initiatives promoted by Venezuela in Latin America and the Caribbean region. In this sense, ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC are examined throughout the chapter.

In the fifth chapter, entitled "Contextualizing what is decontextualized in Venezuela's South-South Cooperation," the analysis of the data and information obtained through the in-depth interviews process is presented, aiming to generate a resignification of Venezuela's SSC during the period under study, based on the commonalities found through the visions of the different sectors (governmental, academic, and media sectors), and understand the political dimension within the cooperation initiatives promoted by the Venezuelan government. Therefore, this chapter responds to the research question regarding the motivations of the Government of Venezuela to promote South-South cooperation initiatives from 2007 to 2013.

Chapter sixth, related to the "Comparison of Development Cooperation of Japan and China to Latin America and the Caribbean," contains a comparison between the approaches undertaken by these countries to development cooperation, with a particular emphasis on Latin American and the Caribbean region, to later compare them with Venezuela's SSC approach. Consequently, this chapter addresses the research question related to the similarities and differences between the South-South cooperation promoted

by Venezuela and other emerging countries such as China and the traditional cooperation of established donors such as Japan.

Finally, in the last chapter, the conclusion and recommendations elaborated by the author are presented based on the contents provided through the dissertation, the study's relevance, the implications of SSC, the limits of Venezuela's SSC, and research prospects.

Chapter 1

The International System for Development Cooperation

1.1 Introduction

Overcoming underdevelopment and achieving sustainability have been some of the most challenging tasks for the international community. Even though different initiatives have been promoted by international organizations, developed and developing countries, the private sector, and academia, among other actors, there is still work to do.

The concept of development includes many aspects and has changed over time. The UN (1997) defined it as “a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development, and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development” (p.1).

Contrarily, underdevelopment is defined by the International Peace Institute (2009) as a condition characterized by “extreme poverty; disparity in delivery of social services including formalized education systems, medical facilities, and safe drinking water; poor or lacking infrastructure and governance capacity; and an environment of physical insecurity” (p.3).

Since the end of World War II, with the implementation of the Molotov Plan (1947), the Marshall Plan (1948), and the Colombo Plan (1951), Development Cooperation has been the most common approach used by the international community to tackle underdevelopment.

According to Alonso and Glennie (2015), Development Cooperation can be defined as an activity that meets the following four criteria:

1. It aims explicitly to support national or international development priorities.
2. It is not driven by profit.
3. It discriminates in favor of developing countries.
4. It is based on cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership.

Additionally, foreign aid and Official Development Assistance have been some of the principal economic tools used by the international community to promote development.

In this sense, these are defined as:

Table 1.1: Definitions of Foreign and ODA

Foreign Aid	ODA
It includes development assistance that seeks to meet long-term development and poverty needs as well as (short-term) humanitarian assistance and assistance that primarily meets political/strategic needs such as military aid.	A voluntary transfer of public resources, from a government to another independent government, to an NGO, or to an international organization (such as the World Bank or the UN Development Program) with at least 25 percent grant element, one goal of which is to better the human condition in the country receiving the aid. Military aid and the promotion of donors' security interests are excluded.

Source: Lancaster (2007), Kragelund, (2019), OECD (2021)

Significant progress has been made in previous decades. For example, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013) pointed out some of the MDGs' achievements, emphasizing that there are half a billion fewer people in extreme poverty; about three million children's lives are saved each year. Four out of five children now get vaccinated for a range of diseases. Maternal mortality gets the focused attention it deserves. Deaths from malaria have fallen by one-quarter. Contracting HIV is no longer an automatic death sentence. In 2011, 590 million children in developing countries attended primary school.

However, according to the UN (2019), 736 million people still live in extreme poverty; 750 million remain illiterate; 3 billion lack clean cooking fuels and technology; in many countries, an increasing share of income goes to the top 1%; the global mean temperature is 1°C higher than pre-industrial baseline; and biodiversity loss is accelerating.

Given this reality, this chapter⁴ aims to provide a historical overview of the conception of development and the debates around development cooperation, as well as a review on

⁴ It is important to mention that the work presented in this chapter has been published in *Observador del Conocimiento* Vol. 6 N.3 (2021).

the actors involved in economic cooperation for development and the channels of disbursement. In the final section, current challenges are presented.

1.2 History and Evolution

The quest for achieving sustainability has its origins at the beginning of the 1960s when the UN General Assembly designated the first UN Development Decade (Coate, 2018). The purpose of this action was: “To mobilize and to sustain support for the measures required on the part of both developed and developing countries to accelerate progress toward self-sustaining growth of the economy of the individual nations and their social advancement.” (UN, 1960).

During this decade also the UNESCO played a critical role in promoting development, declaring the International Hydrological Decade in 1965, and sponsoring the UNESCO General Conference in 1966 and the International Conference of Experts on the Biosphere in 1968.

Additionally, during this period, international concerns about fostering the development of developing countries arose, as underscored by the Pearson Report of 1969 and the Tinbergen Report of 1970. In 1969, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) officially introduced the concept of ODA. In 1970, the UN General Assembly proposed that donor countries allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) to ODA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1994).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the UN celebrated the Conference on the Human Environment (1972). It led to several other major conferences, such as the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (1974) (1982), the World Population Conference (1974), the World Food Conference (1974), the UN Conference of the International Women’s Year (1975), the UN Conference on Human Settlements (1976), the Conference on Desertification (1977) and the World Climate Conference (1979).

Also, in the 1970s, the World Bank played an important role in introducing poverty alleviation into the development agenda. The Bank proposed that by simultaneously providing agricultural credits and improving the living conditions of rural and small urban communities, entire areas could be lifted out of poverty (Finnemore, 1996).

The decade of the 1980s is often referred to as the “lost development decade.” (Coate, 2018, p.669). However, in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) provided in its report “Our Common Future,” the definition of sustainable development that remains in use today. In this report, Sustainable Development is defined as “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p.41).

In 1992, the UN convened its members in the Earth Summit, celebrated in Rio de Janeiro. It had the participation of political leaders, diplomats, scientists, representatives of the media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 179 countries focusing on the discussion of the impact of human socio-economic activities on the environment. (UN, 2021).

The principal outcome of this summit was the adoption of a comprehensive plan of action called Agenda 21. This plan covered various issues related to biodiversity, biotechnology, deforestation, and institutional and procedural issues involving financing, technology transfer, and institutional arrangements.

The end of the Cold War provoked new ideas and concerns in the development community about the role of foreign aid. This situation provided an opportunity to reconsider the ODA definition. For example, the Government of Finland suggested adding to the existing ODA concept a broader concept of concessional resource flows for development, humanitarian, and environmental purposes (Hynes & Scott, 2013).

At the same time, while heads of states and ministers were making promises about development initiatives at global summits in the mid-1990s, traditional donors started to decrease ODA allocations as a share of GNI (Gross National Income), which led to a decline in total ODA globally (Hulme, 2009).

Hulme (2009) also emphasized the difference in the development priorities of the UN and the OECD-DAC. The DAC’s focus was primarily on making a case for increasing foreign aid and demonstrating that aid would be used effectively. In contrast, the UN aimed for a broader agenda encompassing different socio-economic aspects.

In this context, Dollar and Pritchett (1998) wrote a report sponsored by the World Bank entitled “Assessing Aid”. It aimed to generate a more significant "rethinking of aid" in two ways. First, the authors showed that there remains a role for economic cooperation

and development assistance. Second, it tried to re-conceptualizing the role of assistance in light of a new development paradigm.

The report showed that although economic assistance is necessary, it has been proved that it is not enough to achieve development and that sometimes it can lead to the perpetuation of the problem. In this sense, the World Bank proposed some improvements based on previous successful experiences, among them:

- Donors need to find a national champion to lead internal development reforms.
- Development initiatives must have a long-term vision of systemic change.
- Donor countries must support knowledge creation.
- Donor countries and recipient governments must engage civil society.
- Donors need to work as partners rather than competitors.

With the beginning of the new millennium, there was a huge expectation about the UN Millennium Summit to be celebrated in September 2000. In order to meet the expectation, the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, took the lead in shaping the agenda and proposed his vision in the report “We the People,” which placed a strong focus on poverty eradication.

An exhaustive negotiation process took place in the summer of 2000 to reach an agreement for the millennium declaration, and even though the final document incorporated additional aspects, the core was framed for the report of the Secretary-General.

Nevertheless, the millennium declaration did not specifically include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Instead, these were adopted in September 2001, after another year of negotiations between different international bodies such as the OECD-DAC, the World Bank, the IMF, and the UN. (Hulme, 2009).

The MDGs were composed of 8 goals: 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) Achieve universal primary education; 3) Promote gender equality and empower women; 4) Reduce child mortality; 5) Improve maternal health; 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; 7) Ensure environmental sustainability; 8) Develop a global partnership for development.

ODA was emphasized in Target 8.B, which addresses the special needs of the least developed countries. In this sense, it is highlighted the need for more generous ODA for countries committed to poverty reduction.

Similarly, the final declaration of the International Conference on Financing for Development (the Monterrey Conference) in 2002 recognized that:

A substantial increase in ODA and other resources will be required if developing countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. To build support for ODA, we will cooperate to further improve policies and development strategies, both nationally and internationally, to enhance aid effectiveness.

Therefore, the debate about international cooperation, especially the role of foreign aid, was shaped by the evolution of the global agenda. Hirst (2010) highlighted that the OECD established novel approaches. These were systematized in the Paris Declaration (2005), encompassing responsibilities, distribution of resources, governments' attributions, and the role of international institutions and NGOs, but the most crucial point was the complexity of the new development landscape.

Academic debates have also permeated the discussion on sustainability and the role of aid as one of the tools to achieve it.

For example, Professor Sachs (2005) proposed that: 1) developed countries should raise their contributions to ODA to 0.7% of GDP; 2) the development of fair trade should be promoted; 3) the external debt of the most backward countries needs to be forgiven and 4) attention should be paid to the problem of climate change.

Contrary to Sachs and the vision of aid advocates, Easterly (2006) claimed that loans for structural adjustment should be suspended, large-scale utopian plans should be abandoned, and there should be fewer working groups and reports. Instead, he proposed that donors must develop a form of work that includes feedback, responsibility, independent evaluation of aid, incentives, and cooperation with small-scale initiatives.

Similarly to Easterly, Professor Deaton (2013) also criticized the role of aid in achieving development. He argued that by trying to help poor people in developing countries, the rich world might corrupt those nations' governments and slow their growth.

In his view, foreign aid can weaken the Government-People relationship, leaving a government less accountable to its people, the congress or parliament, and the courts. He also believes that the idea that developed countries must save everyone else is condescending and similar to the ideas of colonialism.

Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) explained that the dynamic that produces political and economic institutions can be either inclusive — focused on power-sharing, productivity, education, technological advances, and the well-being of the nation as a whole; or extractive — based on grabbing wealth and resources away from one part of society to benefit another. In this sense, they suggested that donor countries should be better structuring foreign aid to reinforce national institutions in recipient countries, bring in marginalized and excluded groups and leaders, and empowers broader sections of the population.

Twenty years after the Earth Summit in 1992, the member states of the UN convened in Brazil for the Rio+20 Summit. There the international community launched a process to develop the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build on the MDGs and constitute the post-2015 development agenda.

In this context, in July 2012, the then Secretary-General of the UN, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, tasked a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to make recommendations on the development agenda beyond 2015.

The panel discussed two of the world's biggest challenges – how to end poverty and how to promote sustainable development. The report provided an example of how new goals and measurable targets could be framed in this new stage of promoting development.

The proposed goals were as follows:

Figure 1.1: Goals Proposed by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons



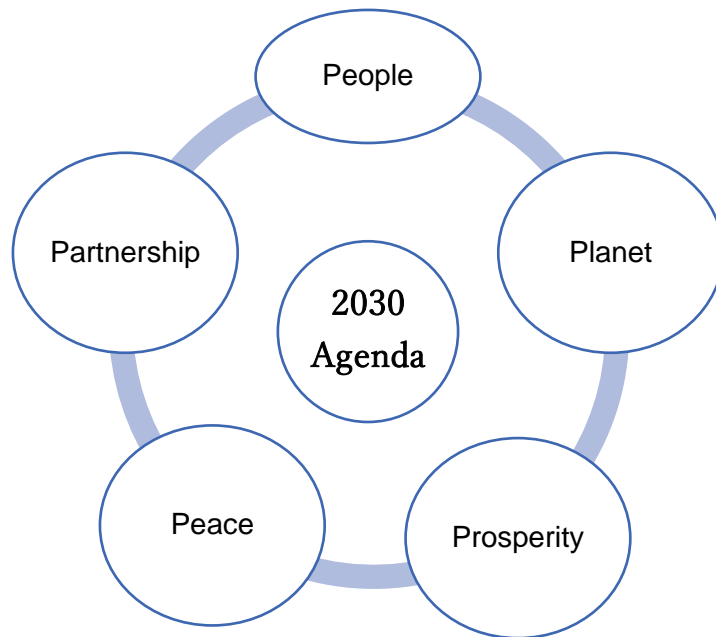
Source: United Nations (2013)

Consequently, in September 2015, the UN, its member states, and a diverse series of stakeholders launched, through the resolution 70/01, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This agenda encompasses 17 goals, 169 targets, and 230 indicators aiming to achieve sustainable development before 2030. It involves developed and developing countries alike, and the goals are integrated into the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental).

The agenda revolves around five critical areas for humanity and the planet:

Figure 1.2: Critical Areas for Achieving Sustainable Development



Source: United Nations (2015)

Figure 1.3: Sustainable Development Goals



Source: United Nations (2015)

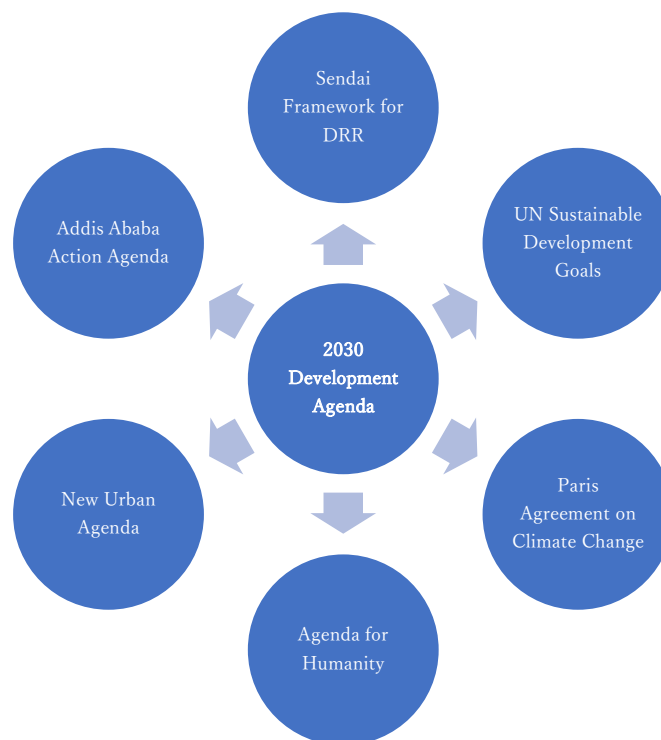
The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the role of economic cooperation in the 17th goal: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Specifically, its target 17.2 calls for developed countries to fully implement their official development assistance commitments, including achieving the target of 0.7 percent of GNI for ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 percent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.

Additionally, the agenda highlights the necessity of strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.

Previously that year, the Addis Ababa Plan of action also recognized that the way forward for the SDGs and sustainable development governance depends on providing the resources and enabling an environment necessary for their success.

Also, the 2030 Agenda encompasses other developmental frameworks aiming to achieve sustainable development:

Figure 1.4: UN Developmental Frameworks

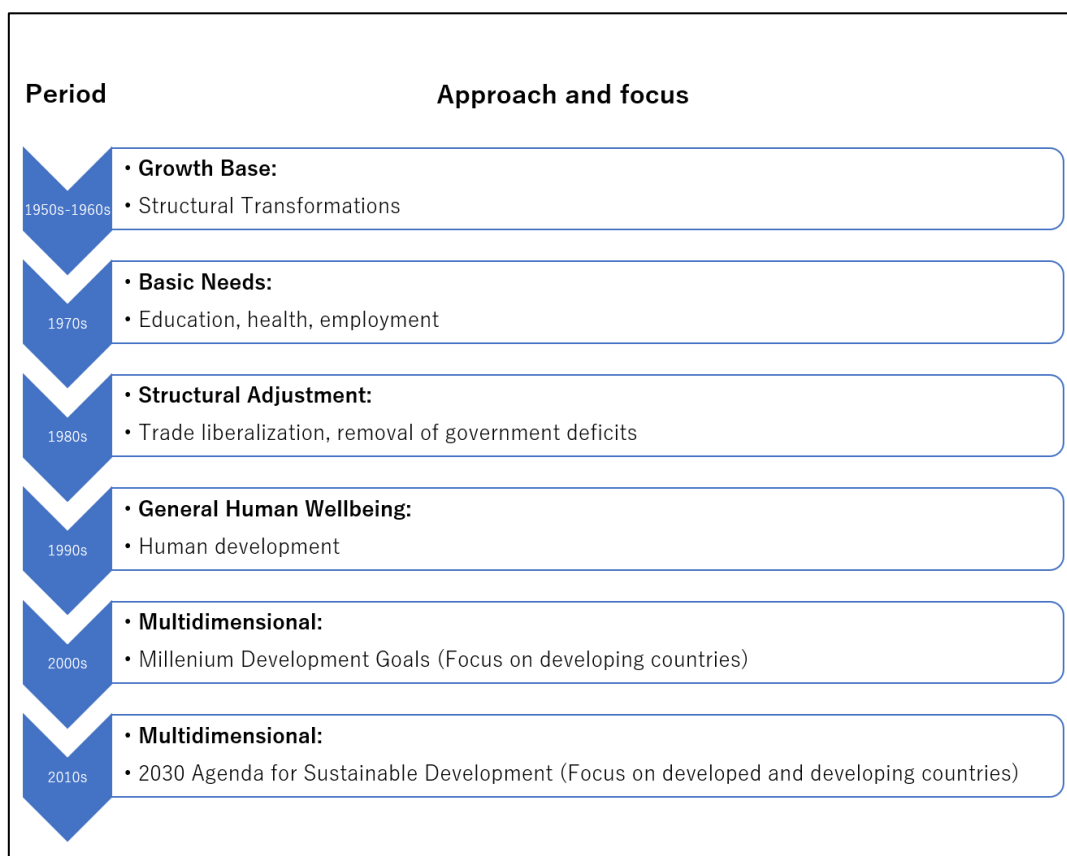


Source: Zhang Qiang (2021)

In this sense, ODA remains crucial, particularly for countries most in need. Nevertheless, aid alone will not be sufficient. The plan also addresses other kinds of financial sources, including public and private, domestic and international (UNDESA, 2015).

In order to summarize the ideas promoted by different actors through development cooperation since its origins, figure 1.5 presents the evolution of its concepts:

Figure 1.5: Evolution of the Concept of Development from the 1950s to the 2020s



Source: Elaborated by the author based on Cobbinah et al. (2011).

1.3 Actors involved in Development Cooperation

Lancaster (2007) highlighted that the number of organizations and countries involved in development cooperation is large. Several dozen international organizations, like the World Bank, the Asian, African, and Inter-American Development Banks, and the UNDP, plus approximately thirty governments have significant programs of foreign aid, including all the rich countries of North America, Europe, and Japan as well as oil-producing countries in the Middle East and “middle-income” developing countries, like South Korea, Thailand, and Turkey. In addition, former socialist countries in Eastern

Europe are also establishing new aid programs, and even relatively poor countries provide aid to other poor countries.

Foreign aid has been historically promoted by traditional donors related to the OECD-DAC founded in 1961. Among these are the U.S., France, Japan, Germany, the U.K., and Nordic countries.

Similarly, oil providers, primarily in the Middle East and countries such as South Africa, India, Nigeria, and Brazil, provided small amounts of aid in their particular regions to fortify their roles as regional leaders (Lancaster, 2007). These countries are categorized nowadays as “emerging donors,” an umbrella term for all the states development aid providers that are not members of the OECD-DAC. It overlooks the fact that most of the donors in this group are, in fact, re-emerging countries in the development arena. Since the beginning of the century, countries like China and India and initiatives such as the BRICS and ALBA-TCP have gained relevance in the development landscape (Kragelund, 2019).

Additionally, since the beginning of the 1980s, there has been an impressive proliferation of non-governmental organizations in development cooperation (Wegner, 1993). In this sense, Banks (2021) highlighted the growing role and significant contributions of civil society, especially NGOs, to achieve development.

Moreover, universities are playing an important role in development cooperation as a resource of economic development and the most important inputs of production processes for the knowledge-based economy in this century (Al-Youbi et al. 2021).

Likewise, since the beginning of the century, an influential group of private donors, including individuals, foundations, and global corporations, began to play a growing role in development cooperation. For example, in 2006, Warren Buffett gave a mega-donation of \$30 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for programs seeking to reduce inequities around the world (Osili, 2014).

Thus, the development actors can be categorized as follow:

Table 1.2: Actors in Development Cooperation

Actors	Example
International Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Nations • The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development • The World Bank • Others
Traditional Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United States of America • Japan • Germany • The United Kingdom • Scandinavian countries • Others
Emerging Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • India • Brazil • The United Arab Emirates • South Africa • Venezuela • Others
Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • Activists • Social Movements • Others
Academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Manchester • University of Sydney • Tohoku University • Others
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation • Others

Source: Elaborated by the author (2021)

1.4 Modalities to Achieve Sustainable Development

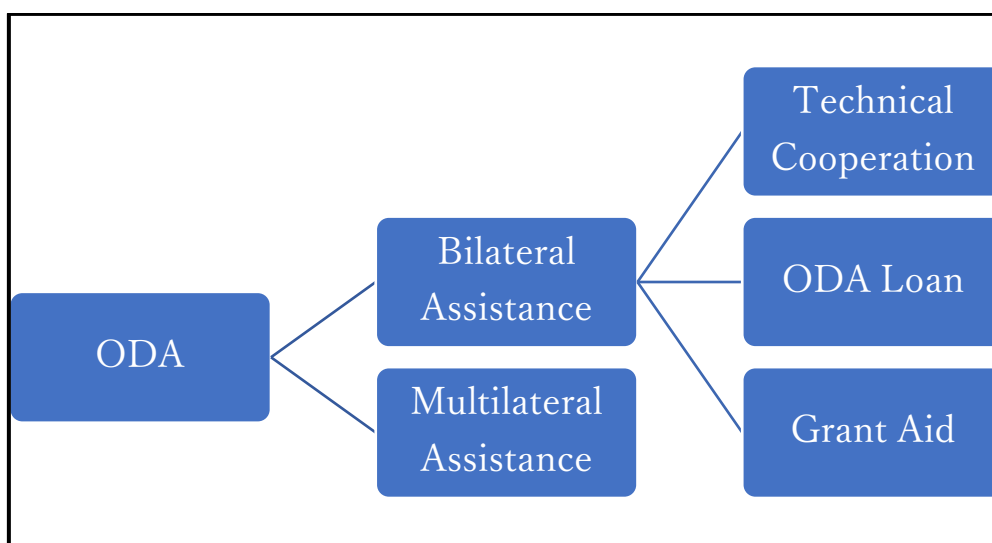
Development cooperation initiatives are driven mainly by three different modalities: North-South Cooperation (NSC), South-South Cooperation (SSC), and triangular Cooperation.

North-South cooperation, which is the most traditional type of cooperation, occurs when a developed country supports economically or with another kind of resources a less favored one, for example, with financial aid during a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis (UNDESA, 2019).

Thus, North-South cooperation is a broad framework for development cooperation between the North (the developed countries) and the South (the developing countries) in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains. Involving two or more developed and developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, subregional, or interregional basis (UCLG ASPAC, 2021).

ODA promoted by countries of the Global North has been primarily promoted through three main schemes:

Figure 1.6: ODA Schemes



Source: JICA (2021)

North-South cooperation has been traditionally characterized by conditionality that covers not only every aspect of policy (e.g., economic reforms, good governance, institutional and social development) but also its process of elaboration and implementation (e.g., civil society participation, transparency, the introduction of results-based management techniques) (Bergamaschi et al. 2017).

In contrast, the UNOSSC (2021) defines SSC as:

A broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise, and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. Recent developments in SSC have taken the form of increased volume of South-South trade, South-South flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.

This modality of cooperation has relied historically on the principles of the Bandung Conference (1955), which still seem to guide much of the SSC programs in the new millennium. The principles are: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty;

mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence (Quadir, 2013).

According to Gomez (2019), the rejection of the vertical relation donor-recipient is explicit in all South-South cooperation initiatives. In this sense, horizontal exchanges that entail mutual benefit or that can be reciprocated are preferred.

Finally, Triangular Cooperation is defined by the UNOSSC (2021) as collaboration in which traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South-South initiatives through the provision of funding, training, management, and technological systems, as well as other forms of support.

Similarly, Potter (2015) describes it as cooperation that involves collaboration between a donor country and a former aid recipient in assisting a current aid recipient.

In this sense, a comparison between these modalities of development cooperation is presented in table 1.3:

Table 1.3: Types of International Cooperation based on modalities and involved actors

<p>International Cooperation Actions carried out by nation-states or their organizations, sub-national state actors, or NGOs of one country, with other of these actors belonging to another country, to achieve common objectives at the international level or in the national one of the actors.</p>	<p>Centralized Always of an official nature, carried out by nation-states or their organizations.</p>	<p>Bilateral Carried out between two nation-states.</p>	<p>Vertical or North-South Developed donor and developing recipient.</p>
			<p>Horizontal or South-South Developing donor and recipient.</p>
		<p>Triangular Two States join efforts to cooperate with a third one.</p>	
		<p>Multilateral Donor: International Organization</p>	

	<p>Decentralized Carried out by sub-national public agencies or private non-profit organizations.</p>	<p>Official or Public Carried out by subnational public entities.</p>	<p>Direct Based on the establishment of direct relationships between subnational governments of different countries.</p>
			<p>Indirect In this case, the actions do not imply the establishment of a direct relationship between the actors.</p>
		<p>Not official Carried out by private non-profit organizations</p>	

Source: Chiani and Scartascini (2009)

1.5 Current Challenges

As we have seen through this chapter, the quest to achieve sustainable development is not a new problem for the international community. It has been on the global agenda since the beginning of the 1960s. However, despite the different initiatives promoted by a wide variety of actors, and the achievement made in the last 50 years, there are still gaps to close.

Likewise, the concept of development has been the subject of different epistemic debates. Even though there is some consensus, it is still an evolving concept linked to rapid changes, increasing interconnections, and complex challenges taking place in the international system.

Even though economic cooperation for development, especially foreign aid, has been intertwined with the evolution of development since it has been promoted as one of the main tools to achieve it. As shown by Hulme (2009), it is necessary to highlight that there have been differences between the priorities promoted by the UN and the OECD-DAC. At some points, the DAC has primarily focused on increasing foreign aid and demonstrating its effectiveness, while the UN has aimed for a more comprehensive development agenda. In this context, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

represents a major achievement since it was built on a broad consensus, including the member states of the UN, other international financial institutions, civil society, private sectors, the academia, among other stakeholders. However, it still faces different challenges, among them:

- Its non-binding nature poses a threat to its fulfillment since governments can prioritize political approaches that, based on sovereignty and security, promote unsustainable practices, even to the detriment of its effectiveness (Trinity College Dublin, 2021). However, Schmassmann (2017) said that this was the only way to get all countries to approve a 2030 Agenda as the reference framework for the next 15 years. This way, many goals could be introduced to the negotiation process that would have stood no chance had the document been more binding in nature.
- Competition rather than complementation between traditional and emerging donors can lead to overlapping and duplication of efforts and, consequently ineffectiveness of development cooperation (Dollar & Pritchett, 1998). Nevertheless, Esteban and Pérez (2017) establish that the needs for financial flows in different regions of the world, such as the Latin American and Caribbean region, are so vast that competition between emerging and traditional donors does not make much sense.
- Asplund and Soderberg (2017) recognized that the affinity of interests and a shared vision of the world between governments attract cooperation. However, different political ideologies and prioritization of national political agendas can undermine effective cooperation for development.
- Finally, authors like Garcia (2020) highlight that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the weaknesses of the international system generating uneven results, especially in developing and least developing countries (LDCs). Thus, it remains to be seen what will be the role of international cooperation to address future challenges.

Chapter 2

South-South Cooperation Approaches

2.1 Introduction

The study of the Global South and especially South-South Cooperation (SSC) has been regaining interest to states, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders since the beginning of the century, often due to a professed desire to identify ways to maximize the potential benefits of the policies and practices developed by states across the Global South (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Daley, 2020).

The interest is also given by the recent economic and diplomatic achievements of several key countries of the Global South, especially China and the BRICS group. This situation has promoted diverse debates and considerations about the potentials and downsides of a new phase of contest or construction of alternatives to the traditional politics of the Global North (Gray & Hills, 2016).

In this sense, and in order to explain not only the orientation that emerging countries are having in terms of foreign policy in global and regional dynamics but also the intensity with which they are strengthening their ties, it is necessary to synthesize in three interrelated phenomena, the events that arise within the framework of the global architecture: a) the displacement of the gravitational axis of world economic growth from the U.S and Europe to Asia; b) the structural diffusion of global power caused by the energetic and multidirectional diplomacy deployed by emerging countries, which has generated changes in political and economic governance, and c) the progressive loss of the monopoly of power by the Western powers after five centuries of hegemony in the international system (Magalhaes, 2011; Santander, 2012).

Given this reality, and the current global financial inequality, caused by insufficiencies in the classic architecture of international cooperation (traditionally led by winners of World War II), new tensions have appeared, challenging the legitimacy of traditional donors and the effectiveness of existing multilateral institutions.

In this way, SSC re-emerged as a foreign policy strategy amidst the crisis of the economic development model (neoliberal model) that occurred between the 1980s and 1990s as a product of competition among the most industrialized nations in search of growth, new

markets, and strategic associations, which generated new geo-economic and political relations, and the redistribution of economic and political powers between North America, Europe, China, Russia, Japan and the countries of the so-called semi-periphery of the system.

Within this context, this descriptive chapter aims to analyze the ideological and political origins of the SSC, its definition and evolution, as well as present a comparison with the North-South Cooperation (NSC) to present minimally consensual aspects about what is understood by SSC as an instrument of foreign policy and development cooperation based on the literature reviewed.

2.2 Concepts, origin, and evolution of the South-South Cooperation.

2.2.1 Conceptualizing South-South Cooperation

SSC's definition and conceptual delimitation are controversial aspects usually discussed in international forums without any of the existing definitions completely fulfilling the aspiration of the involved actors. Brun (2018, p.173) pointed out that "government actors, as well as international organizations and academics, issue their proposals without reaching an agreement within each group. In fact, there is no agreed definition of the phenomenon, which constitutes another differentiation from traditional ODA".

Given this situation, one possible formulation is the one provided by the UNDP SSC Unit, which defines it as "...a process by which two or more developing countries acquire individual or collective capacities through cooperative exchanges in knowledge, resources, and technological know-how" (SEGIB, 2008, p.16).

This definition can be complemented with another one elaborated in 1977 by the Group of Consultants on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which served as a preparation for the UN Conference on the subject held in Buenos Aires in 1978: "... SSC is a conscious, systematic and politically motivated process developed to create a framework of multiple links between developing countries" (UN, 1978.p10).

Similarly, Surasky (2014) defined SSC as: "...a politically motivated process of reciprocal and equitable exchange of capacities carried out between countries of the South that are associated with the intention of promoting their development" (p.9).

The final document of the United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, celebrated in Nairobi in 2009, included other elements that enrich the concept of SSC, defining it as:

... a common endeavor of peoples and countries of the South, born out of shared experiences and sympathies, based on their common objectives and solidarity, and guided by, inter alia, the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free from any conditionalities. South-South cooperation should not be seen as official development assistance. It is a partnership among equals based on solidarity (UN, 2009, p.5).

Currently, the UN defines it as a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, or interregional basis. (UN, 2021).

In this sense, SSC is understood as a modality of Development Cooperation, and subsequently, it is currently implemented at all levels of government and with the participation of a variety of public and private actors (Ojeda, 2018, p.15).

Since 2002, with the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus, passing through the Accra Agenda for Action, and more recently, the 2030 Agenda, SSC has been considered a catalyst to promote sustainable development. Consequently, SSC is defined in this work as cooperation among countries of the Global South aimed to improve the quality of life of their population, reinforce the role of developing and least developed countries in the international system, and achieve sustainable development. This type of cooperation encompasses modalities beyond economic cooperation, including political, cultural, social, environmental, and technical cooperation.

2.2.2 Origin and evolution

Regarding the origin of SSC, Lopez (2014), SEGIB (2017), Li (2018), and Taylor (2018) pointed out that the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955 may be seen as the starting point when the emergent governments of developing countries expressed the idea that they shared certain interests and promoted a partnership in order to unify the voices of the Global South.

The Bandung Conference led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the 1961 Belgrade Conference. By confirming the “Spirit of Bandung” in 1961, the NAM also adopted a posture that rejected the bilateralist impulses that dominated the world through the system of Cold War alliances (Taylor, 2018). Hence, the Bandung Conference and the creation of the NAM represented the political dimensions of an emergent Global South (Gray & Gills, 2016).

SSC often combines foreign policy motivations with specific technical assistance demands. Nevertheless, it is not about the reproduction of North-South assistance logic conditioned by structural asymmetries (Hirst, 2010). In this way, a fundamental element that allows SSC identification and its differentiation from NSC is given not by the actors who practice it but by the political content that guides their vindictive actions.

It was precisely on the basis of claims aligned with the attempt to establish a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and a New International Information Order (NIIO) that the UN Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Group of 77 (G77) were constituted in 1964, and the Program of Action for Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries of NAM was approved in 1966. These represented institutional expressions of a project that aimed to generate a different international order from the existing one.

A significant step in SSC was taken in 1978 with the meeting, in Buenos Aires, of the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The outcome of this conference was the “Buenos Aires Plan of Action” (BAPA) to promote and implement technical cooperation among developing countries. The plan contains objectives that remain to some extent, valid for SSC providers⁵.

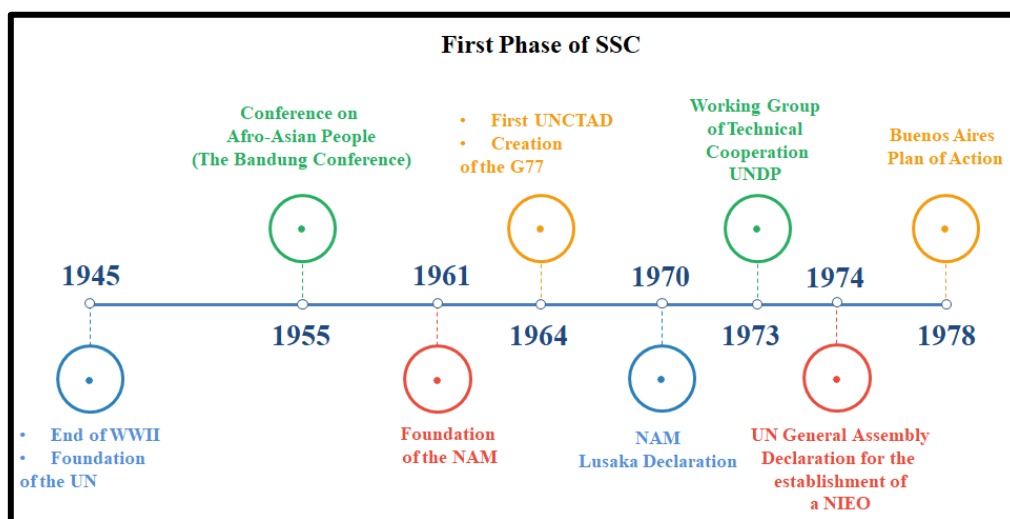
⁵ (a) To foster the self-reliance of developing countries through the enhancement of their creative capacity to find solutions to other development problems in keeping with their own aspirations, values and special needs; (b) To promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among developing countries through exchanges of experience, the pooling, sharing and utilization of their technical resources, and the development of their complementary capacities; (c) To strengthen the capacity of developing countries to identify and analyze together the main issues of their development and to formulate the requisite strategies in the conduct of their international economic relations, through pooling of knowledge available in those countries through joint studies by their existing institutions, with a view to establishing the new international economic order; (d) To increase the quantum and enhance the quality of international co-operation as well as to improve the effectiveness of the resources devoted to over-all technical co-operation through the pooling of capacities; (e) To strengthen existing technological capacities in the developing countries, including the traditional sector, to improve the effectiveness with which such capacities are used and to create new capacities and capabilities and in this context to promote the transfer of technology and skills appropriate to their resource endowments and the development potential of the developing countries so as to strengthen their individual and collective self-reliance; (f) To increase and improve communications among developing countries, leading to a greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge and experience as well as the creation of new knowledge in tackling problems of development; (g) To improve the capacity of developing countries for the absorption and adaptation of technology and skill to meet their specific developmental needs; (h) To recognize and respond to the problems and requirements of the least developed, land-locked, island developing and most seriously affected countries; (i) To enable developing countries to attain a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international co-operation.

With the implementation of the BAPA, the traditional division between “developed donors” and “developing recipients” within the international cooperation regime was supposed to be overcome with the broader concept of SSC, which emphasized the horizontal character of this modality and labeled the relationship among the participants as partnerships instead of donor-recipient relationships. In this sense, Brun (2018) highlighted that emerging countries do not frame their actions under the standards established by the OECD-DAC concerning ODA. Aiming to differentiate themselves from traditional actors, they prefer the term cooperation, considering the actors involved as partners for development and not as donors and recipients.

Therefore, when reviewing SSC’s evolution, Colacrai and Kern (2009) identified four (4) phases (1) 1945-1970s, (2) 1980s, (3) 1990s, and (4) 2000s.

During the first stage, in the 1960s and 1970s, an attempt was made to reorient and prioritize the links to broaden development perspectives and obtain greater spaces of power in multilateral forums. Proof of this is that the UN system created, in 1974, a special unit dedicated to SSC within the scope of the UNDP and organized the first UN Conference on Technical Cooperation between developing countries in 1978.

Figure 2.1

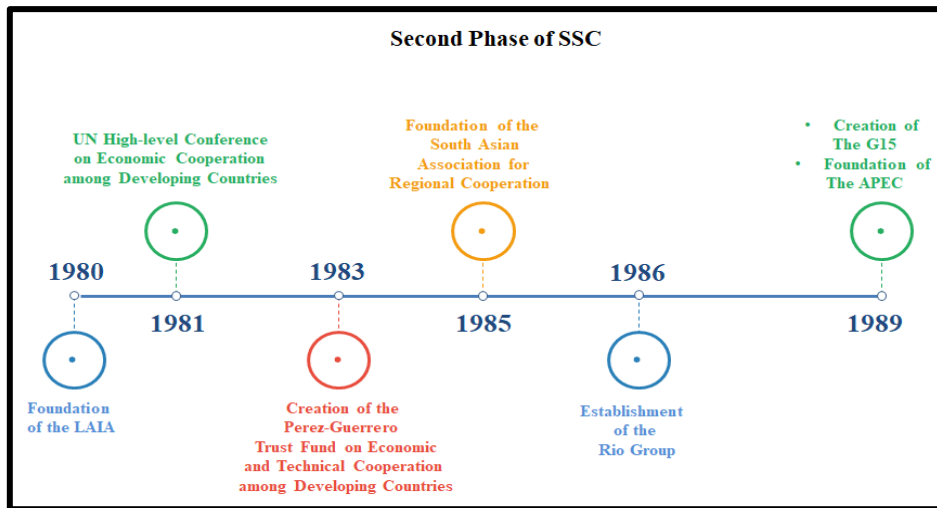


Source: Elaborated by the author (2021).

Later in the 1980s, in what could be considered the second stage of SSC, a disarticulation of the South was observed due to individual and fragmented responses that gave rise to the external debt crisis, especially in Latin America. SEGIB (2017) recorded only 19

international events linked to SSC during this decade, highlighting, as the most important, the ones reflected in figure 2. However, sustained economic growth since the late 1980s led to an increasing number of developing countries becoming regional centers of economic dynamism (UNDP, 2007).

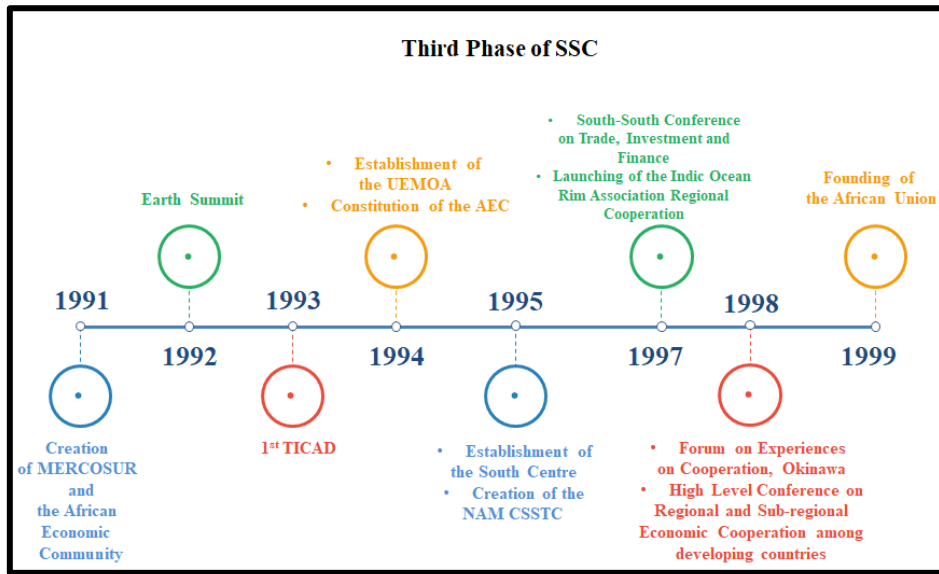
Figure 2.2



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Subsequently, the third stage was in the 1990s, marked by the emergence of a globalized economy. There, SSC began to be considered a tool for developing countries' international insertion. SEGIB (2017) reported 32 international events linked to SSC during this period. Likewise, the UNDP, in its South Report (2009, p.35), highlighted that from the beginning of the 1990s to 2005, the South's export share was on an upward trend, reaching \$3,721 billion in 2005 and accounting for 36 percent of world trade, the highest proportion in the post-Second World War period.

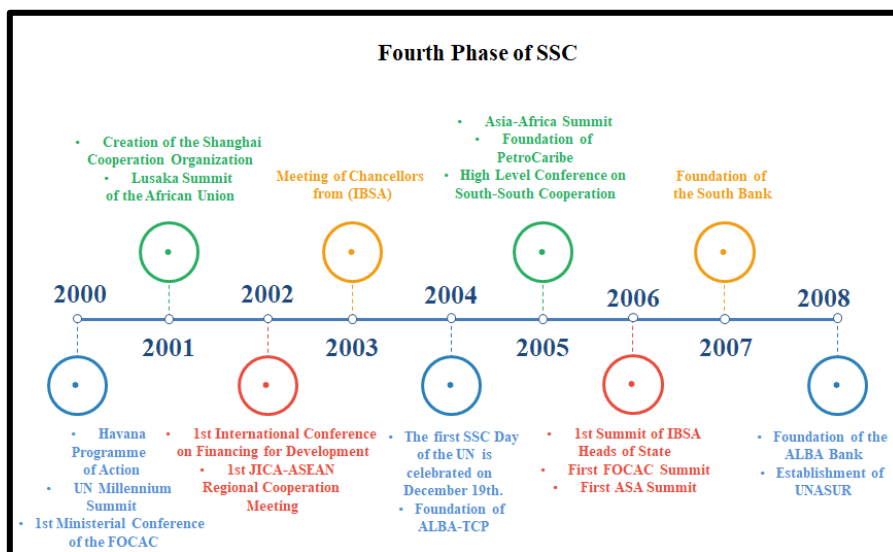
Figure 2.3



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The fourth phase began in the 21st century with an idea of the South as a group of states linked in multiple dimensions – political, economic, technical – politically motivated to multiply their ties by transferring and acquiring experiences for mutual benefit. During this period, countries like Cuba (5.1%) and Venezuela (1.5%) became large providers of foreign aid in relation to their GDP and the main promoters of cooperation in the LAC region (Morales, 2012, p.97).

Figure 2.4

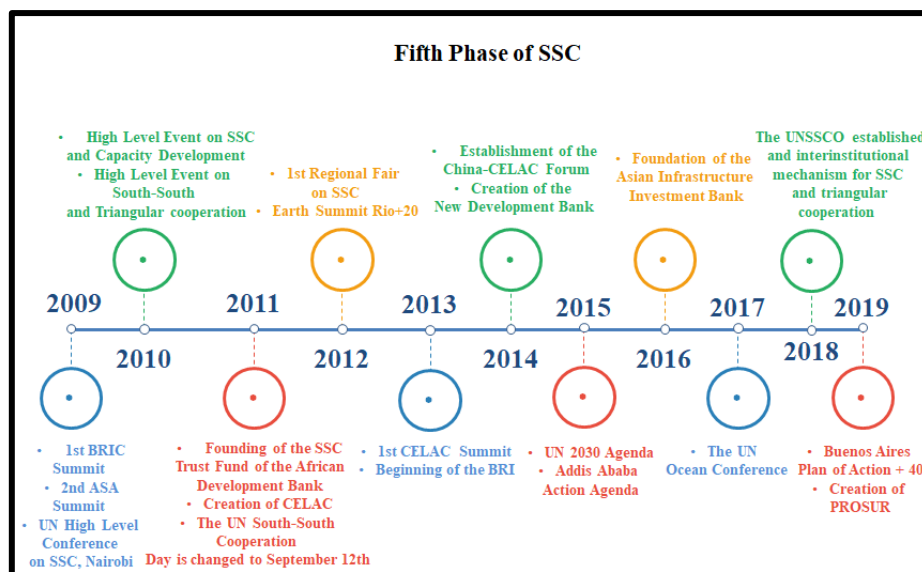


Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Additionally, Lopez (2014) identified a new and current phase, which began in 2009 with the Nairobi Conference on SSC. This phase occurred, in part, as a consequence of the 2008 economic crisis. This produced lower volumes of aid destined for middle-income countries and, in contrast, continued economic growth in developing countries. This situation has led not only to an increase in the volumes of SSC in economic terms but also to a more significant impact of this modality of cooperation at the international level. Moreover, the interest and growth are not driven only by developing countries; developed countries have also shown an interest in supporting this modality through Triangular Cooperation or regional schemes.

SEGIB, in its annual report (2021, p.39), informed that during the period 2009-2019, 12.914 SSC initiatives were undertaken by Iberoamerican countries with partners around the world. Similarly, between 2010 to 2017, 638 international events linked to SSC were reported.

Figure 2.5



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The fourth and fifth phases have been characterized by the rise of Brazil, China, India, and South Africa as key actors in the global political economy (Stuenkel, 2013). This situation has raised expectations about the possibilities of changing the traditional practices of development cooperation, which has been dominated by multilateral

institutions and bilateral aid agencies from developed countries since the ‘invention’ of development in the 1950s (Quadir, 2013).

Gray and Gills (2016) also explained that even though countries of the South remain recipients of aid and struggle to effectively address domestic problems such as poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, corruption, inequalities, and other socio-political issues, their aid has achieved significant amounts that it is no longer possible to understand the development cooperation architecture simply in terms of North-South dynamics.

Despite the undeniable increment in SSC initiatives in the last two decades, evidence point out that the wide variety of actions that fall outside the traditional definition of ODA, the complex organizational structure of SSC at national levels, the absence of a unitary international organization related to this type of international cooperation, and the gaps between announced initiatives and executed projects make difficult to track accurate data related to SSC.

In this regard, SSC analysis faces a few obstacles: the definition of activities, the access to reliable data, and the notorious deficit of analytical and empirical analysis, despite an increasing body of literature oriented toward describing and interpreting the phenomenon (Brun, 2018; Alonso, 2018)

2.3 South-South Cooperation: Rhetoric vs Reality

Since its genesis SSC has had a strong political imprint inspired by the claims of developing countries for a fairer and more egalitarian international economic and political system. However, with the adoption of the BAPA, which had a more technical approach, and later, the MDGs and the SDGs, SSC has also gained recognition as a catalyst to promote economic growth and sustainable development. Due to this dichotomy, there have been discrepancies between the rhetoric and actual practices promoted by developing countries regarding this modality of international cooperation.

Diverse authors like Lechini (2009), Ayllon (2009), and Sagasti and Prada (2011) defended the thesis that SSC overcomes the traditional standards and motivations of NSC by combining ideology and cultural affinity with strategic, commercial, and technical issues and also presenting a significant and particular incentive linked to the increase of

bargaining power and international influence of the countries involved on it. This kind of cooperation is based on non-interference in internal affairs; equality between partner countries; respect for their independence and national sovereignty; self-reliance, and the absence of explicit conditionalities imposed by NSC practices.

Moreover, Yamada (2011) suggested that from the technical perspective, emerging donors offer a number of advantages over traditional capacity development approaches. Relying on linguistic, cultural, historical, and even geographical similarities between providers and recipients, SSC facilitates the delivery of appropriate solutions tailored to the needs of other developing countries.

Consequently, in theory, it could be said that SSC complements traditional efforts promoted by the North in harmony with the national efforts of the countries of the South.

These alternative forms of relationship in development cooperation have increased the exchanges of knowledge and capacities between the involved countries. These dynamics are evidenced in the rising number of organizations, projects, activities, and debates to reinforce SSC modalities, which represent a clear sign of the dynamism of this cooperation modality and undoubtedly encompassed opportunities and difficulties to achieve development.

However, and to not be naïve, it is also important to note that it is evident that some nations make SSC a radically different practice from the type of South-South relations promoted in previous decades under the principles of the UN Charter and the Bandung declaration. Consequently, Santander and Alonso (2018, p.1924) pointed out that “very different development cooperation models coexist, with different narratives, purposes, and practices, and not all the features attributed to the SSC providers appear to be equally founded on empirical experience.”

Since SSC is a part of the foreign policies of the involved countries, this revolves around interests and incentives. Besides, countries of the South are heterogeneous in political models, economic capabilities, and ways of interaction in their regional and global contexts. Therefore nowadays, we can observe countries that, under the flags of SSC, seek support for their positions in international forums; aspire to increase their role in the international system; promote their international projection based on values and ideologies; explore opportunities for new markets and acquisition of natural resources;

seek to consolidate anti-hegemonic poles of power while others only aspire to be a link between the North and the South. Sometimes it is even a combination of these intentions.

One specific example where the gaps between the rhetoric and practice of SSC can be seen is connected to political conditionality. Historically, SSC has been labeled under the principle of “non-conditionality,” differentiating itself from NSC modalities, which in some cases implement political conditionality to promote changes in recipient countries. However, Brun (2018) expressed the need to contextualize the notion of conditionality. In this direction, even though countries of the South do not impose conditions related to governance and development models in partner countries, these implement other obligations regarding the purchase of products from the offering country depending on the needs of the projects or support to the bilateral or global aspirations of the provider.

From this perspective, it is possible to argue that some providers of the South are replicating practices that were previously associated with biases in NSC modalities related to the use of international cooperation for the promotion of national interests and the achievement of economic and political goals abroad, instead of promoting alternative types of cooperation based on commonalities or seeking the democratization of the current international economic order.

2.4 Difference between North-South and South-South Cooperation

This section presents a comparison between NSC and SSC in an attempt to show the differences in development cooperation promoted by these two models by identifying five dimensions that shape both NSC and SSC. These dimensions are ideas (principles), interests, institutions (political models), and organizations proposed by Lancaster (2007), and schemes based on Kragelund’s conception of vectors (2019).

2.4.1 Ideas

Historically countries of the Global South have promoted cooperation based on the “Ten Principles of Bandung”, which represented a political statement containing the principles

that would guide the efforts of developing countries to promote peace and cooperation in the world⁶.

Likewise, since the elaboration of the BAPA, a set of principles that shape the SSC promoted within the UN System began to be highlighted. These principles are strict respect for national sovereignty (non-interference), equity in distributing costs and benefits, leadership from governments, horizontality, decision-making by consensus, action under association schemes, and work led by the recipient partner.

Also, developing countries have consistently emphasized in international forums the principles that, in their view, must shape international cooperation and could allow globalization to become an inclusive, positive force. These principles are “inclusiveness, representativeness, multilateralism, transparency, and legitimacy” (Kaul, 2013, p.17).

In addition, the UNOSSC established that:

The guiding principles of SSC are based on solidarity between the peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, national and collective self-sufficiency, and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SSC agenda and initiatives must be established by the countries of the South, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national authorship, independence, equality, non-dependence, and non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefits (UN, 2021).

However, it is necessary to highlight that even though there is a broad consensus about the commonalities in principles based on the Bandung declaration, the BAPA, and other international documents, governments of the Global South use these principles selectively based on the orientation of their own foreign policy.

⁶ 1) Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; 2) Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; 3) Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small; 4) Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country; 5) Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. 6) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers, abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries. 7) Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country; 8) Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration, or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; 9) Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation; 10) Respect for justice and international obligation.

In this sense, the OECD (2021) shows how for example, Brazilian cooperation is implemented under principles that include respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and non-conditionality. For India, on the other hand, the most fundamental principles in its development cooperation are respecting its partners' priorities and showing solidarity with other developing countries.

In the case of China, it has been providing cooperation to developing countries following the Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries (1964), which are mutual benefit; no conditions attached; the no-interest or low-interest loans would not create a debt burden for the recipient country; to help the recipient nation develop its economy, not to create its dependence on China; to help the recipient country with the project that needs less capital and quick returns; the aid in kind must be of high quality at the world market price; to ensure that the technology can be learned and mastered by the locals; the Chinese experts and technicians working for the aid recipient country are treated equally as the local ones with no extra benefits for them.

Nonetheless, some critics of SSC argue that rather than promoting a revolution in the global order, this modality of cooperation is primarily based on the same principles that guide established structures led by the traditional donors, with the only difference that it invariably leads to a shift of power (Stuenkel, 2013).

Regarding NSC, governments of traditional donors often follow the guidelines emanated from the OECD-DAC. Consequently, the OECD members established the current principles that characterized NSC initiatives in the 2005 Paris Declaration. There, the participants agreed upon the following principles:

- **Ownership:** Developing countries set their own development strategies, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.
- **Alignment:** Donor countries and organizations bring their support in line with these strategies and use local systems.
- **Harmonization:** Donor countries and organizations coordinate their actions, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

- **Managing for results:** Developing countries and donors focus on producing – and measuring – results.
- **Mutual accountability:** Donors and developing countries are accountable for development results. (OECD, 2021)

Additionally, The Busan Partnership (2011), promoted by the OECD, specifically highlights a set of common principles for all development actors that are key to making development cooperation effective.

- **Ownership of development priorities by developing countries:** Countries should define the development model that they want to implement.
- **A focus on results:** Having a sustainable impact should be the driving force behind investments and efforts in development policymaking
- **Partnerships for development:** Development depends on the participation of all actors and recognizes the diversity and complementarity of their functions.
- **Transparency and shared responsibility:** Development co-operation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens.

Additionally, Chiani and Scartascini (2009) argue that, in the current international context, with its particular characteristics, NSC practices constitute an invaluable part of the fight for democracy, the rule of law, and social justice, especially in those regions of the planet that present significant deficits in these aspects.

Even though traditional donors share more similarities in terms of ideas due to their adherence to OECD-DAC standards than countries of the South, Lancaster (2007) showed how for example while Japan and France shared a similar idea related to the obligation of the rich to help the poor, the U.S cooperation, on the other hand, has been shaped by the conception of the U.S. as great power and leader of the Western Liberalist alliance against socialism.

2.4.2 Institutions/Political Systems

Countries of the South encompass a vast heterogeneity that emerges not only from differences in size but also from their membership in global governance structures and their historical role vis-à-vis the rest of the Global South (Kragelund, 2019).

Moreover, the economic and political diversity of the Afro-Asian-Latin American group began to appear more marked in the post-cold war world as the overarching anti-imperial, non-aligned priorities faded. (Braveboy, 2009).

In this context, it is not easy to generate consensus regarding a predominant political system implemented by countries of the Global South. For example, if we categorized countries of the South based on the classification made by McManus and Gulcin Ozkan (2018) when studying which forms of government are associated with superior economic outcomes, we would see that while Brazil is categorized as a Presidential system, India and South Africa are included in the group of countries with a parliamentary system. Moreover, 13 of the 24 countries studied by these authors in the African continent are categorized as presidential; seven are categorized as semi-presidential, and four as parliamentary.

Despite this situation, it is possible to observe similarities among countries of the South in the South American region, where the presidential model has been generally adopted. Nowadays, twelve of the twelve countries in South America work under a presidential model. In this regard, Emerson (2015) explored how the concentration of power in the executive branch, specifically in Brazil and Venezuela, during the Lula and Chavez administrations, was beneficial to active policymaking in relation to SSC. However, it is highlighted that the excessive reliance on presidential relationships instead of institutional procedures can lead to unsustainable practices.

Political systems in traditional donors are also diverse. For example, Lancaster (2007) showed how while the U.S system is conducted under a presidential model, Japan has a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament, France, since 1958, established a hybrid presidential/parliamentary system centered on a strong executive, Germany is a parliamentary democracy with a form of proportional representation, and Denmark is a constitutional monarchy based on a parliamentary system and proportional representation.

2.4.3 Interests

Countries of the Global South differ in economic capabilities and political ambitions. The heterogeneity of this group of countries inevitably generates that one side of the relationship obtains greater economic benefits. Nevertheless, through SSC engagements, the other part can get more intangible gains such as experience, knowledge and cultural exchange, capacity building, diplomatic solidarity, human rights promotion, and the visibility and recognition of the South (Muhr, 2013).

Brun (2018) and Santander and Alonso (2018) showed how for example, in the case of Latin American countries, the interests pursued by the governments vary based on their foreign policies. However, a common feature is that LAC governments promoted SSC to obtain support in international forums and reinforce their image at the international level.

Santander and Alonso (2018) also demonstrated how, for example, while the interest of the Chilean government has been seeking international integration and appearing as a reliable partner to Northern countries, Brazil, on the other hand, has been seeking regional leadership and shaping extra-regional alliances for its economic interests.

Another relevant example of the interests pursued by countries of the South is portrayed by India, which nowadays promotes SSC with the aim of safeguarding critical geopolitical influence, especially in South-East Asia and Africa, where China has been gaining preponderance in recent years (Choudhury & Nagda, 2019).

Additionally, South Africa, another relevant nation from the South, has been engaging in SSC intending to position the country to be a norm entrepreneur in global affairs, advocating reforms in the global governance system, reinforcing trade and economic relations with other African partners, and be the voice of the continent in the international arena (Lucey & O’riordan, 2014; Bradlow, 2020)

These differences in attributes allowed Braveboy (2016) to distinguish between three tiers of countries in the Global South:

Table 2.1: Tiers of Countries in the Global South

Tier	Behavior	Countries/Examples
1 st tier	Countries that seek regional and global influence/power	China, Brazil, India and, South Africa
2 nd tier	Countries that have expressed/shown regional ambitions	Argentina, Chile, México, and Venezuela
3 rd tier	“Small” countries that “punch above their weight.”	Azerbaijan, Cuba, Qatar, Senegal, and Singapore

Source: Braveboy (2016).

In this sense, Hirst and Antonini (2018), when studying the evolution of SSC modalities, identified three types of approaches to SSC promoted by Latin American governments aiming to achieve their interests in the regional and global contexts, which are not necessarily exclusive: autonomous pragmatism, defensive idealism, and prestigious outsourcing.

The first approach promotes a policy that seeks to part ways with traditional donors and reinforce the particularities in the SSC, based on a policy of horizontal cooperation, which implies pick-and-choose triangulation offers on topics and with countries or agencies, depending on political priorities and economic, institutional, and technical resources. Participation in triangular projects obeys selective criteria that always preserve their own margins of autonomy.

The second modality seeks to reconcile the double condition of recipient and donor as a source of legitimation towards the North and the South and implies a preference for South-South projects and a critical vision of the great impulse and the regulations recently used by the donors' community.

The third way considers the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and the framework established by the millennium agenda as opportunities to expand ties with the industrialized world, with positive extensions and effects for their respective economic and political interests. It would be a way of reversing the tied cooperation, keeping the same donor-recipient logic.

Although the three options are not exclusive, their overlap can give room for ambiguous policies, which always represents a source of weakness and erosion in North-South and South-South relations.

Nevertheless, Taylor (2018) stated that political elites in the Global South have a wide variety of interests and that, in some cases, these interests tended to be different from their own constituencies. Consequently, Quadir (2013) argued that contrary to what the Southern donors express, their aid is not qualitatively different from the one provided by OECD countries. Like DAC countries, most emerging donors use their foreign aid to promote trade, investment, and commercial interests. Therefore, the Southern donors' cooperation agendas are based largely on national self-interest and national priorities.

In relation to traditional donors, as we have seen in other subsections of this chapter, traditional donors are not a monolithic unit either. In this sense, Lancaster (2007) showed how the U.S., Japan, France, Germany, and Denmark, pursue different goals in the diplomatic, commercial and developmental fields based on the interests promoted by internal forces and the national interest of the donor government in the recipient country.

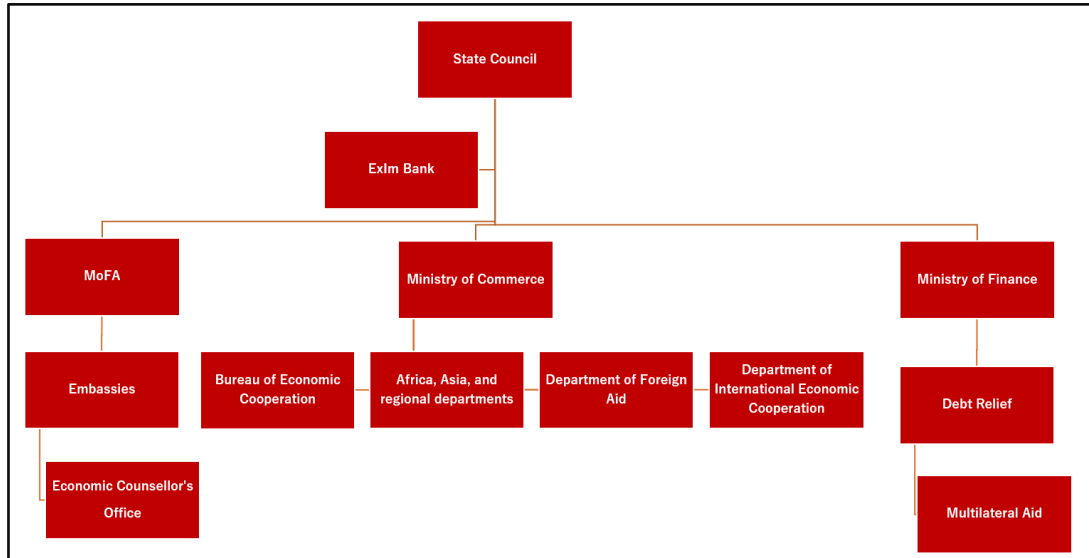
2.4.4 Organizations

Nowadays, governments of the Global South are establishing aid agencies to coordinate and promote their aid programs; they are also creating Export-Import banks to boost trade and investments with partner countries. Similarly, these countries continuously expand their representation abroad: build new embassies, sponsor trade and cultural fairs, and engage in bi- and multilateral summits. Moreover, they promote education programs, cultural exchanges, and the expansion of national media. These countries also sponsor numerous state-owned enterprises that actively engage in trade and investments in other parts of the world (Kragelund, 2019).

In this context, Kragelund (2019) also emphasized that development cooperation in the Global South is diverse, and a single entity does not drive the efforts promoted at the national level. Instead, a broad group of central, regional, and local government entities is involved in the planning and execution of SSC. Likewise, sometimes these entities also engaged with private and civil actors. Unlike many traditional donors, countries of the Global South have no single entity responsible for development cooperation.

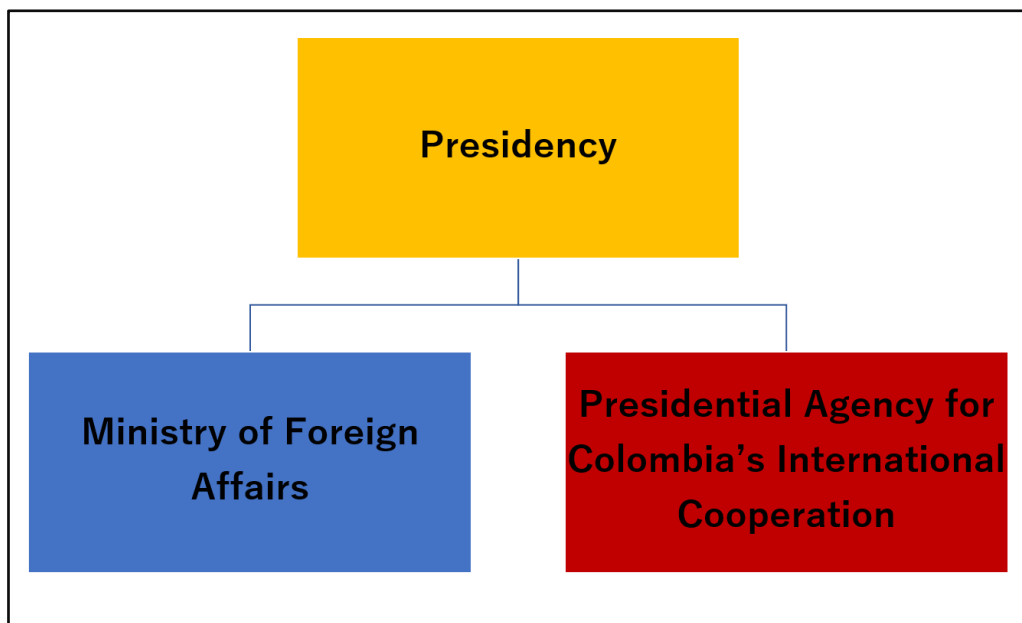
Figures 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8 show some examples of internal organizations for the promotion of SSC:

Figure 2.6: China’s Aid and Economic Cooperation System



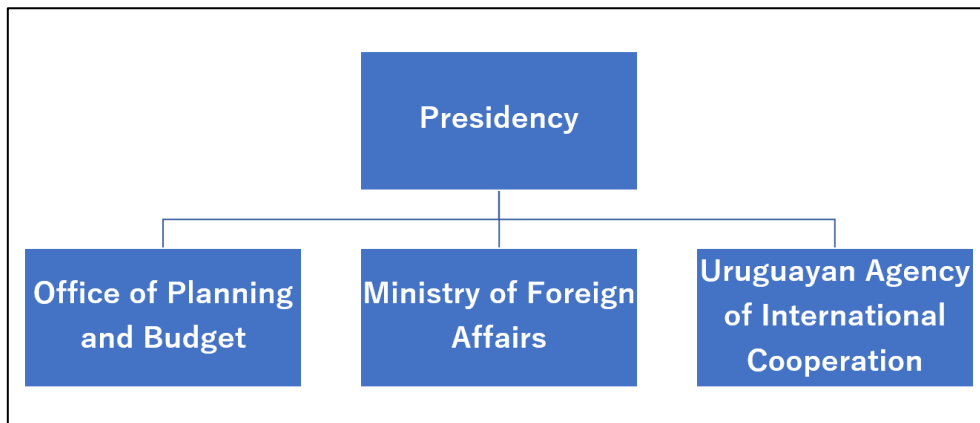
Source: Kragelund (2019)

Figure 2.7: Colombia’s System for South-South Cooperation



Source: Gobierno de Colombia (2021).

Figure 2.8: Uruguay's System for South-South Cooperation



Source: Agencia Uruguaya de Cooperación Internacional (2014).

Similarly, Stuenkel (2013) showed how at the international and regional level, different SSC initiatives are promoted by different institutions such as the African Union (AU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Mercosur, the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZPCAS), the Community of Latin American States (CELAC) and ALBA-TCP, among others.

What is necessary to highlight is the persistence of traditional organizations and the emergence of new ones. Braveboy (2009) explained that since the beginning of the century, the international community has witnessed the revitalization of old global organizations, such as the NAM and OPEC, which fell in the category of tricontinental organizations, and the flourishing of new ones in the regional and subregional level, such as the African Union, CELAC, and Mercosur, and even in regions such as Asia where cooperation has until now been limited by inter-state political rivalries.

In contrast, despite the differences, and in some cases, even fragmentation that each traditional donor presents, based on Lancaster (2007), it can be said that NSC tends to be more uniform in terms of organizations at the national and international level. Consequently, at the national level, we can observe how traditional donors have promoted efforts to concentrate their development initiatives through unitary agencies, which in some cases are linked to their MoFA. In this regard, the U.S. promotes development cooperation through USAID, which is linked to the State Department. Japan promotes the

majority of its initiative through JICA. Denmark has an aid agency (DANIDA) fully integrated within its MoFA. Sweden also implemented its cooperation projects through a unitary agency called SIDA.

At the international level, for over 60 years, the OECD-DAC has grouped the world's main donors, defining and monitoring global standards in key areas of development. (OECD, 2022)

2.4.5 Vectors/Schemes

SSC encompasses a variety of schemes and fields that include but does not limit to ODA. Kragelund (2019) listed various vectors through which SSC is provided: foreign aid, humanitarian assistance, trade, investment, migration, education, and global governance.

Similarly, the UN (2021) highlights that recent developments in SSC have taken the form of increased volume of South-South trade, South-South flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.

In contrast, as explained in Chapter 1, NSC is primarily based on economic cooperation for development, which tends to focus on ODA and its three main schemes: grants, loans, and technical cooperation. However, in recent years, this cooperation modality has also promoted the use of other official flows (OOF), such as foreign direct investment.

In this sense, the OECD (2022) defines OOF as official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria. OOF includes grants to developing countries for representational or essentially commercial purposes; official bilateral transactions intended to promote development but having a grant element of less than 25%; and official bilateral transactions, whatever their grant element, that are primarily export-facilitating in purpose.

Therefore, it can be said that because of the wide variety of initiatives labeled as SSC and the inexistence of a consensus regarding what is defined as SSC, many of the activities promoted by countries of the South, even though they do not fall into the concept of ODA, they can be considered into the definition of OOF use by traditional donors.

However, it is necessary to highlight that SSC, as we have seen through this chapter, relies to a greater extent on political aspects, including the political scheme, which implies bilateral or multilateral political cooperation. Also, some countries of the South include military cooperation in the scope of SSC (Morales, 2012). This situation generates a gray zone, where in the absence of consensus, many activities can be labeled as SSC, even though these do not have a clear developmental purpose.

2.5 Synthesis of the most relevant aspects

Since its genesis in the Asian-African Conference, celebrated in Bandung in 1955, SSC has undergone different phases which have shaped the rhetoric, the interests, the approaches, and the focus of the policies embraced by the actors involved in this kind of cooperation.

Therefore, we can see that while the SSC promoted during the Bandung Conference was inspired by political demands from countries of the South, the BAPA, in 1978, took a more technical approach. Additionally, more recently, the MDGs and SDGs have promoted SSC as a catalyst to promote economic growth and sustainable development.

Consequently, the broad scope encompassing SSC modalities has made it difficult to achieve a unitary concept. Even though governments, academics, and technicians have brought their proposals to the table, there is no conclusive agreement on the definition of SSC modalities yet.

Additionally, even though, in theory, SSC aims to break with the donor-recipient relationship established by traditional donors based on different principles such as solidarity, equality, complementarity, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs, and non-political conditionality, some SSC providers have to some extent replicated practices of traditional donors based on the promotion of international cooperation to fulfill their commercial and financial interests.

Moreover, rather than seeking to alter the structure of global governance established by traditional donors, currently, some countries of the South are benefiting from this structure and aim to play a more preponderant role within it.

Hence, nowadays, it is possible to observe a wide variety of approaches promoted by different countries of the South. On one side, some countries aim to radically break with

the North-South traditional relations and propose an alternative governance structure, such as Cuba and Venezuela. There are also countries, such as Brazil and South Africa, that aim to play a more preponderant role within the already-established governance structures. Some of them, like India, engage in SSC to protect their areas of critical geopolitical influence. On the other spectrum, some countries, such as Chile and Colombia, want to maintain the best possible relationship with traditional donors.

In order to summarize the contents explained in this chapter, fully comprehend SSC modalities, and contrast them with traditional cooperation, Table 2.2 presents an approximation of the main differences between NSC and SSC. Here the author tries to capture the complexity of both modalities of cooperation through the dimensions explained above, which allow the understanding of the political process under study.

Table 2.2 SSC vs NSC

Dimensions	South-South Cooperation	North South-Cooperation
Institutions (Political Systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presidential system. - Semi-presidential system. - Parliamentary system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presidential system. - Semi-presidential system. - Parliamentary system.
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for the principles of the UN Charter. - Selective promotion of the Bandung and BAPA principles such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. - Non-intervention in internal affairs. - Promotion of mutual interests. - Solidarity between nations. - Horizontality and equity. - Multilateralism. - Mutual benefit. - Non-conditionality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OECD-DAC principles. - Democratic values of a free, pacific and prosperous world to achieve development, dignity, and high quality of life. - Human rights. - Alignment. - Accountability and transparency. - The obligation of the riches to help the ones in need.

<p>Interests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic benefits. - Political leverage. - Regional and global influence. -National and regional development. - Regional integration. - Capacity building. - Diplomatic solidarity. - Commercial interest. -Transformation of the international system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Interest. - Sustainable Development. - Economic Growth. - Political Transformation in the recipient country. - New Markets. - Securitization of natural resources.
<p>Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple overlapping organizations at the national level. - Multiple organizations at the international level (NAM, OPEC, ASEAN, UNASUR, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governed by strategies, policies, and a clear institutional framework. - OECD-DAC as a rector entity at the international level.
<p>Vectors/ Schemes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign aid. - Humanitarian assistance. - Trade. - Investment. - Education. - Military cooperation. - Global Governance. - Others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Official Development Assistance. - Other Official Flows.

Source: Elaborated by the author (2022).

Chapter 3

Venezuela's Foreign Policy in the context of the Bolivarian Diplomacy

3.1 Introduction

Any attempt to analyze Venezuela's foreign policy should highlight that, during the twentieth century and especially after 1958, it revolved around the fight against regional dictatorships and the defense of the representative democracy as a political system. (Romero, M 2002)

However, in 1999, with the election of Hugo Chavez as President of Venezuela, the government established a new political-ideological, socio-economic and international project radically different from previous administrations. The bases for this new model were contained in the new constitution of 1999 and the 2001-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan.

Also, it is necessary to note that since the election of Hugo Chavez as President and the emergence of the Bolivarian project, the approaches of Venezuela's foreign policy were modified, impregnating it with new goals, strategies, and actors, which have materialized in a drastically different diplomacy from that of previous governments. These changes in Venezuela's foreign policy have marked a turning point in the role of Venezuela in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region and in the international context.

However, the transition of Venezuelan foreign policy since 1999 "was not short or abrupt as it generated changes and set precedents as time progressed" (Mora, 2004, p.76). Thus, for practical reasons, dividing Venezuela's foreign policy under the leadership of President Chavez into two periods is necessary. The first period, which covers 1999 to 2006, was marked by a continuation and a progressive shift in foreign policy orientation. The second period (2007-2013), which is the main focus of this study, was characterized by radicalization and deepening of the socialist model in Venezuela's foreign policy.

Hence, this chapter aims to show two main aspects 1) a historical overview of the strategies and motivations of the Venezuelan foreign policy during Hugo Chavez's Presidency and 2) Venezuela's foreign policy-making process during 2007-2013. The results of the analysis presented in this chapter are based on official documents, such as the national constitution and laws, the 2007-2013 Plan of Social and Economic

Development of the Nation - Simon Bolivar National Project, and documents from the Ministry of People's Power for Foreign Affairs, among others, as well as specialized literature on the topic of Venezuela's foreign policy and the data recollected through in-depth interviews.

3.2 Historical overview of the strategies and motivations of the Venezuelan foreign policy during Hugo Chavez's Presidency

3.2.1 Venezuela's Foreign Policy 1999 – 2006

Since the beginning of its democratic history, in 1958, Venezuela's foreign policy had as primary orientation the fight against regional dictatorships and the defense of the representative democracy as a political system. (Romero, M 2002).

Romero, M (2001) showed how the Betancourt Doctrine⁷ during the administration of Romulo Betancourt (1959-1964) and Raul Leoni (1964-1969), the policy of ideologic pluralism⁸ and the doctrine of international social justice⁹ proposed by Rafael Caldera (1969-1974) cemented the bases for a foreign policy oriented towards the promotion of the defense of democracy. This foreign policy continued during the governments of Carlos Andres Perez (1974-1979), Luis Herrera Campins (1979-1984), and Jaime Lusinchi (1984-1989), between the 1970s and 1980s, as well as during the administrations of Carlos Andrés Pérez (1989-1993), Ramón J. Velásquez (1993) and Rafael Caldera (1994-1998) in the 1990s.

Similarly, Romero, L (2007) summarized Venezuela's foreign policy during the representative democracy, underlining that the Betancourt administration had two main orientations: 1) Avoid any influence that could bring Venezuela back to a military and non-democratic regime 2) Promote an anti-communist policy based on the U.S interests. During the first Caldera's presidency, the country focused on promoting peace at the international level; subsequently, Carlos Andres Perez opted for promoting the third-world identity as part of his foreign policy. However, after the first Perez administration,

⁷ The Betancourt Doctrine consisted in breaking diplomatic relations with non-democratic regimes.

⁸ The doctrine of ideologic pluralism placed particular importance on reinforcing relationships with Caribbean countries and opening diplomatic channels with Cuba.

⁹ The doctrine of international social justice argued that every country in the global system, especially Latin American countries, must achieve peace and progress in accordance with their possibilities and requirements.

there was a decline in the activism of Venezuela's foreign policy, and during successive periods, the governments focused more on solving domestic issues.

Moreover, Garcia (2018) explained that during the period 1958-1999, there was a permanent international orientation with a set of goals, interests, actions, and rules based on the principles of the 1961 National Constitution¹⁰ and the promotion of the representative democracy as the main political model in the international system.

Hence, evidence points out that there was continuity in the goals, channels, actions, and actors linked to foreign policy, despite the particular orientations each administration took due to the circumstantial changes in the international system. Thus, Venezuela's foreign policy revolved around the ideas promoted by the national constitution promulgated in 1961, the fight against regional dictatorships, the promotion of the representative democracy, and the contention against communism in the region led by the U.S.

This foreign policy was sustained at the national level by the Punto Fijo Agreement (Pacto de Punto Fijo), which:

...at first, it was an agreement between the three largest Venezuelan political parties, Accion Democratica, COPEI, and URD, of not breaking the constitutional order. Later, this agreement became an alliance between Accion Democratica and COPEI that went beyond the principle of democratic rules establishing the consensual and consecutive share of power between these two parties (Garcia, 2018, p.23).

Also, Romero, C (2015) pointed out that besides the two main political parties, the system relied on the strong economic support of the oil revenues, a rentier economy, neutral military armed forces, and the support of the business sector, the middle class and the farmer and worker sectors.

However, after the electoral win and the reorganization of the republic via a new constitution in 1999, the national government implemented a new government model that distanced itself from previous administrations. Likewise, President Hugo Chavez promoted a new international agenda for Venezuela's foreign policy. This agenda had

¹⁰ For the international sphere, the 1961 Constitution contemplated the following principles: Cooperation with other nations, especially the ones of the continent, in the goals of the international community based on the mutual respect of sovereignty, self-determination of the peoples, the universal guarantee of human rights, the condemnation of war, conquest and the economic predominance as a tool of foreign policy.

two phases: the first one between 1999 and 2010, entitled the silver era in the Economic Development Plan of the Nation, which was considered a transition period to the second phase, which was entitled the Golden era in which the Bolivarian Revolution will be established (Chavez, 2001, p. 9).

The bases for this government agenda were embodied in the new National Constitution of 1999 and the 2001-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan. In this sense, the new constitution contained the principles that guide the international relations of the republic in article 152¹¹, which to some extent replicated some of the principles of the 1961 Constitution.

However, the new constitutional text highlights the promotion of Latin-American integration as a critical aspect of its foreign policy in article 153, which says:

The Republic shall promote and encourage Latin American and Caribbean integration in the interest of advancing toward the creation of a community of nations, defending the region's economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental interests... In its policies of integration and union with Latin America and the Caribbean, the Republic shall give privileged status to relations with Ibero-American countries, striving to make this a common policy throughout our Latin America.

Additionally, the 2001-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan, which constituted the government's agenda for that period, aimed to promote "the international equilibrium" through five lines of action:

1. Foster the multipolarity of the international society.
2. Foster Latin American and Caribbean integration.
3. Consolidate and diversify international relations.
4. Strengthen the position of Venezuela in the international economy.
5. Promote a new integral hemispheric security regime.

¹¹ Article 152: "The international relations of the Republic serve the ends of the State as a function of the exercise of sovereignty and the interests of the people; they are governed by the principles of independence, equality between States, free self-determination, and non-intervention in their internal affairs, the peaceful resolution of international conflicts, cooperation, respect of human rights and solidarity among peoples in the struggle for their liberation and the welfare of humanity."

Based on the previous elements, it can be said that Venezuela's foreign policy during 1999-2007 preserved some elements and principles from previous governments; it was characterized "by the use of diplomacy as a principal instrument for coexistence with other nations" (González Urrutia, 2005, p.159). Since 2001, it found its conceptual support in the 2001-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan, which in the international field aimed to foster "International Balance" by strengthening national sovereignty and promoting a multipolar world.

In this first stage of Hugo Chavez's government, LAC integration and strengthening Venezuela's position in the international economy were promoted. For these purposes, Venezuela sought to diversify its international relations and promote a new comprehensive hemispheric security regime through active cooperation and military integration at the regional level.

The new government intended to establish a new development model called "Socialism of the 21st century", an updated version of soviet socialism. Therefore, the Bolivarian Project, aiming to break with the historical passivity of the country against the geopolitical interests of the U.S., planned the goal of building new international geopolitics through the creation of multiple poles of power, forming regional blocs that serve as a counterweight to the U.S. influence (Chavez, 2001).

However, it did not imply abrupt changes with the principles and values that the right-wing governments that preceded Hugo Chavez had promoted until 1999 based on the Pacto de Punto Fijo, the agreement that dominated the political system since the 1960s (Garcia, 2018).

During this stage, the Venezuelan government signed the first cooperation agreements with Cuba and privileged the relations with the Andean Community. There was also a concrete political closeness with Mercosur and OPEC. In contrast, the bilateral relations with the U.S. began to be antagonistic, to the point that some military cooperation programs were suspended, and the national government demanded the withdrawal of the U.S. military mission in the country (Golinger, 2005).

Despite the initial tensions with the U.S. and the strong political alliance with Cuba, Venezuelan oil continued to flow regularly to the North American market, which was still its first destination, despite the attempt of Chavez's administration to diversify

Venezuela's oil markets. Additionally, after his electoral win in 1998, President Chavez met with President Bill Clinton twice, once in December 1998 at the White House and the other in September 1999 at the UN Headquarters in New York (Zapata, 2018). Moreover, the 41st President of the U.S., George Bush Sr, and father of the then President George W. Bush, visited Caracas to meet Chavez in February 2001 (DeYoung, 2001). In this sense, according to Ellner, "during its first years, Chavez's government assumed nationalist and independent positions, although in some cases, it expressed its goodwill to adapt to the interests of the U.S." (2009, p. 116)

The progressive distance between Venezuela and the U.S. was accompanied by constant tensions between Venezuela and the European Union, especially Spain. These tensions reached their peak in the 2007 Ibero-American Summit, held in Santiago de Chile, when after several interruptions from President Chavez to the Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the King Juan Carlos I of Spain publicly demanded Hugo Chavez to stop talking with the infamous phrase "¿por que no te callas?" (English: "Why don't you shut up?").

Additionally, based on the concept of a multipolar world, Venezuela diversified its international relations, finding strategic allies in China and Russia. Concerning China, the bilateral relationship started to be fostered in October 1999, when President Chavez traveled to China to visit President Jiang Zemin. During this visit, several bilateral agreements were signed covering different areas. Moreover, during his fourteen years in power, President Chavez made six official visits to China¹². Consequently, the proactive dynamic between the two countries led to the establishment of an Integral Strategic Partnership in 2014.

Regarding the bilateral relationship with Russia, since the Millennium Summit in 2000, when President Chavez met with President Putin in a bilateral sideline meeting, the association between both countries has been bolstered in several areas, including political, economic, energy, and military cooperation. President Chavez traveled seven times¹³ to

¹² President Chavez made official visits to China in 1999, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2009. President Xi Jinping visited Venezuela in 2009 and 2013.

¹³ President Chavez visited the Russian Federation in 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Russia, while former President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, visited Caracas in 2008.

Besides, Venezuela aimed to expand its international relations with other Asian countries such as Japan. President Chavez made two official visits to Tokyo (1999 and 2009), in which representatives of Venezuela and Japan signed several agreements to promote bilateral cooperation, focusing on the energy sector, especially crude oil and gas. Despite the signing of multiple agreements between the two countries, high-ranking Japanese officials expressed their concern “as a consequence of the situation of political conflict and the absence of physical and juridic security in Venezuela that guarantee their normal development” (Molina, 2012, p.130).

In those years, the extreme polarization of Venezuelan society and the internal political violence generated some concerns in the international community. Furthermore, the paralysis of the oil industry caused by the oil strike in 2002 added a variable that would affect the perception of Venezuela as a reliable oil supplier in the international market.

Moreover, on April 11th¹⁴, 2002, an opposition protest that intended to march to the presidential palace triggered a confrontation with the security forces and government supporters, causing multiple deaths. This situation led some high-ranking military officers to rebel against Chavez’s government and demand his resignation, while Pedro Carmona Estanga, with the support of a small number of military officials, part of the business sector, especially FEDECAMARAS, and part of the international community, was designated interim president of Venezuela. This attempt of coup d’etat lasted until April 13th, when President Chavez was reinstated as the constitutional president with the help of the Armed Forces and massive popular support.

It is necessary to point out that based on different sources such as Vulliamy (2002), Fernandez (2004), and Ellner (2009), the Bush administration supported the attempt of coup d’etat since different officials of the U.S government met with opposition representatives during the weeks before April 11th, the CIA had prior information of plans to destabilize the Venezuelan government, the U.S. government publicly blamed

¹⁴ For a detailed explanation of the events on April 11th, 12th, and 13th, consult Lopez Maya (2002), Olivieri and Guardia (2003), Brewer-Carias (2008), and Villegas Poljak (2012), among others.

the Chavez's administration as the cause of the violence of April 11th, and was the first to recognized Carmona as interim president of Venezuela.

The attempt of coup d'état, made President Chavez rethink his political strategy and prioritize the consolidation of the Bolivarian Project. Consequently, on November 12 and 13, 2004, he held a High-level strategic workshop in Caracas with governors, majors, deputies, activists from the political party Movimiento Quinta Republica, high-ranking military officials, social activists, ministers, and the vice-president. "There, Hugo Chávez, with the support of other political leaders of the Socialist Bolivarian Project, aimed to elaborate a general document about the new phase of the Socialist Project." (Garcia, 2018, p. 62) This document was the based for the Simon Bolivar National project, implemented in 2007.

Venezuela's foreign policy platforms in that period were diverse, each associated with an identity:

In the first place, the high activism of Chavez diplomacy found fertile ground in platforms such as the G-15, the G-77, the NAM, the Rio Group, the Andean Community, the Association of Caribbean States, and MERCOSUR. Second, and in defense of oil prices, the country maintained a relevant role in the OPEC. Third, the government program presented in 1998 indicated that Venezuela maintains the best relations with the U.S. Fourth, the development of relations with the Arab world from the economic point of view and cultural affinities. Fifth, there was unconditional support for the Cuban government. (Mora, 2004, p. 79).

These changes in Venezuela's foreign policy were mainly designed by the figure of President Chavez, as we will see in subsequent sections and chapters based on the literature review and the data collected through in-depth interviews with key informants. Still, the MoFA of Venezuela had a relevant role as the arm of execution of the policies designed by the president, especially the different ministers during Chavez's government periods: Jose Vicente Rangel (1999-2001), Luis Alfonso Davila (2001-2002), Roy Chaderton (2002-2004), Jesus Arnaldo Perez (2004), Ali Rodriguez Araque (2004-2006), Nicolas Maduro (2006-2013), who is Chavez's successor and current President of Venezuela, and Elias Jaua (2013).

In Sum, Venezuela's diplomacy during 1999-2006 underwent a progressive transformation aiming to achieve the goals established in the 1999 constitution and the 2001-2007 National Economic and Social Development Plan. Although Venezuela kept fulfilling the obligations and commitments of former administrations, especially regarding oil supply to the U.S and active participation in the OAS and the Andean Community, the Chavez's administration also intended to progressively establish alternative centers of power to diminish the U.S influence and make important changes to the prevailing international system.

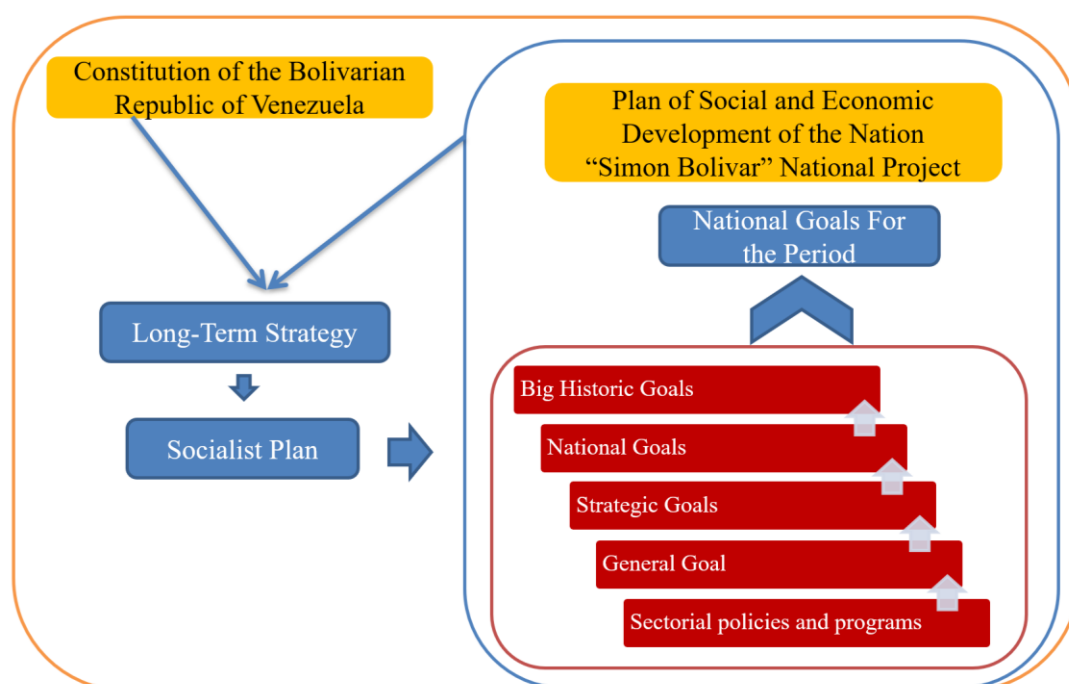
3.2.2 Venezuela's Foreign Policy 2007-2013

After winning the presidential election in December 2006, Hugo Chavez started his third constitutional period in power in 2007. This year the Venezuelan government elaborated the Plan of Economic and Social Development of the Nation, better known as "Proyecto Nacional Simón Bolívar – Primer Plan Socialista." In general terms, the mission stated in the plan was:

... The overcoming of capital's ethics focuses on the configuration of a revolutionary consciousness on the need for a new collective morality, which can only be achieved through the dialectic of the struggle for the material transformation of society and spiritual development of those who live in this beautiful space of land that is Venezuela. This dialectic should raise us to found the conviction that if we do not change ourselves, it would be useless to change the external reality (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Planificación, 2007).

Therefore, to achieve the goals established in the Constitution and the Simon Bolivar National Project, public policies were registered under a sectoral perspective, as shown in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Plan of Social and Economic Development of the Nation (2007-2013).



Source: Elaborated by the author (2021)

During this period, the different goals of the 2007-2013 Plan of Social and Economic Development of the Nation constituted a chain of objectives (general, strategic, national, and big historic goals) that the executive power aspired to achieve through the formulation of sectoral policies and programs (agricultural, pharmaceutical, industrial, petrochemical, tourism, military, among others), expressing the sense of social transformation contained in the plan, while meeting the provisions of the national constitution.

This plan was oriented toward the construction of the Socialism of the 21st century, foreseeing the development of a socialist approach which in the international sphere is expressed in the following guidelines:

Venezuela world energy power: This guideline considered that the energetic potential would allow the country to develop a strategy that combines the sovereign use of its resources with regional and global integration.

Likewise, it contained several objectives, including transforming the country into an energy power, achieving regional energy integration, accelerating productive diversification, and ensuring sustainable energy consumption.

The new international geopolitics: The construction of a multipolar world implies the creation of new poles of power that represent the breakdown of the unipolar hegemony, in the search for social justice, solidarity, and guarantees of peace, under the deepening of fraternal dialogue between peoples, their self-determination, and respect for the freedoms of thought.

Also, this guideline had a few goals, such as strengthening national sovereignty, creating a regional geopolitical bloc, and diversifying political and economic relations.

To achieve the goals in the international sphere, the plan also established several strategies, among them:

- Develop integration with Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- Promote solidarity relations with other developing countries.
- Advance in the transformation of multilateral systems of global, regional, and local cooperation and integration.
- Build the institutional framework for a new order of financial integration and the establishment of fair trade.

(Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Planificación, 2007).

Given this framework, Tinker (2015) showed how Caracas promoted new economic arrangements with China, Cuba, Iran, and Russia, especially in areas such as health, telecommunications, auto manufacturing, oil explorations, and the production of machinery. In the UN, Venezuela openly sought a position in the Security Council. In addition, as part of a policy to promote South-South relations, in 2009, Venezuela hosted the Africa-South America Summit.

Additionally, as part of its SSC strategy, from 2005 to 2009, the government opened ten new embassies in Africa, in addition to the only eight opened between 1950 and 2004. Also, since 2008, Venezuela has had diplomatic relations with all the 54 African countries, hosting nine resident embassies in Caracas and maintaining relations with others through the concurrent diplomatic representations in Brazil, Cuba, and the UN (Palatz, 2010).

Authors like Tinker (2015) and Garcia (2018) also pointed out that Venezuela became a leader in regional integration, promoting different initiatives such as ALBA-TCP, PetroAmericas, PetroCaribe, PetroSur, CELAC, and attempting to enter the MERCOSUR.

The rise of these new hemispheric groups produced an unparalleled level of cooperation among Latin American states while diminishing the traditional role of the OAS, where the U.S. exercised significant influence.

Corrales and Penfold (2011) stressed that under the Chávez's administration, Venezuela became the most uncooperative country in the region after Cuba. Consequently, Venezuela systematically abstained from cooperation with the U.S., for example, on drug interdiction and security. In addition, the country openly accused the U.S. of posing an economic and military national threat to the revolution, planning to assassinate Chávez or invade the country from Colombia, Aruba, or other U.S. allied countries in the neighborhood.

Additionally, one of the key informants, Professor Magdaleno¹⁵, highlighted that during this period, "Venezuela implemented soft power through oil diplomacy in an attempt to increase the influence of the country and reinforce relations in Latin America."¹⁶

The use of soft power by the Chavez's administration was also emphasized by Hayden (2011) when studying Venezuela's public diplomacy initiatives arguing that:

Venezuela has been well positioned to develop strategic communication programs, given its oil-related revenues, and has invested considerable resources into a broad program of international broadcasting and other cultural programs designed to amplify the possibilities of the Bolivarian revolution for regional integration and Venezuela's regional leadership (p.132).

Moreover, Hayden (2011) stated that Venezuela "renders the concept of soft power as competitive where international politics is defined by an antagonism between imperialist/capitalist powers and the emergence of socialist solidarity" (p.133).

This foreign policy privileged the articulation with countries associated with new poles of global geopolitical power, defining new forms and mechanisms of integration and relations, which allowed the strengthening of bilateral ties, the construction of new regional spaces conducive to coalitions between partners, and support in multilateral

¹⁵ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on December 20th, 2021.

¹⁶ Although 'soft power' here may be misuse, I quote as he stated.

forums, thus promoting advantages, particularities, principles, and mechanisms different from the traditional cooperation framework of the countries of the OECD.

For this reason, it can be said that Venezuela's foreign policy during the period under study expresses the will of a political elite (President Chavez's government) that sought to break with the traditional model promoted by previous governments and build a socialist society (Romero, C 2006).

Consequently, based on the official documents that guide Venezuela's Foreign Policy and the specialized literature on the topic, it can be said that the motivations and strategies of Venezuela's foreign policy from 2007 to 2013 were as follows:

Table 3.1: Venezuela's Foreign Policy motivations 2007-2013

Motivation	Strategies
Establishment of new poles of power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversify strategic alliances with non-traditional partners such as China and Russia. - Diversify diplomatic relations with African and Asian countries. - Increase diplomatic participation in international forums, including a bid for a seat in the UN Security Council. - Promote a new regional architecture through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, CELAC, and Mercosur.
Implementation of Socialist State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the Socialism of the 21st century. - Seek support in international forums. - Promote strategic alliance with politically aligned countries in the region and other parts of the world.
Achieve Latin American Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a new regional architecture through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, CELAC, and Mercosur. - Promote strategic alliance with politically aligned countries in the region. - Foster SSC among Latin American and Caribbean countries.
Decrease the influence of the U.S in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soft Power. - Oil diplomacy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a new regional architecture through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, CELAC, and Mercosur. - Encourage regional integration without the U.S., especially through UNASUR, and CELAC. - Foster SSC among Latin American and Caribbean countries. - Diversify oil markets.
Became an oil energy power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversify strategic alliances with non-traditional partners, such as China, Russia, India, Belarus, Iran, and Turkey. - Diversify oil markets. - Oil diplomacy. - Reinforce the role of the OPEC in the international system.

Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

At this point is important to highlight that even though these were general motivations and strategies of Venezuela’s foreign policy, some of them are intrinsically linked to SSC, which is the main focus of this thesis. Therefore, those related to SSC will be explored in more detail in chapter 5.

3.3 Venezuela’s foreign policy-making process during 2007-2013

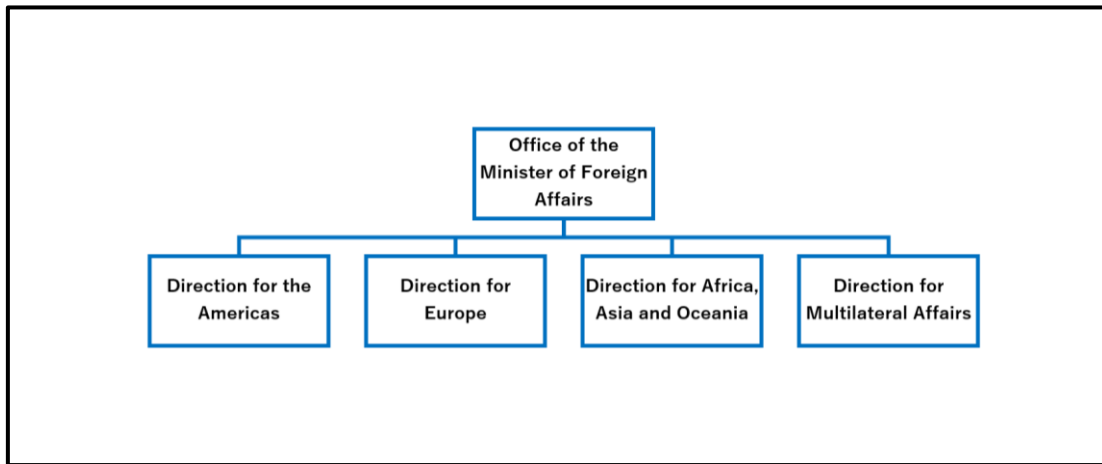
Under these motivations, a new public policy model with a marked social orientation was established to implement the socio-economic model outlined in the 1999 Constitution and the objectives embodied in the Simón Bolívar National Project. This model aimed to create a new public institutional architecture where the social aspect plays a central role.

At this point is necessary to mention that from 1958 to 1999, under the model of the representative democracy, the Constitution of 1961 established a presidential system with three public branches: the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branch. The last one was composed by a bicameral congress.

Additionally, the article 132 of the Constitution emphasized the apolitical role of the National Armed Forces, which “are at the service of the republic and in any case to serve a person or a political partiality”.

Regarding the organization of the MoFA, despite the different transformations and the administrative and bureaucratic organizational structures that the governments of this period employed, the sectoral foreign policy was always organized in four main areas: The Americas; Europe; Asia, Africa, and Oceania; and Multilateral Affairs.

Figure 3.2: MoFA’s Sectoral Foreign Policy 1958-1999



Source: Elaborated by the author based on various Libros Amarillos from the Venezuelan MoFA (2022)

Based on this sectoral structure, the policy-making process assumed by the Venezuelan governments was marked by the phases contained in table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Phases and products of the Policy-Making process 1958-1999

Phases	Products
1. Agenda’s formulation	Governmental Agenda
2. Policies’ formulation	Programs, goals, means
3. Policies’ implementation	Actions and results
4. Policies’ evaluation	Effects, follow-ups, future programs

Source: Maria Teresa Romero (2002)

In contrast, with the election of President Hugo Chavez in 1998 and the adoption of a new constitution in 1999, which aimed to rebuild the republic, a new public institutional architecture was adopted. In this direction, the constitutional text established in article 136 that the “National Public Power is divided into Legislative, Executive, Judicial,

Citizen and Electoral”. Therefore, adding two public branches to the three already contemplated in the 1961 Constitution. In addition, the legislative branch, previously organized in a congress composed of a bicameral chamber structure, changed to a National Assembly formed by a unicameral chamber.

In relation to the Armed Forces, the new constitution introduced a novel aspect in article 330, where it is stated that “Members of the National Armed Forces on active duty have the right to vote in accordance with the law”, a right that was not contemplated in previous constitutions and that set a precedent for the Civic-Military union advocated by President Chavez, and the major participation of military officials in the national political dynamic.

Within this institutional architecture, the policy-making process was marked by the guidelines contained in the Organic Law of the Public Administration (2008), which established in article 44 that:

The highest management bodies of the Central Public Administration are the President of the Republic, the Executive Vice President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, the ministers, and the deputy ministers.

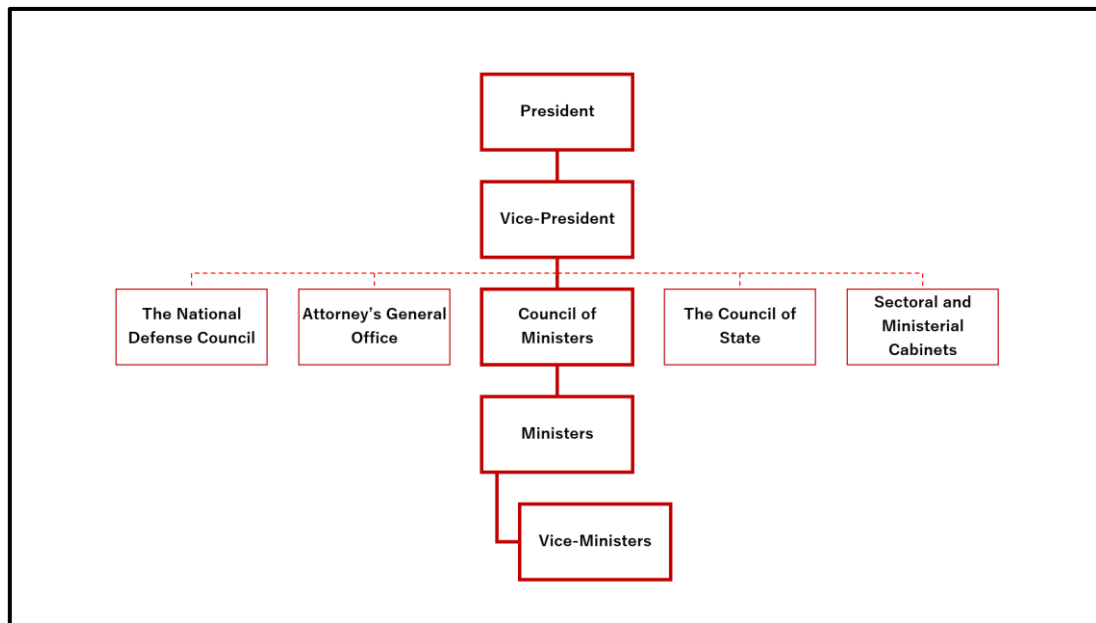
The consultative bodies of the Central Public Administration are the Attorney General’s Office, the Council of State, the National Defense Council, the sectoral cabinets, and the ministerial cabinets.

Consequently, article 45 stated that:

The higher management bodies of the Central Public Administration have the duty to direct the internal and external policy of the Republic and exercise the executive function and the regulatory power in accordance with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the laws. Likewise, they will be in charge of the strategic management of the State and, in particular, the formulation, approval, and evaluation of public policies, the follow-up of their execution, and the evaluation of institutional performance and its results.

Therefore, Figure 3.3 shows the actors involved in the public policy-making process according to the national laws:

Figure 3.3: Actors Involved in the Policy-Making Process



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

This institutional structure enabled the MoFA to take a leading role in the foreign policy-making process based on the Law of the Foreign Service (2005), which in article 3 established:

Following the guidelines established by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs designs foreign policy, executes and coordinates the activities of foreign relations, taking into account the superior purposes of the State and the interests of the people, as well as the needs and specific approaches of the other organs of the National Executive, other organisms of the Central Administration, and the regional and local authorities.

As commented in the first section of the chapter, within the MoFA, the ministers Jose Vicente Rangel (1999-2001), Luis Alfonso Davila (2001-2002), Roy Chaderton (2002-2004), Jesus Arnaldo Perez (2004), Ali Rodriguez Araque (2004-2006), Nicolas Maduro (2006-2013), and Elias Jaua (2013) had a predominant part in the execution of the foreign policy designed by President Chavez.

From this group, special mention should be given to Ali Rodríguez Araque, who, according to Professor Romero¹⁷ and Dr. Pérez Pirela¹⁸, “played an important role in the execution of foreign policy.” Besides being the Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2004 to 2006, Rodríguez Araque was Secretary-General of the OPEC (2001-2002), President of PDVSA (2002-2004), Minister of Finance (2008-2010), Secretary General of UNASUR (2012-2014), and Ambassador to Cuba (2014-2018).

Likewise, Pérez Pirela and Magdaleno pointed out the important role of Roy Chaderton, with the second highlighting “its diplomatic experience.” Beyond its role as a Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2004, Chaderton was Ambassador to Colombia (2001-2002), Ambassador to France (2004-2007), Ambassador to Mexico and the OAS (2008-2015), and since 2022, Ambassador to Switzerland.

However, from 2007 to 2013, the focus of this study, Nicolás Maduro (current President of Venezuela), was the leading figure after President Chávez regarding foreign policy. In this direction, Magdaleno expressed that:

Chancellor Maduro was a key actor for foreign policy... Nicolás Maduro was the chancellor with more time in that position since Chávez’s government started in 1999 until 2013. It was Maduro who implemented the oil diplomacy; it was Maduro who started the efforts of constructing relationships with different actors. In my understanding, Maduro was the one who instrumented the idea of incrementing the soft power of the Venezuelan State to have better relations with other Latin American countries.

Furthermore, within Maduro’s team at the MoFA, Professor Brun¹⁹ pointed out the crucial role of Temir Porrás²⁰ as “an advisor of Nicolás Maduro.” Similarly, Magdaleno mentioned the importance of Jorge Valero²¹ as one of the key ambassadors for this period. Moreover, Professor Nelson Lara²² highlighted the role of Rafael Ramírez²³, who was

¹⁷ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on December 21st, 2021.

¹⁸ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on February 2nd, 2022.

¹⁹ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on May 26th, 2022.

²⁰ Temir Porrás had a Public Service career in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2002 - 2013). He was a Foreign Policy Advisor of President Hugo Chávez, Chief of Staff for President Nicolás Maduro, Deputy Minister of Higher Education (2005-2007) and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2007-2013)

²¹ Jorge Valero has served as Ambassador to South Korea (1999), Ambassador to the OAS (2001-2008), Ambassador to the UN (since 2008), and Ambassador to the European Union (since 2022).

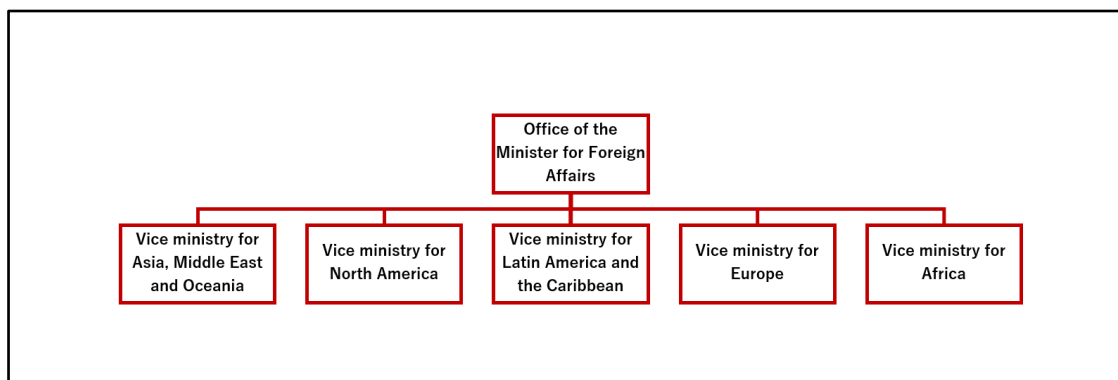
²² Interview through personal communication via written response, received on September 26th, 2021.

²³ Rafael Ramírez was the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Oil (2002-2014), President of PDVSA (2004-2014), Minister for Foreign Affairs (2014), and Ambassador to the UN (2014-2017).

not part of the MoFA until 2014 but had a crucial role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Oil in the cooperation initiative linked to SSC, especially those linked to oil.

Additionally, President Chavez reorganized through a partial reform of the internal regulation of the MoFA the structure of this ministry, promoting a different approach to sectoral policies. Therefore, the organigram of the MoFA after 2004 was as follows:

Figure 3.4: MoFA’s Sectoral Foreign Policy 2004-2013



Source: Elaborated by the author based on Reglamento Orgánico del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores 2004 (2022)

Palatz (2010) highlighted the importance of the creation of the Vice ministry for Africa since it illustrates the process of adequation and specialization of the Bolivarian foreign policy. This also shows the importance that the Chavez administration gave to South-South relations.

It is important to indicate that regarding foreign policy, within the institutional structure led by the executive branch, the National Assembly has to some extent, a veto power since it is one of its duties “to authorize the appointment of the Heads of Permanent Diplomatic Missions” and “to approve by law any international treaties or agreements entered into by the National Executive” based on the guidelines established in the 1999 National Constitution.

Nonetheless, it is also necessary to point out that for the parliamentary period 2005-2010, the MVR party, which President Chavez led, obtained 114 of 167 seats (El Mundo, 2005). Similarly, for the parliamentary period 2010-2015, the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV), which became the official party after his foundation by President

Chavez in 2007, obtained 98 of the 165 seats (Fregosi, 2010). This situation guaranteed President Chavez's control of the National Assembly during the study period.

Based on this dynamic, from 2007 to 2013, the Executive Power, with the support of the dominant political coalition (left-wing political parties led by the PSUV and grouped in an alliance called Polo Patriótico), in association with the leadership of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, representatives of the organized popular power, and the endorsement of the rest of the national public branches (Legislative Power, Judicial Power, Citizen Power, and Electoral Power), defined the Venezuelan foreign policy during this period.

Even though since the beginning of its republican history in 1811, Venezuela's political system has been characterized for having a presidential system in which the executive power has the leading role, since the election of Hugo Chavez as head of state, the concentration of power in the president reached unprecedented levels.

During Chavez's presidency, and especially during the period of study, the executive power fill functions of designing, implementing, supervising, and assessing public policies, including foreign policy, usually taking into consideration political factors instead of technical assessments from bureaucratic experts. This situation promoted the deinstitutionalization of the decision-making within the bureaucracy and the ruling party, centralizing the power in the president and establishing a decision-making process from the top to down (D'elia & Maingon, 2009; Sakaguchi, 2014; Urabe, 2014; Emerson, 2015; Serbin & Serbin, 2017; Garcia, 2018).

In addition, Serbin and Serbin (2017) argued that the concentration of power was accompanied by the progressive dismantling of the professional agencies involved in foreign affairs, with the gradual deprofessionalization of the Foreign Service, the restructuring of the MoFA, and the growing subordination of foreign policy decisions to the presidential will, with no effective control or accountability mechanisms beyond the executive branch.

Proof of this argument is that since 2005, there has not been a single public contest of merit and opposition for the promotion of diplomats and the recruitment of new diplomatic staff. Also, from 2006 to the date, more than 200 career diplomats have left the MoFA (Campoverde, 2019).

This situation can also be seen in the changes made through the years to the Law of Foreign Service. For example, the 2001 law established in article 88 that “the President of the Republic could designate people that do not belong to the diplomatic career to fulfill up to fifty percent (50%) of the positions as a chief of diplomatic and consular missions of the Republic.”

However, article 57 of the 2005 law eliminated the designation quota limit for people outside the diplomatic career, establishing that:

The President of the Republic will designate the chief of all the diplomatic missions, permanent missions to international organizations and consular offices of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The designated officials will be subjected to free removal by the President of the Republic.

Based on the institutional architecture explained above, authors like Corrales and Penfold (2011) described Venezuela’s political model as a hybrid government that combined both democratic and autocratic practices, showing the following features: 1) Government negotiations with opposition forces were rare. 2) Loyalists of the government were placed at top-level positions in State offices, undermining checks and balances. 3) The State actively sought to undermine the autonomy of civic institutions. 4) In terms of economic policy, the regime was heavily statist.

In this sense, Chavez’s foreign policy found resistance in national and international institutions, media conglomerates, sectors of academia, civil society, and traditional political parties. These actors fostered an intense ideological and political debate based on four ideas that have been constant in the narrative against the government since 1999:

1. The radical content of the policy
2. The exclusion of different sectors in the formulation of public policies.
3. The concentration of power.
4. The lack of accountability

(Mora, 2004; Corrales, 2009; Romero, C, 2010a; Boersner, 2011; Mijares, 2015; Figueroa Sepulveda, 2017)

The different assessments from a wide sector of the civil society and academia influenced internal and external debates related to domestic politics, causing a part of the

international community to categorize the Bolivarian government as an authoritarian regime with discriminatory practices.

Consequently, it can be said that the foreign policy promoted by Hugo Chávez was defined by his strong leadership and political will and not necessarily by the professionalism of those with the knowledge and competence to make decisions on these issues. For this reason, the government explored new ways for participation in foreign policy, including political allies, such as military officials, and other public branches beyond the career diplomats at the MoFA. Nevertheless, it excluded various groups in the private sector, civil society, part of academia, and Venezuelan citizens abroad.

Additionally, the diplomatic priorities of Venezuela's foreign policy were to insert the country into a new international context with goals, targets, instruments, and discourses different from previous administrations. Therefore, the presidential and political activism rather than a foreign policy based on agreements has characterized the country's international relations since 1999.

3.4 Synthesis of the most relevant aspects

Since 1999 with the election of Hugo Chavez as President of Venezuela and the promulgation of a new constitution, the country underwent several changes in its institutional architecture. For example, the public branches were increased from three (executive, legislative and judicial) to five, adding the electoral and citizens' powers. Additionally, the national congress, composed of a bicameral structure, was changed to a national assembly made of a unicameral format.

These changes were also reflected in foreign policy. The Chavez's administration designed a new international policy impregnated with new motivations and strategies that differed from previous governments, which maintained a relatively continuous foreign policy based on the Punto Fijo Agreement. However, these changes were not abrupt, as they were unfolding while national and international events developed.

During the period 1999-2006, the Bolivarian government kept fulfilling previous agreements with the U.S., the Andean Community, and the OAS, among other traditional partners. Nevertheless, there was a new conception of multipolarity in which Venezuela started to diversify its strategic alliances and set distance with its traditional ally, the U.S.

However, it was not until 2007, with the beginning of the third constitutional period of Hugo Chavez as President and the establishment of the Simon Bolivar National Project as the new model of development of the nation, that the Chavez's administration took a more radical approach to its foreign policy aiming to establish new poles of power, implement a socialist state, achieve Latin American integration, decrease the U.S influence in the region and become an oil energy power.

In order to achieve these goals, the Bolivarian government implemented different strategies, including diversifying strategic alliances with non-traditional partners such as China, Russia, Africa, and other Asian countries, increasing diplomatic participation in international forums, promoting a new regional architecture through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, CELAC, and Mercosur, diversifying oil markets, fostering SSC, and using soft power through oil diplomacy.

At the bureaucratic level, the MoFA also experienced different changes both in structure and regulations. These changes gave the president of the republic a more preponderant role in the policy-making process, which has been labeled by different analysts as the personalization of foreign policy due to a major concentration of power in the executive branch, in comparison with previous governments.

Additionally, the modifications promoted by President Chavez in the MoFA led to changes in the diplomatic career, which no longer has public contests of merit and opposition for the promotion of diplomats and the recruitment of new diplomatic staff and allowed the president to appoint people outside of the MoFA as chief of diplomatic missions.

Finally, the changes promoted by the Bolivarian government generated tensions with different actors at the national and international levels, which accused President Chavez of having a policy with radical contents, excluding different sectors in the formulation of public policies, concentration of power, and lack of accountability.

Chapter 4

Venezuela's South-South Cooperation initiatives in the regional context

4.1 Introduction

Historically Venezuela has been an advocate and provider of SSC. Moreover, during the period under study, the country had a wide variety of initiatives destined for regional and extra-regional partners. These initiatives ranged from oil supply and economic cooperation with Caribbean partners, security cooperation with South American countries, political concertation in Latin America to educational exchanges and infrastructure building to African countries, as well as cultural and commercial exchanges with China and other Asian nations, among others.

However, despite the increment in political ties and cooperation initiatives between Venezuela and countries of the Global South, the main focus remained in the LAC region. Proof of this can be seen in the information obtained in this research through the interviews with the key informants, the literature review, and official documents. This information reflects that Venezuela subscribed more than 5.000 cooperation agreements from 1999 to 2013, which were majorly channeled through regional organizations such as ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. In addition, as readers will see in chapter 5, Venezuela focused its SSC initiatives on the region, based on the interest of constructing a multipolar world which implied the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a bloc of power through regional integration to diminish the U.S influence in the region.

The establishment of separate initiatives allowed the Venezuelan government to create a new regional architecture to support SSC, which permitted political concertation and economic cooperation while establishing a network of actors that gave added value to this modality of cooperation and placed Venezuela in a relevant position to assume diverse roles and pursue different interests through each one of these organizations. In this context, the country became one of the most proactive SSC providers in the continent through financial disbursements, technical cooperation, political support, and energy cooperation, among others, while promoting the construction of a multipolar world and strengthening its influence anchored in anti-imperialistic rhetoric.

Through each one of these initiatives, a total of 33 states were, in different degrees, participants in SSC during the period under study, a situation that can be interpreted as a support for this modality of international cooperation and, to some extent, to the vision promoted by the Venezuelan government.

Therefore, this chapter examines the scope covered by Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013 and the impacts generated through the region. For this purpose, the chapter is divided into eight sections as follows: 1) The overview of Venezuela's South-South Cooperation in the framework of the Bolivarian Diplomacy 2) The relationship between Venezuela and the closest politically allied nations (ALBA-TCP); 3) The relationship between Venezuela and the Caribbean (PetroCaribe); 4) The relationship between Venezuela and South American nations (UNASUR); 5) The relationship between Venezuela and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC); 6) Venezuela's government evaluation of these initiatives 7) Perceptions of partner countries and other regional actors, and 8) the final section presents a synthesis of the most relevant aspects of these regional organizations concerning Venezuela's SSC.

4.2 The overview of Venezuela's South-South Cooperation in the framework of the Bolivarian Diplomacy

Venezuela is a South American country that shares the heritage of favoring Latin American integration but also shares specific identities with the Andean zone, the Caribbean, and the Amazon sub-region (Mora, 2004).

Hence, since the beginning of its democratic history (1958), Venezuela has been a traditional contributor to SSC modalities. Venezuela is a founding member of the OPEC and the G77; the country was one of the main advocates for a NIEO during the presidency of Carlos Andres Perez and joined the NAM in 1989 (Romero, C, 2002; Dominguez, 2015). At the regional level, Venezuela was a founder member of the Andean Pact, the LAIA, and since 1980 a reliable oil provider to Central America and Caribbean countries through the San Jose Agreement (Lander, 2006; Romero & Curiel, 2009).

In the words of Dominguez, "Venezuela is one of the principal architects of understanding SSC as a collective action for the construction of international coalitions. In this task, Venezuela has utilized since the 1970s financial cooperation from the wealthiness of its largest oil reserves" (2015, p.90).

However, from 1999, the Chavez administration promoted a more proactive foreign policy aiming to break with some of the orientations of previous governments, among those related to engaging in North-South Cooperation initiatives. This new foreign policy translated into a cooperation model characterized by the predominance of the political agenda, highlighting its multipolar rhetoric, distance from technocratic and apolitical approaches promoted by traditional and other emerging donors, aiming for regional integration, and reliance on the oil sector (Ojeda, 2010; Sanahuja & Cienfuegos, 2010).

In this way, it can be said that the Venezuelan case has as distinctive characteristics a remarkably anti-neoliberal dimension and the rejection of the open regionalism promoted by the U.S., which took the country to disengage with the U.S. and its regional allies, leading the country to seek in other neighbors and regional mechanisms the cooperation that was previously demanded from developed countries and international financial institutions. This decision came at a time when Venezuela relied on the greatest availability of financial resources due to a commodity boom, while in parallel, it experimented with the emergence of dense internal political instability.

A review of the official documents, guidelines, and speeches of Hugo Chávez as a head of State, allows us to affirm that, on the one hand, the altruistic discourse of the SSC relied on shared identities and values as a result of the existence of similar challenges, friendship, regional solidarity, and common history.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, the government also openly promoted policies related to the consolidation of regional leadership, the establishment of strategic alliances, the complementarity of economies, affirmation of national sovereignty, prestige, influence, or desire for recognition (Rodríguez, 2013).

Along with the general rhetoric, Hugo Chávez emphasized the strategic dimension that most adequately fits his interests. Venezuela found in SSC an instrument to cement its role as a regional leader based on its active foreign policy and the relative level of development of its energy industry (Oil and byproducts). Similarly, President Chavez used the SSC as a mechanism to spread the triumphs of the socialist revolution, in addition to winning allies in his fight against the neoliberal model promoted by the U.S.

Therefore, Motta and Ríos (2007), Briceño (2014), and Riggiozzi and Tussie (2012) considered that SSC was projected within a national strategy framed with post-liberal and

post-hegemonic characteristics, which allowed the reformulation and reorientation of the regional integration with mechanisms of political consensus and economic cooperation such as the ALBA- TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. These experiences shared “new political motivations” and “the rediscovery of the regional space as a platform for discussion and collective action” (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012).

In this sense, Venezuela attempted to contribute to regional development by providing natural and financial resources, aiming at generating social improvements in LAC countries; but also projecting soft power, focusing on political interests against the developmental paradigms supported by the IMF, the World Bank, and the OECD and trying to diminish U.S. influence in regional affairs.

It is necessary to note that the core of Venezuela’s financing was directed to left-wing oriented governments, such as Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. However, other SSC initiatives were promoted with regional allies of the U.S., such as Colombia and Guyana, through UNASUR, CELAC, and PetroCaribe.

In numbers, the UN, in a report prepared by ECOSOC (2008), estimated that development cooperation provided by Venezuela to partners countries globally ranged between 1,16 and 2,5 billion dollars, a figure that would have been between 0.71% and 1.52% of the country’s GDP and that placed it, together with Saudi Arabia and China, among the three main external non-OECD-DAC donors. In addition, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, this cooperation positioned Venezuela, in terms of GDP percentage, among other OECD countries such as Denmark (0,82% - 2,8 billion dollars), Norway (0,88% - 3,9 billion dollars), Sweden (0,98% - 4,7 billion dollars), even though in net aid the numbers of these countries were higher (OECD, 2009).

Additionally, according to different UNECOSOC estimations, between 1999 and 2009, Venezuela would have transferred resources to its LAC partners with different degrees of concessionality, amounting to \$ 36.4 billion, representing an aid effort of 1.9% of its GDP (Ayllon, 2015, p.154).

The figures should not be surprising, considering that, as pointed out in the introduction of this chapter, more than 5,000 cooperation agreements were signed from 1999 to 2013. Only the development support provided to the PetroCaribe partners would have

represented, in 2011 and 2012, some 4,2 and 4,8 billion dollars, or 1.36% and 1.28%, respectively, of the national GDP, with a positive impact on the signatory countries, on average of 25% of their GDP in the last ten years (SELA, 2015).

Likewise, the strength and vigor of the SSC promoted by Venezuela during 1999-2013 can be evidenced by reviewing the report of the UN Secretary-General on the state of SSC in 2009 to verify that China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela each contributed at least US\$ 1 billion annually.

Despite the proactiveness of the country, it is important to highlight that there is no easy way to measure the exact amount of Venezuelan Cooperation in the LAC region. There is no entity in charge of centralizing, systematizing, and providing accountability on this issue. This situation generates significant difficulties in obtaining accurate data on developmental activities sponsored by Venezuela (Benzi & Zapata, 2013).

Still, this non-traditional experience of foreign policy formulation, with an emphasis on SSC, made social scientists (inside and outside the region) start using new terms to characterize it: post-liberal regionalism (Motta & Ríos, 2007; Sanahuja, 2008), post-hegemonic regionalism (Riggirozzi & Tussie, 2012), new strategic regionalism (Aponte García, 2014; Aponte García & Amézquita Puntiel, 2015), among others.

In short, the number of projects, activities, and the financing mobilized for their execution showed that the period 2007 to 2013 could be considered the golden decade of Venezuela's SSC since the economic resources and the political alliances experienced an incremental trend, at least until the first signs of the economic crisis that have affected the nation in the second decade of the century, and the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013.

4.3 The relationship between Venezuela and the closest politically allied nations (ALBA-TCP)

4.3.1 Origin

The proposal to create the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) arose as an integrationist project promoted by the Venezuelan government presided by Hugo Chavez. Since the beginning of his mandate in 1999, President Chavez raised the idea of establishing a new regional integration mechanism,

understood as a political union that would go beyond the traditional economic approaches of open regionalism, adapting it to the new times and highlighting national sovereignties.

Even though, as Ullan (2012) pointed out, the proposal did not get the intended support during the initial years of his mandate, by 2001, in the framework of the Third Summit of Head of States of the Association of Caribbean states, the proposal started to be seriously taking into account. In this forum, President Chavez proposed again the necessity to promote the regional integration of the LAC countries as an alternative to the proposal promoted by the U.S to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas, also known as ALCA (Free Trade Area of the Americas – FTAA, in English).

However, it was not until December 14th, 2004, when the governments of Venezuela and Cuba, through the signing of an agreement between Presidents Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro, decided to formally apply the Bolivarian Alternative for our Americas (ALBA).

Since its first declaration in La Habana in 2004, “ALBA has been an agreement for the liberation and self-determination of the people against the imperial impositions and the pretensions to hegemonize the culture and economies of our Americas, and against the ALCA and free trade agreements” (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Bolivia, 2009).

Therefore, the ALBA was born as an initiative that pretended to reinforce the self-determination and sovereignty of LAC countries while minimizing the political power of the U.S. and weak its proposal of hemispheric economic integration, transforming the LAC region into a bloc of power with a bigger negotiation capacity (Morales & Morales, 2007; Altmann, 2009).

In 2006, with the election of Evo Morales as President of Bolivia, this country decided to join Venezuela’s initiative since President Morales shared ideological similarities with the Socialism of the 21st century promoted by Hugo Chavez (Ullan, 2012). Hence, with the adhesion of Bolivia as a country member, the People’s Trade Agreement (TCP) was created as an integral part of the Bolivarian Alliance. Consequently, the bilateral initiative (ALBA) was transformed into a multilateral agreement (ALBA-TCP) to achieve LAC political, social, cultural, and economic integration.

4.3.2 Objectives and Scope

ALBA-TCP is a regional platform with a strong political imprint that aimed originally to counteract the ALCA initiative backed up by the U.S government and has maintained its anti-U.S. sentiment through the years, aiming to diminish U.S. influence in the region as well as other initiatives promoted by neoliberal institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the IDB.

In the words of Hernandez and Chaudary (2015):

Initially, the ALBA-TCP was presented with the primary purpose of opposing the neoliberal hegemonic regionalism of regional integration sponsored by the U.S. Subsequently, it evolved into a strategic ideological-political alliance, which calls into question the premises of mercantile integration and gives priority to the social and political component (p.7-8).

Based on official documents from the organization reviewed through the research, it can be said that with the increase in its membership and the emergence of new issues at the regional and global levels, ALBA-TCP has evolved, aiming nowadays to achieve integral development, assure social equality, and contribute to guaranteeing the quality of life, good living, independence, self-determination, and identity of the peoples.

Official documents also express that the ALBA-TCP promotes different principles among its country members. Among these are fair and sustainable development, special and differential treatment, complementarity, cooperation and solidarity, defense of culture and the identity of the peoples of the region, and respect for intellectual property (ALBA-TCP, 2022).

Since its creation in 2004 by the government of Venezuela and Cuba, its membership has progressively increased to ten (10 members), as table 4.1 illustrates:

Table 4.1: ALBA-TCP Membership²⁴

Member States	Joining date
Venezuela	December 14th, 2004
Cuba	December 14th, 2004
Bolivia	April 29th, 2006
Nicaragua	January 11th, 2007
Dominica	January 26th, 2008
Ecuador *	June 24th, 2009
San Vincent and the Grenadines	June 24th, 2009
Antigua and Barbuda	June 24th, 2009
St. Lucía	July 30th, 2013
St. Kitts and Nevis	December 14, 2014
Granada	December 14, 2014

* Ecuador retired in 2018

Source: SELA (2015), ALBA-TCP (2022).

At this point, it is important to highlight that at the time of joining this organization, most of these countries were under the governments of left or center-left-oriented leaders such as Fidel Castro (Cuba), Evo Morales (Bolivia), Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua), Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Ralph Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines), Kenny Anthony (Saint Lucia), Denzil Douglas (St. Kitts and Nevis), which, to some extent, shared a similar ideology and vision with President Chavez.

However, Altmann (2009) argued that “the adhesion of some countries could have been driven by economic interests and benefits resulting from the agreement rather than exclusively ideologic identification” (p.138). In this sense, ALBA-TCP was an attractive organization even for governments that were not aligned with the Venezuelan model because it offered economic benefits to them, and their adherence contributed to Venezuela’s strategy to achieve regional integration.

Still, the strong political alignment of ALBA-TCP can be perceived when comparing this initiative with other organizations like PetroCaribe. Both were backed up by the Venezuelan government and provided financial advantages to partner countries. Nonetheless, ALBA-TCP had a more entrenched anti-imperialist character, while PetroCaribe had a developmental one. Consequently, these different orientations translated into twelve member states joining ALBA-TCP in contrast to the nineteen subscribing to PetroCaribe.

²⁴ There is another category of membership, special guests, which includes Syria, Haiti, and Suriname.

4.3.3 Institutional structure

The most important political and decision-making instance is the Summit of Heads of State and Government. During the period of study (2007-2013), twelve (12) regular summits were held, being Presidents Hugo Chavez (11 appearances), Evo Morales, and Daniel Ortega (8 appearances each) the most active participants as reflected in table 4.2:

Table 4.2: ALBA-TCP Regular Summits²⁵

Regular Summit	Location and date	Participants
I	La Habana, Cuba – December 14th, 2004	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Fidel Castro (Cuba)
II	La Habana, Cuba – April 27th and 28 th , 2005	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Fidel Castro (Cuba)
III	La Habana, Cuba – April 28th and 29 th , 2006	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Fidel Castro (Cuba) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia)
IV	Managua, Nicaragua – January 11th, 2007	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Fidel Castro (Cuba) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua)
V	Tintorero, Venezuela – April 27th and 28 th , 2007	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua) - Vicepresident Carlos Lage Dávila (Cuba) - President Rene Preval (Haiti)
VI	Caracas, Venezuela – January 26th, 2008	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua) - Vicepresident Carlos Lage Dávila (Cuba) - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (Dominica) - Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda) - Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
VII	Cochabamba, Bolivia – October 17 th , 2009	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua) - President Rafael Correa (Ecuador) Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (Dominica) - Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda) - Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) - Vice-president Jose Machado (Cuba)
VIII	La Habana, Cuba 13th and 14 th , 2009	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Raul Castro (Cuba) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua)
IX	Caracas, Venezuela April 19th, 2012	- President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Raul Castro (Cuba) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua) - President Rafael Correa (Ecuador) - Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda) - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (Dominica) - Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines)

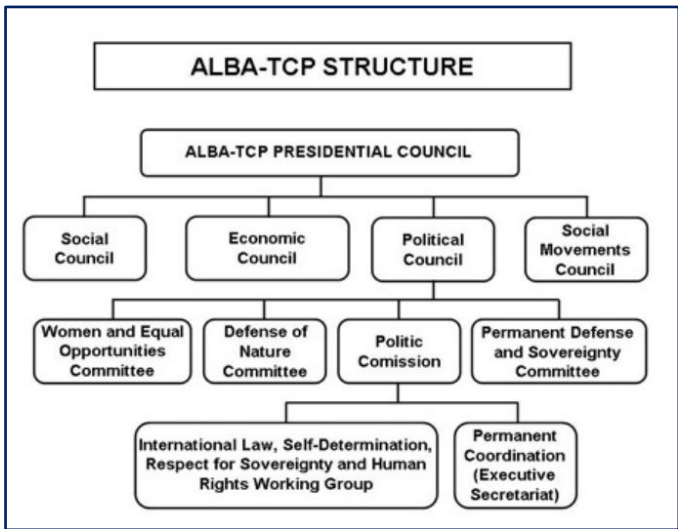
²⁵ ALBA-TCP held seven special summits during the study period, 3 in 2008 and 4 in 2009.

X	Otalvo, Ecuador. June 25th, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Rafael Correa (Ecuador) - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (Dominica) - Vicepresident Esteban Lazo (Cuba)
XI	Caracas, Venezuela. February 4th and 5th, 2012.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President Hugo Chavez (Venezuela) - President Raul Castro (Cuba) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua) - President Rafael Correa (Ecuador) - Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) - Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit (Dominica) - Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer (Antigua and Barbuda)
XII	Guayaquil, Ecuador. July 30th, 2013.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President Nicolas Maduro (Venezuela) - President Evo Morales (Bolivia) - President Rafael Correa (Ecuador) - President Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua)

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Chavez (2008), Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Bolivia (2009), Sputnik (2009), TeleSur (2009), El Universo (2013), Ministerio del Comercio Exterior y la Inversión Extranjera de Cuba (2022)

Additionally, since the organization was conceived initially as a bilateral agreement between Cuba and Venezuela, it did not have a formal structure since its foundation. Therefore, it has been evolving through the years as a forum for agreement and political dialogue and has developed an organizational structure that shapes its actions. Beyond the ALBA-TCP Presidential council, which gathers every time a regular or special summit is held, the organization has also created different councils, such as the Social, Economic, Political, and Social Movements councils, which are also subdivided into committees and commissions, as shown in Figure 4.1. The states are usually represented in these meetings by their foreign affairs ministers or those related to the specific issue area. By 2013, the organizational structure was as follows:

Figure 4.1: ALBA-TCP institutional structure



Source: SELA (2015)

4.3.4 Main instruments of cooperation and projects

4.3.4.1 ALBA-Bank

The ALBA Bank is one of the financial organizations of the alliance. Based on its constitutive agreement, its purpose is to:

Assist with the sustainable social and economic development, reduce poverty and asymmetries, strengthen integration, and promote fair dynamic, harmonic, and balanced exchange among member countries of the ALBA-TCP inspired by the principles of solidarity, complementarity, cooperation, and respect to the sovereignty of peoples (ALBA Bank, 2008, p.10).

The member states of the Bank are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela. This financial institution has its headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela, and one office in la Habana, Cuba.

According to its Constitutive Agreement, the organizational structure is comprised of the Ministerial Council, the Board of Directors, and the General Manager. The Ministerial Council is the supreme body of the Bank, composed of the Ministers of Economy, Treasury, or Finance or the President of the Central Bank of each member country. Likewise, the Board of Directors is integrated by the designated representatives of the state members. Additionally, the General Manager is responsible for the Bank's daily operations for three years.

The Bank performs the following operations:

1. Give credits, credit facilities, bonds, collateral, and other guarantees.
2. Render administration services for portfolios, and organize, constitute, and administer trusts, mandates, and other trustworthy operations.
3. Render treasury services to governmental, inter-governmental and international entities, as well as State, semi-State, and associative entities promoted by the Bank to member countries.

Until 2014, according to SELA (2015), the ALBA Bank financed nine (9) projects with its own funds, for estimates of US\$ 44 million, while managed funds added up to 33 projects for US\$ 300 million, for a total of 42 projects for the estimated amount of US\$ 344 million.

Among the most important projects are financing the construction of a bovine slaughter central in Nicaragua (2011), providing funds to alleviate the effects of natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy in Cuba (2012), renovating and rehabilitating areas for coffee cultivation in Nicaragua (2014), and financing the reconstruction of the Argyle international airport in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2014) (ALBA-TCP, 2022).

Likewise, since its creation in 2009, the bank has allocated funds to non-reimbursable financing of large-scale programs with a high regional impact, such as ALBA Education, ALBA Culture, and ALBA Health. (ALBA-TCP, 2022).

4.3.4.2 ALBA Caribe Fund

The Venezuelan government led the creation of this fund in the framework of the First PetroCaribe Summit of Heads of State and Government in 2005 to contribute to the economic and social development of Caribbean countries. The ALBA Caribe Fund was created within the Petrocaribe framework specifically for ALBA participating countries (Girvan, 2011). This fund comprises “resources from the savings generated by the financing of the oil bill and direct trade, as well as from financial and non-financial instruments” (PDVSA, 2005).

In order to activate the fund, an initial capital of US\$ 50 million was provided by Venezuela. Since 2006, the fund has received multiple contributions, with the most recent one being for US\$ 200 million, agreed at the IX Extraordinary Summit of PetroCaribe, held in Caracas in March 2015 (SELA, 2015).

The ALBA Caribe Fund is administered by the state enterprise PDVSA (Girvan, 2011). Based on its constitutive agreement, PDVSA, with the aim of materializing the operation of the fund, created a subsidiary under the denomination of PDV Caribe. This subsidiary has its office in Caracas, Venezuela, at the headquarters of PDVSA.

Similarly, SELA (2015) reported that by the end of 2014, 88 of 432 PetroCaribe projects were funded through the ALBA-Caribe Fund. Table 4.3 provides a detailed explanation of the projects carried out in member countries and the area of investment:

Table 4.3: Projects of the ALBA-Caribe Fund

Member States ALBA-PETROCARIBE	Areas of investment	Projects of the ALBA-CARIBE Fund
Antigua and Barbuda	Environmental sanitation Tourism	Improvements to international the airport and service of potable water in Antigua.
Belize	Education Health Environmental sanitation Roads Housing	Rural education projects; rural water system, paving of streets and draining systems; project for the increase in the production of food for self-sufficiency and export.
Cuba	Environmental sanitation Endogenous development	
Dominica	Agriculture Sport Education Social economy Environmental sanitation Citizen security Food sovereignty Tourism Roads Housing and habitat	Housing projects; construction of marine defense; programs of the Caribbean territory; poultry, fishing, and pork projects; sewage system; revamping of Melville Hall Airport; program of gas stations to supply fuel for fishermen and remove metal scrap.
Grenada	Culture Tourism Housing and habitat	Urbanism of the community Simon Bolivar Village.
Guyana	Health	Construction of a center for the homeless.
Haiti	Social economy Environmental sanitation Housing	Construction of low-cost housing; acquisition of waste collectors; electricity projects and strengthening of the health program
Nicaragua	Humanitarian aid Sport Ecology Social economy Education Health Environmental sanitation Roads	Environmental sanitation works; improvements of aqueducts, stoves and gas cylinders; roads and housing; equipment for health center; power generation plants.
Dominican Republic	Energy	
St. Kitts and Nevis	Housing and habitat	Construction and expansion of housing.
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Culture Sport Education Social economy Environmental sanitation Tourism Roads Housing and habitat	Sports and fishing infrastructure, housing, rural roads, and aqueducts
Suriname	Culture	

Source: SELA (2015)

4.3.4.3 SUCRE

The Unitary System of Regional Payment Compensation (SUCRE) was founded by Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Cuba in 2010, with the later addition of Nicaragua in 2013. It is a mechanism that serves to channel international payments resulting from reciprocal trade operations between its member countries. This system is based on the use of a virtual currency, “Sucre,” for the registration of operations exclusively between central banks, while local settlement (payments to exporters and collections to importers) is made with the respective local currencies of the member countries (Banco Central de Venezuela, 2018).

According to SELA (2015), 5,657 operations have been registered for approximately 2,007 million Suces (XSU), equal to US\$ 2,509 million, since it entered into force. Additionally, the number of operations performed through the system had a significant increase during the period of study: 6 in 2010; 431 in 2011; 2,646, its historical peak, in 2012; and 2,094 in 2013.

4.3.4.4 Social programs

Since its genesis, ALBA-TCP has implemented cooperation projects aiming to generate improvements in the quality of life of the population of its member countries. Therefore, governments of the alliance, especially Venezuela and Cuba, created social programs oriented at obtaining short and medium-term social effects on the socio-economic profile of Alliance member states.

The most visible projects have been carried out in the fields of health and education. For example, in the framework of the ALBA, Venezuela and Cuba signed in 2005 an integral agreement of cooperation, in which Venezuela compromised to provide Cuba goods and services that include assistance and technical advice from public and private entities, as well as the supply of crude oil and petroleum derivatives, up to a total of fifty-three thousand (53,000) barrels per day.

In exchange, Cuba agreed to:

- Inaugurate in 2005 in Venezuela, 600 comprehensive diagnostic centers and 600 rehabilitation and physiotherapy rooms.
- Train 40,000 doctors and 5,000 health technology specialists in Venezuela.

- Train 10,000 Venezuelan high school graduates from the Venezuelan educational Ribas Mission in Cuban institutions, especially in medicine and nursing.
- Send 30,000 Cuban doctors and other health workers by the end of 2005.
- Surgery in Cuba of 100,000 patients with eye conditions through the "Mision Milagros" program.

Even though it is not clear how the salary of Cuban health workers was paid, the information provided by Oletta (2007) and Voice of America (2011) suggested that the Venezuelan government paid professional fees to the Cuban government, being the latest, the one in charge of administering the payroll for the services.

The findings through the literature review and the interviews also show that another successful cooperation experience was seen in Bolivia, where through the educational programs “Yo Si Puedo” and “Mision Robinson Internacional,” Cuba and Venezuela sent teachers and teaching assistants to provide basic education to Bolivian citizens living in vulnerable areas with the purpose of reducing and eliminating illiteracy.

These ways of engagement were replicated with other member states fostering the exchange of goods, services, and capacities. Hence, from 2007 to 2013, diverse social programs were carried out within the ALBA-TCP in the following sectors:

Table 4.4: Social Programs by Sector

Education
Literacy: Over 3,800,000 people were taught to read and write until 2013, and 1,174,312 people have completed their primary education studies. Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela were declared free of illiteracy by the UNESCO, with the first two having achieved a higher level of literacy, 99% and 99.8%, respectively.
Within the framework of the International Scholarship Programme, scholarships have been awarded to more than 4,000 students from 48 countries in 88 training programs of 36 Venezuelan universities. Until 2013, more than 1,200 students graduated, and 789 came from alliance countries.
Until September 2013, 2,348 students registered with ELAM-Venezuela, while registration at ELAM-Cuba totaled 9,580 students. From the latter, at least 20,789 professionals from 123 countries have graduated, with 8,398 nationals of the Alliance Member States.
Health
International Miracle Mission (2004-2014): 3,482,361 patients were operated, allowing them to recover and improve their visual capability. From that amount, 2,871,043 correspond to patients from the Alliance.
Reduction in the infant mortality rate of children under 5 years by 5.1%.

Programme Genetic, Psychosocial and Clinical Study of Persons with Disabilities: From 2009 to 2011, 3,841,797 households were visited in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela. Until June 2014, 1,285,089 persons with physical and neurological disabilities received medical care in more than 2 million consultations. More than 864.678 technical aids – prosthetics and orthotics – were delivered. Since 2006, more than 8,000 operations have been performed on children.
Since 2006, more than 8,000 operations have been performed on children from Latin America and Africa at the Latin American Children’s Cardiology Hospital Dr. Gilberto Rodríguez Ochoa.
Sports
Celebration of four (4) editions of the ALBA Sports Games, with the participation of 10,532 athletes from 36 countries, in 45 disciplines. A total of 3,066 medals were awarded.

Source: SELA (2015)

The information provided in Table 4.4 is a concrete example of the positive impact on the population of country members of ALBA-TCP under SSC modalities, which go beyond the monetary standard to measure cooperation and include intangible social benefits, such as improvements in health and life quality.

4.4 The relationship between Venezuela and the Caribbean nations (PetroCaribe)

4.4.1 Origin

The use of energy resources, especially oil, is not a new aspect of Venezuela’s foreign policy. The review of previous arrangements between Venezuela and partner countries shows that even though the PetroCaribe agreement represents an innovative platform due to its scope in the number of issues and membership, it originates from two previous agreements: the San Jose Agreement of 1980 and the Caracas Agreement of 2000.

The San Jose Agreement was signed in San Jose, Costa Rica, on August 3, 1980, by the Presidents of Venezuela and Mexico, whereby the two countries mutually committed to supplying the net imported domestic oil consumption of several Central American and Caribbean countries (U.S Department of Energy, 2022). In its original text, the agreement had beneficiaries: Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Barbados, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic. Haiti was included in 1981, and Belize in 1988. (UN-ECLAC, 1994).

The Caracas Agreement, signed in Caracas, Venezuela, on October 19th, 2000, was an agreement between Venezuela, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti,

Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Dominican Republic (Cuba entered on October 30th, 2000), aiming at alleviating the oil bill in the economies of the signatory countries when the international price of oil was high. Within this agreement, Venezuela had the compromise of supply at preferential prices a total of 78.400 oil barrels per day and derived products (Lander, 2006; Koivumaeeki & Rodriguez, 2014).

These two agreements laid the foundations for the creation of PetroCaribe. This initiative materialized when Caribbean high-ranking officials met on June 28th, 2005, in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, and signed the Energy Cooperation Agreement.

Consequently, the foundational agreement defines Petrocaribe as an instrument that enables the development of energy policies and plans aimed at achieving the integration of Caribbean nations through the sovereign use of the region's natural energy resources for the direct benefit of its people (PDVSA, 2005).

4.4.2 Objectives and Scope

PetroCaribe was conceived as an initiative of energy policies and plans, using Venezuela's natural energy resources for its member states' benefit and as a platform for coordinating and managing the energy relations among its members. It can be said that this initiative aimed to achieve energy security and mitigate Caribbean economies' high vulnerability caused by their geographical isolation, the propensity to natural disasters, and heavy dependence on foreign capital.

PetroCaribe set out the following goals to achieve regional energy:

- Offer energy supply with a financial arrangement that would allow supporting social and productive projects.
- Build the infrastructure to manage hydrocarbons in each country.
- Foster transfer of technology and exchange of knowledge through the creation of binational and grand-national mixed enterprises.
- Widen the refining and petrochemical capacities in the region.

(SELA, 2015)

In this direction, according to the Venezuelan MoFA (2016):

Petrocaribe has formed a different scheme in terms of energy cooperation and complementarity since its objectives aim to move far beyond the simple supply of crude oil with payment facilities. Petrocaribe is founded on solidarity and human perspective to achieve one of its core objectives: the elimination of asymmetries and inequalities. This strategy, in the short, medium, and long term, contributes to energy security, socio-economic development, and the union of the peoples of the Caribbean and Central America based on the sovereign use of energy resources (p.27).

Petrocaribe comprises 19 member states, as table 4.5 reflects:

Table 4.5: PetroCaribe member states

Country	Year of adhesion
Antigua and Barbuda	2005
Bahamas	
Belize	
Cuba	
Dominica	
Grenada	
Guyana	
Jamaica	
Dominican Republic	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	
Saint Lucia	
Suriname	
Venezuela	
Haiti	2007
Nicaragua	
Honduras	2008
Guatemala	2012
El Salvador	2014

Source: SELA (2015)

In contrast to ALBA, in which left and center-left governments led most of the member states at the time of adhesion, PetroCaribe encompassed governments with different tendencies. In this direction, Altmann (2009) argued that participation in this initiative did not necessarily imply an ideological-political adherence but rather a willingness to take advantage of the economic opportunities. Consequently, in his view, “this explains why the alba has achieved the support of a limited number of countries, while nearly all the Central American and Caribbean countries participated in Petrocaribe” (p.127).

4.4.3. Institutional Structure

According to the PetroCaribe Energy Cooperation Agreement, the institutional platform of the initiative consisted of two main instances: the Ministry Council, made up of Ministries of Energy or their equivalent of the member states, and an Executive Secretariat that would have been exercised by the Minister of Energy and Petroleum of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela²⁶.

Also, the constitutive agreement established that each of the instances had specific functions specified as follows:

Ministry Council

Coordinating policies, strategies, and plans, deciding the topics of interest of the organization, exercising check and balance to the performance of the Executive Secretary and approving the entrance of new members. This instance normally meets once a year, and in an extraordinary occasion when needed.

Executive Secretariat

Directly managing daily affairs of the organization, ensuring the execution and assessments of the decisions made by the Council of Ministers, and establishing the priority of the projects defined by the Council of Ministers.

²⁶ Additionally, according to SELA (2022), PetroCaribe also had different sectoral organizational structures covering the following areas: 1) Science, technology, and industry; 2) trade; 3) economy; 4) integration and international cooperation; 5) mechanisms of regional integration (ALBA-TCP); 6) energy.

4.4.4 Main instruments of cooperation and projects

4.4.4.1 Long-term finance and payment conditions

From its adoption and based on the San Jose Agreement and the Caracas Agreement, PetroCaribe offered long-term financing to the member states following the mechanism stipulated in its constitutive agreement in 2005. The financing mechanism was slightly adjusted in 2008, as presented in table 4.6:

Table 4.6: Line of financing

2005 conditions		2008 conditions		Condition
Prince per barrel in US\$	% to finance	Prince per barrel in US\$	% to finance	
≥ 15	5	≥ 15	5	2-year grace period 17 years to pay At a 2% interest rate
≥ 20	10	≥ 20	10	
≥ 22	15	≥ 22	15	
≥ 24	20	≥ 24	20	
≥ 30	25	≥ 30	25	
≥ 40	30	≥ 40	30	2-year grace period 25 years to pay At a 1% interest rate
≥ 50	40	≥ 50	40	
≥ 100	50	≥ 80	50	
		≥ 100	60	
		≥ 150	70	

Source: Elaborated by the author based on SELA (2015)

Therefore, member states have 17 years to pay the oil bill, including the two-year grace period, as long as the oil price remains under 40 dollars per barrel. When the price exceeds 40 dollars, the payment period will be extended to 25 years, including the two-year grace period mentioned, reducing the interest to 1%²⁷.

4.4.4.2 PDV Caribe

In September 2005, after the signing of the PetroCaribe Energy Cooperation Agreement, the Venezuelan government founded PDV Caribe, a subsidiary of PDVSA. Beyond

²⁷ For the deferred payment, Venezuela could accept that part of the payment be made with goods and services, for which it would offer preferential prices. The products Venezuela could acquire at preferential prices would be some which like sugar, banana, or other goods or services agreed, are affected by the trade policies of rich countries.

administering the ALBA Caribe fund as explained in section 4.3.4.2 this company plans and executes the activities of transportation, reception, storage, distribution, and commercialization of hydrocarbons, along with the necessary infrastructure projects to ensure the sovereign management of the energy resources in member states (PDVSA, 2005).

The agreement also stipulates that the existence of public companies to conduct energy operations is required in the member countries. Consequently, according to SELA (2015), between 2005 and 2015, eleven public companies were established in partner countries.

4.4.4.3 PetroCaribe in numbers

Based on data provided by SELA (2015), PetroCaribe has promoted energy availability to its member states by meeting, on average, 32% of their oil demand. In other words, from 2005 to 2014, 307 million oil barrels were supplied to 13 member countries, although the main destinations were the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Haiti. The initiative also increased access to energy resources by financing approximately 50% of the oil bills, that is, US\$ 28,000 million, and promoted trade of goods and services of more than US\$ 3,247 million during the same period.

Likewise, SELA (2015) informed that the supply of hydrocarbons to thirteen countries under a quota of 129 thousand barrels per day was based on the following distribution:

Table 4.7: Quotas and supply of fuel to PetroCaribe member states

2015 and Thousands of barrels per day (MBD)

Country	Quota	2015 average	% Performance
Dominican Republic	30	7.5	25
Jamaica	23.5	20.7	88
Nicaragua	27	22.3	83
Haiti	14	20.7	148
Guyana	5.2	4.9	94
Antigua and Barbuda	4.4	1.8	40
Grenada	1	0	0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1.2	0	0
Dominica	1	0.3	26
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	0	0
Belize	4	3.2	80
Suriname	10	1.6	16
El Salvador	7	12.9	184
Total	129	96	74.4

Source: SELA (2015)

Additionally, data from other sources such as the UN-ECLAC (2014) and the IMF (2015) indicated that Petrocaribe financing averaged from 2.5 to 3.5 percent of importing countries' GDP and about 6% of GDP for the small islands of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in 2014. Consequently, countries like Guyana, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Belize showed a larger impact on their GDP at 4.7%, 4.3%, 4.1%, and 3.5%, respectively.

Moreover, in the social area, a total of 432 projects that account for US\$ 3,944 million in investment were implemented by PetroCaribe since its creation until 2014. These projects are reflected in table 4.8:

Table 4.8: PetroCaribe Projects and Investments

Sector/activity	No. Projects	Investment Total%
Home sectors	41	34%
Housing, habitat and, road construction	115	21%
Institutional strengthening	44	12%
Production sectors	33	11%
Agriculture and food	45	10%
Education	31	4%
Environment	23	2%
Social welfare and assistance	19	2%
Public service	20	2%
Culture and sports	50	1%
Health	11	1%
Total	432	100%

Source: SELA (2015)

4.5 The relationship between Venezuela and South American nations (UNASUR)

4.5.1 Origin

The origins of UNASUR can be traced to the first Meeting of the Presidents of South America in 2000, in Brazil, and the creation of the Community of South American Nations during the Third Summit of South American Presidents in Cuzco, Peru, on December 8th, 2004. The Community of South American Nations was established to bring together two regional platforms: MERCOSUR and the Andean Community (Parish, 2012; Servicio Nacional de Aduana del Ecuador, 2022).

Later in April 2007, at the 1st South American Energy Summit held in Margarita, Venezuela, the government representatives decided to change the name of the Community of South American Nations to the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

However, it was not until May 3rd, 2008, at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Heads of State and Government, held in Brasilia, Brazil, that the representatives of the 12 member states signed the Constitutive Treaty of the bloc. (UN South-South Galaxy, 2022). The Constitutive Treaty entered into force on March 11th, 2011, with the ratification and the deposit of the instrument by Uruguay as nine of the twelve signatory states (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2022).

4.5.2 Objectives and scope

It can be said that UNASUR is an intergovernmental organization comprised of 12 South American governments, created with the conception of the European Union model to achieve regional integration. World Bank figures for 2011 showed that the sum of its country members' GDP was worth more than \$4.1 trillion, placing the regional bloc as the world's fourth largest economy after the U.S, China, and Japan (Parish, 2012). Likewise, an ECLAC report (2014) showed that the combined GDP of UNASUR members represents 6.1% of world GDP, measured in dollars at purchasing power parity.

Its general and specific objectives are reflected in its constitutive agreement. In this sense, article 2 states that:

The objective of the Union of South American Nations is to build, in a participatory and consensual manner, an integration and union among its peoples in the cultural, social, economic, and political fields, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing, and the environment, among others, with a view to eliminating socio-economic inequality, in order to achieve social inclusion and participation of civil society, to strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of strengthening the sovereignty and independence of the States (UNASUR, 2008).

Likewise, article 3 states specific objectives such as the strengthening of the political dialogue among the Member States, the eradication of poverty and illiteracy in the region, the achievement of energy integration, the development of infrastructure for continental

interconnection, financial integration, the protection of biodiversity, the consolidation of a South American identity, economic and commercial cooperation, the promotion of cultural diversity, the exchange of information and experiences in matters of defense, among others

This regional organization, during the period of study (2007-2013), had twelve member states: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These member states all ratified the Constitutive Treaty during 2009-2011.

Even though most of the member states of UNASUR were led, during the study period, by the left and center-left governments, and there was a common goal towards South American integration, this regional organization was, to some extent, the stage of the confluence of two different development models promoted by the governments of Brazil and Venezuela (Ríos Sierra, 2011; Borda, 2012; Bautista, 2014).

On one side, the Brazilian government led by President Lula saw in UNASUR a new way of international insertion with an autonomous character, reinforcing the strategic positioning of the South American region and the Brazilian regional leadership (Bautista, 2014).

Hence, through UNASUR, Brazil adopted a pragmatic approach aiming to reinforce other regional organizations in which it already had an established leadership, such as MERCOSUR and the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA). However, even though Brazil aimed to portray the role of regional power, it tried to keep steady relationships with other actors like the U.S while respecting the scope of other organizations like the OAS and the Andean Community.

On the other hand, when analyzing Venezuela's engagement in this initiative, we can see that President Chavez's government had a more radical proposal for this organization, promoting it as an alternative to the neoliberal practices of the Andean Community and Mercosur with a strong anti-U.S. character.

Special mention must be given to the topic of security and defense from the Venezuelan perspective. Throughout the South American Defense Council, Venezuela attempted to create a South Atlantic Treaty Organization proposing a South American Army to defend

the region against external threats. However, “President Chávez’s vision, shared by Bolivia and to a lesser degree by Ecuador, implied a clear confrontation with the U.S., a stand that was neither shared nor promoted by Brazil” (Borda, 2014. p.3).

Despite these dissimilar approaches, Brazil with a pragmatic approach and Venezuela with a more radical approach, the personal relationship between Presidents Chavez and Lula and the interests of both countries in achieving regional integration and reinforcing the role of the South American region in global politics allowed compromises between these two actors within the UNASUR.

4.5.3 Institutional Structure

UNASUR’s institutional structure is given by its constitutional agreement. In this sense, Article 4 establishes that the organization’s bodies are: the Council of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Delegates, and the General Secretariat.

Likewise, article 5 states that “Sectoral Ministerial Meetings and meetings of the Councils at Ministerial level, Working Groups and other institutional levels may be convened as required on a permanent or temporary basis.”

Moreover, article 7 institutes the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Union, which “will be held successively by each of the Member States, in alphabetical order, for periods of one year.”

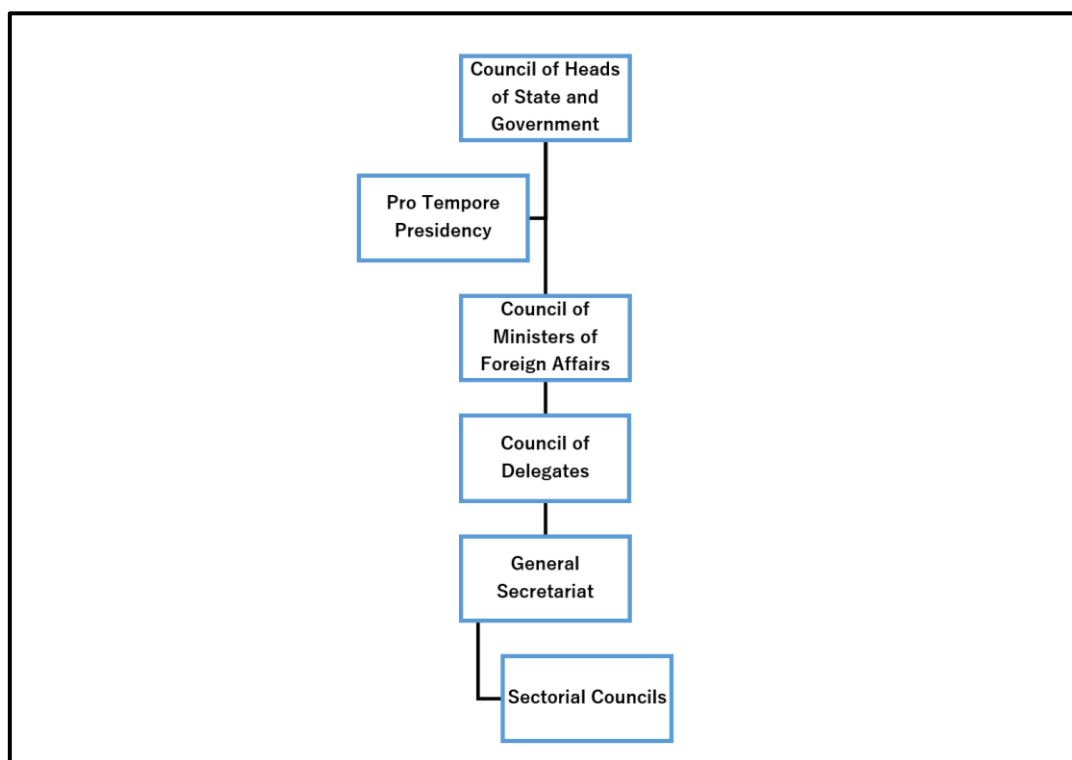
UNASUR has had four Secretary Generals since its conception in 2008: Nestor Kirchner (Argentina) from May to October 2010, Maria Emma Mejia (Colombia) from May 2011 to June 2012, Alí Rodríguez Araque (Venezuela) from June 2012 to August 2014, and Ernesto Samper (Colombia) from 2014 to 2017.

Besides the institutional structure reflected in the constitutive agreement and based on the guidelines established in article 5, member states agreed on the creation of the following instances at the ministerial level: South American Defense Council, South American Council of Health, Electoral Council of UNASUR, South American Energy Council, South American Council of Science, Technology and Innovation, South American Council of Culture, South American Council of Social Development, South American Council of Economy and Finance, South American Council for Education, South

American Council for Infrastructure and Planning, South American World Drug Problem Council, South American Council for Citizen Safety, Justice and Coordination of actions against Transnational Organized Crime.

Consequently, figure 4.2 illustrates the institutional structure of UNASUR based on the guidelines established by its constitutive agreement:

Figure 4.2: UNASUR Institutional Structure



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

4.5.4 Main initiatives

Since its foundation in 2008, UNASUR has promoted numerous projects in different fields, including security and defense, health, electoral processes and democracy, and regional finance. Table 4.9 explains some of the most important projects achieved through this regional organization:

Table 4.9: UNASUR's main initiatives

Field	Project / Year / Location	Aim
Security and Defense	South American School of Defense (2015), Quito, Ecuador.	It seeks to instruct on defense and security issues, both at the civil and military level, following the principles of a regional strategic vision.
	Centre for Strategic Defense Studies (2011), Buenos Aires, Argentina,	It aims to coordinate and harmonize regional defense and security policies in South America through joint strategic thinking.
Health	South American Government Institute of Health (2011), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.	It is an inter-governmental organization of a public nature that promotes the dissemination of knowledge in health and high-level human resources training.
Electoral processes and democracy	Electoral Mission: 2015 - Suriname - Venezuela - Guyana - Bolivia 2014 - Bolivia - Colombia - Ecuador 2013 - Venezuela - Paraguay - Ecuador 2012 - Venezuela	The observation and accompaniment of electoral processes of member states in an Electoral Mission of UNASUR.
Regional finances	Bank of the South (2009), Caracas, Venezuela	Its purpose is to finance the economic and social development of the region in a balanced and stable manner, using intra- and extra-regional savings, strengthening integration, reducing asymmetries, and promoting the equitable distribution of investments within the member countries of the bank.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Bank of the South (2007) and SELA (2015)

Additionally, through the South American Council for Infrastructure and Planning, the member States promoted diverse projects related to infrastructure development and land, aerial, and maritime interconnection. Table 4.10 contains the information delivered at the V Regular Meeting of the Council in December 2014, indicating the number of projects and investments assigned to each of the nine Axis of Integration and Development established in the region.

Table 4.10

COSIPLAN PORTAFOLIO PROJECTS²⁸				
At September 2014				
	N° of projects		Estimated investment	
Axis	N°	% of total	Mio US\$	% of total
Amazon Axis	82	14.2	25,070.2	15.3
Andean Axis	64	11.1	9,962.1	6.1
Capricorn Axis	83	14.3	17,929.5	11.0
Guyanese Shield Axis	20	3.5	4,581.3	2.8
Paraguay-Parana Waterway Axis	95	16.4	7,574.4	4.6
Central Interoceanic Axis	61	10.5	8,907.6	5.5
MERCOSUR-Chile Axis	123	21.2	54,608.3	33.4
Peru-Brazil-Bolivia Axis	25	4.3	32,131.9	19.7
Axis of the South	28	4.8	2,744.6	1.7
TOTAL*	579	100.3	163,324.5	100.1

*There are two “articulating” projects that form part of two axes. Therefore, the totals for the number of projects and estimated investment do not match the arithmetic addition of the corresponding columns.

Source: SELA (2015)

4.6 The relationship between Venezuela and the Latin American and Caribbean Nations (CELAC)

4.6.1 Origin

It can be said that CELAC has its origin in the Rio Group–Caribbean Community Unity Summit, held in Cancun, Mexico, on February 23, 2010. There, Latin American and Caribbean Heads of Government and State approved the creation of a new regional organization that merged two previous platforms: the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development and the Rio Group.

Firstly, the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development was established in December 2008 with the purpose of advancing in the articulation of integration processes and fostering and strengthening the development of Latin American and Caribbean countries (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia, 2022).

²⁸ Composition by sector of the Portfolio of Projects: 89.1% of the projects and 66.5% of the investments in this Portfolio corresponded to projects in the sector of transport, while energy projects accounted for 9.3% and 33.5%, respectively. Ground transportation projects took precedence in the Portfolio with almost half of the initiatives, and over 50% of the investment of the sector, followed by the projects of the railroad, marine, and fluvial transportation, in order of importance. The Portfolio for the sector of communications represented less than 2% of the number of projects, and its investment amount was estimated at US\$ 41.6 million (SELA, 2015, p.31).

Similarly, the Rio Group was a permanent mechanism for consultation and political coordination among Latin American and Caribbean countries. It was created in Rio de Janeiro in December 1986 as a result of the merger of the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group. At the time of its foundation, it aimed to analyze and propose solutions to the political crises and civil wars in Central America (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, 2022).

Consequently, CELAC was officially inaugurated by President Hugo Chavez on December 3, 2011, in Caracas, Venezuela, with the signature of the Declaration of Caracas, which conceives it as an intergovernmental organization for dialogue and political agreement, encompassing the thirty-three countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

O'Boyle (2015) pointed out that:

The late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, one of CELAC's biggest champions, qualified the nascent group as an effort to challenge the "interference" of the United States. Venezuela and Cuba's leadership roles in the bloc led some to describe the group as an attempt to reject U.S. influence.

Like O'Boyle, other international relations and political analysts have seen the creation of CELAC as an initiative to counteract the OAS and diminish the U.S influence in the region since this regional body includes Cuba, which is not part of the OAS and excluded the governments of the U.S. and Canada (Segovia, 2013; O'Keefe, 2020; Norton, 2021; Kilroy Jr, 2022).

4.6.2 Objectives and scope

The information obtained through the interviews with the key informants, the literature review, and official documents reflect that CELAC was born as an alternative to the OAS and U.S. influence in the region. It also seeks to represent the interests of a wider set of actors since it includes countries from ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, MERCOSUR, the Andean Community, and Caricom, generate political consultation, and achieve political consensus to express the voice of the region as one.

In this sense, the document entitled "Procedures for the Organic Operation of CELAC" establishes that:

CELAC members decided to build a common space with the aim of deepening political, economic, social, and cultural integration of our Region, to revitalize and to strengthen the regional unity, by establishing goals and mechanisms compatible with its reality, as well as to develop ties of solidarity and cooperation among the Latin-American and Caribbean countries (CELAC, 2011, p.1).

In this line, SELA (2022) summarizes the scope of CELAC in 5 main points: 1) It is a mechanism of dialogue and political concertation; 2) It is an articulating mechanism that works based on consensus; 3) It is a forum to advance towards the convergence of actions and common interests; 4) It is a platform that facilitates a major presence of the Latin American and Caribbean region in the world; 5) It is and space to face common challenges.

Regarding its membership, this regional organization comprises the 33 states of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Granada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, San Kitts & Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

4.6.3 Institutional Structure

The institutional structure of CELAC is also drawn in the document entitled “Procedures for the Organic Operation of CELAC” which determined that the organization is comprised by the following bodies:

- The Summit of Heads of State and Government
- Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
- Pro Tempore Presidency
- Meeting of National Coordinators
- Specialized Meetings
- Troika

Until 2021, seven CELAC Summits have taken place:

Table 4.11: CELAC Summits

Summit	Year	Location
Foundational Summit	2011	Caracas, Venezuela
I Summit	2013	Santiago, Chile
II Summit	2014	Havana, Cuba
III Summit	2015	Belen, Costa Rica
IV Summit	2016	Quito, Ecuador
V Summit	2017	Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
IV Summit	2021	Mexico City, Mexico

Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

4.6.4 Main instruments of cooperation and projects

Since its foundation, the CELAC has served as a platform to promote and deepen political dialogue among Latin American and Caribbean countries in different areas that affect the region, such as social and economic development, education, nuclear disarmament, culture, energy, and the environment.

Additionally, based on its mandate, CELAC works as the unified voice of the region on issues of political consensus, being the only regional body that can promote and project the voice of Latin America and the Caribbean in the discussion of critical global issues, aiming to achieve a more successful insertion and positioning of the region at the international level (CARICOM, 2022).

Hence, the role as a regional political consensus builder allows the organization to act as a spokesman for the community with other countries and regional blocs, including the EU-CELAC summit, the China-CELAC forum, dialogues with Russia, South Korea, Arab States, Turkey, and Japan, among others.

Some of the most important projects and cooperation initiatives between the CELAC and other international actors are presented as follows:

E.U-CELAC Summit

The E.U-CELAC summit, established in January 2013, is the main forum for dialogue and cooperation between Europe and Latin American and Caribbean states. Official information reflects that during the first summit in 2013, the government representatives

focused on trade collaboration and the promotion of investments in social and environmental quality.

Likewise, at the second summit celebrated in 2015, leaders agreed to improve cooperation on three major global issues: climate change, the post-2015 development agenda, and the fight against drugs. The summit also sought to deepen political dialogue on citizen-oriented initiatives related to innovation for sustainable growth, education, security, and climate change. Additionally, the EU announced an investment of 25 million euros to the improvement of broadband trans-Atlantic connectivity between the Latin American and Caribbean region and the EU (European Council, 2018).

The China-CELAC Forum

The China-CELAC forum was created during the China-Latin America and the Caribbean Summit held in Brasilia on July 17th, 2014. There, the representatives of the involved parties decided to hold the first Ministerial Meeting in Beijing in January 2015, where the platform was officially launched.

During the creation of the forum, President Xi Jinping announced an economic package for US\$ 35 billion towards the region, which consists of three parts: “a Preferential Loan of US\$ 10 billion, a Special Loan Program for China-LAC Infrastructure Project of US \$20 billion, and China-LAC Cooperation Fund of US \$5 billion” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2016, p.39).

The Chinese President also expressed that China “would provide CELAC countries with 6,000 governmental scholarships, 6,000 training opportunities, and 400 opportunities for on-the-job master’s degree programs in China between 2015 and 2019” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2016, p.51). Additionally, in 2015, China created a 10-year training program aimed at the formation in different fields of 1000 young regional leaders.

Moreover, by the end of 2015, China opened 39 Confucius Institutes and 18 Confucius Classrooms in 20 LAC countries, seeking to promote education and human resources training as an integral part of the cooperation between the parties involved.

Other instruments:

- In September 2013, within the framework of the UN General Assembly, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CELAC and Japan held the first Japan-CELAC Foreign Ministers' Meeting, where the parties expressed their willingness to promote political dialogue and explore possible areas of cooperation.
- In September 2015, representatives of CELAC and the Russian government decided to establish the Permanent Mechanism for Political Dialogue and Cooperation, called the Russia-CELAC Mechanism, aimed at strengthening and diversifying cooperation between the Russian Federation and CELAC and at developing a political dialogue.
- In April 2017, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CELAC and Turkey launched the Turkey-CELAC Political Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism in order to increase dialogue and deepen relations between Turkey and CELAC on areas of common interest.

Sources: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2013) and CELAC (2015) (2017)

4.7 Venezuela's government evaluation of these initiatives.

At the moment of conducting interviews with government officials, the author had the opportunity to inquire about the role of these four organizations (ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC) in promoting Venezuela's SSC and consequently obtain their evaluation of these initiatives.

In this direction, the evaluation obtained from the interviews shows a positive perception, as we can observe in the following statements:

For example, the Venezuelan Ambassador to Japan, Mr. Ishikawa²⁹ stated that:

The role of these organizations was huge since these are spaces of articulation that were created at the regional level to advance not only in cooperation among Latin American and Caribbean nations but also to conform new ideas about the new model of integration that was emerging in the region, which goes beyond the narrow vision of economic and commercial topics and covers other elements to bring well-being to

²⁹ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on November 25th, 2021

the population. These organizations started to create a doctrinaire body seeking to shield the region and to conform an important pole within the new international balance.

Likewise, the Secretary of the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, Ambassador Duarte³⁰, said that:

ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC became options for Latin American regionalism, which projects are expressions of Venezuela's foreign policy led by President Hugo Chavez. The objectives of these organizations seek, in the framework of SSC, to reinforce the sovereignty and self-determination of the people and counteract the economic and military policies that are driven by the U.S. and some international organizations.

Furthermore, the former Venezuelan Ambassador to India, Mr. Montiel³¹, when assessing the positive impact of these initiatives, mentioned specific examples of the successes of these organizations:

The existence of the International School of Medicine allowed students from all over the world to come to Venezuela and become doctors, and Venezuela paid for that; students had to pay nothing since it ran under the Venezuelan budget completely.

Also, these organizations have created bases for relations with other regions. CELAC has signed agreements with India, Africa, and institutions in Asia and North America despite the counter actions, sabotage, and attempts to make them invisible by world powers.

These, among other impressions, confirm the positive assessment made by Venezuelan government officials, who highlighted the role of these organizations in promoting regional integration and political consultation, creating a collective identity of Latin American and Caribbean countries, diminishing the U.S. influence and neoliberal models promoted by international organizations such as the IMF in the region, and bringing tangible benefits to the population.

³⁰ Interview through personal communication via written response, received on October 18th, 2021

³¹ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on September 18th, 2021

In addition, it is also possible to observe that in the view of the Venezuelan government officials, the leadership and political thought of President Hugo Chavez had a crucial role in the conformation and development of these initiatives and in the political imprint that characterized these organizations.

4.8 Perceptions of partner countries and other regional actors.

Additionally, throughout the process of in-depth interviews with the key informants from the government, academic and media sectors, the author inquired about the perception of partner countries and other regional actors regarding Venezuela's SSC through these four initiatives.

Some of the most relevant quotes are shown as follows in order to have a better understanding of the perception of Venezuela's SSC in the region.

For example, the Venezuelan Ambassador to the U.N, Mr. Constant³², stated that:

There is a double perception. Firstly, there is a perception of support; we were in a golden moment for the regional left, and consequently, there was an enormous feeling of empathy in the LAC region to strengthen these newly created spaces. This situation generated a complementarity and complicity of regional leaderships to our vision. On the other hand, some countries and actors had double visions, a perception of support but simultaneously a perception of jealousy toward Venezuelan leadership.

Similarly, Colonel Gonzalez³³, former Venezuelan Military attaché to Ecuador, highlighted that "partner countries and other regional actors (particularly left-oriented) received with great approval the opportunities that were opened with the activation of these agreements of SSC."

Likewise, Professor Angarita³⁴ expressed that "From partner countries, there was gratitude. The existence of cooperation and policies that promoted the recipient's economy more than the Venezuelan economy was always supported." Furthermore, the

³² Interview through personal communication via Zoom on June 8th, 2022

³³ Interview through personal communication via written response, received on November 8th, 2021

³⁴ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 12th, 2021.

journalist Colomine³⁵ said that: "in general terms, the perception was positive. However, some of the countries retired from political reasons, defending Mercosur, the IDB, and more recently ProSur".

The answers show that there is a consensus within the key informants of the three sectors about the positive perception that the cooperation initiatives promoted by Venezuela had in partner countries. In this sense, it can be inferred that Venezuela was seen as a reliable partner for cooperation in the majority of Latin American and Caribbean countries, especially in those where left-wing oriented governments were in power, which for the period of study represented the majority of South American countries.

In the view of Venezuela's partners, the cooperation offered by this country aimed to achieve mutual benefit for the involved countries, and it helped to improve the conditions in different sectors, such as health and education, as well as infrastructure upgrades, energy security, and booster for economic growth.

The positive perception can also be validated by the opinions expressed by regional heads of State when talking about Venezuela's SSC. For example, in 2005, Argentine President Nestor Kirchner, in a bilateral meeting held in Argentina with President Chavez, stated:

I have complete confidence in your concepts, in your vision, in the understanding that it is essential, based on the relative truth of each of our countries and their relative needs, to find the space that will allow us to decisively contain the region and turn it into a voice in the world, where we are definitely taken into account as a region with common ideas, with common interests and integrated with solidarity. It is up to us to find answers to that challenge (Casa Rosada – Presidencia, 2005).

Likewise, President Evo Morales, in a visit to Caracas, in 2006, when asked about his opinion of Venezuela's initiatives, said, "I am really surprised by these proposals, by these initiatives, which I had not even thought about, I had not imagined such support based on principles" (Todo Chavez en la Web, 2006).

Similarly, Brazilian President Lula Da Silva, in a bilateral meeting with President Chavez celebrated in Brasilia in 2010, declared, "I have no doubts about the politics of Venezuela.

³⁵ Interview through personal communication via written response, received on March 3rd 2022

The relationship between Venezuela and Brazil is irreversible,” adding that “I am aware that Venezuela has become an incredible partner for Brazil and the whereabouts of many Brazilian businessmen who are making money and increasing the standard of industrialization” (Notimerica, 2010)

Also, in a bilateral summit between the heads of State of Ecuador and Venezuela, celebrated in 2011, in Santa Elena, Ecuador, when asked about the impact that the cooperation between Venezuela and Ecuador would have on the population, President Rafael Correa expressed:

Of course, the agreements we have signed —otherwise, we would not sign them— contribute to good living. We have given an example of how the agreements benefit. For example, only the exchange of crude oil for derivatives, the country (Ecuador) has saved more than 330 million dollars. We have the lubricant factory at lower prices, which is increasing its market share every time. We are building the Pacific Refinery together; in case there is not enough oil in Ecuador, it will be oil from Venezuela that is refined. In other words, there are strategic complementarities, right? So, of course, all these things are extremely important for the good life of our two countries (Todo Chavez en la Web, 2011).

These are only a few examples of the different statements made by regional leaders that show the positive perception of Venezuela’s SSC throughout the region. Moreover, the deeply personal relationship between President Chavez and other regional leaders like Fidel Castro in Cuba, Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez in Argentina, Lula Da Silva in Brazil, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Jose Mujica in Uruguay, Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay, and Evo Morales in Bolivia, fostered political alliances and helped to create the image of a common multipolar political project shared by all these nations fostering the positive perception of Venezuela’s cooperation throughout the continent.

Nonetheless, according to some key informants such as Romero, Corrales³⁶, Garcia³⁷, and Naim³⁸, even though the perceptions based on the partner countries’ official positions

³⁶ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on December 15th, 2021.

³⁷ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on June 3rd, 2022.

³⁸ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on February 10th, 2022.

were positive, Venezuela's SSC also generated a negative perception in the opposition political forces inside these countries since it was seen as political cooperation used to maintain left-wing political allies in power instead of bringing tangible results for economic and social development, situation to which some extent translated in an anti-Venezuelan sentiment in Latin American political sectors opposed to President Hugo Chavez.

Additionally, there was a consensus among the key informants that in countries that prioritized their relationship with the U.S. and where the governments were not aligned with the progressist model promoted by left-wing-oriented governments, Venezuela's SSC had a negative perception. Consequently, countries like Colombia under presidents Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010) and Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018), Mexico under President Felipe Calderon (2006-2012), and Chile under the first presidency of Sebastian Piñera (2010-2014), perceived Venezuela's SSC as a tool of President Chavez for the promotion of a political model, generate ideological alliances, and diminish the U.S influence in the region.

4.9 Synthesis of the most relevant aspects

The Venezuelan government, during the study period, took diverse approaches to the promotion of SSC through the regional organizations analyzed in this chapter (ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC), each one linked to an identity and a form of relationship that aimed to promoted Venezuela's interests in the region and globally.

ALBA-TCP and PetroCaribe were Venezuela's flag initiatives for the promotion of SSC at the regional level since Venezuela was the main founder member and the country with more economic and political weight within these organizations.

Firstly, ALBA-TCP came into the scene as an alternative to the ALCA promoted by the U.S. Since its genesis, this organization aimed to promote a new kind of trade, as opposed to the free trade agreements, based on the strengths and commonalities of its member countries. Nevertheless, with time Venezuela promoted a holistic approach within this organization to establishing SSC, which addressed different topics such as education, trade, investment, humanitarian assistance, and cultural and sports exchanges, among other areas. This organization holds a strong political component characterized by its anti-imperialist rhetoric.

However, despite the strong anti-imperialist rhetoric and the close political alignment of its member states, the cooperation provided by Venezuela through this organization generated tangible results for the population of these countries. Among the most important ones are the declaration by the UNESCO of Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela as territories free of illiteracy, the graduation of more than 20 thousand professionals from 123 countries from the Latin American School of Medicine, more than 3 million people have received eye surgery to improve their visual capacity, and many other projects were financed in the different fields such as agriculture, sport, food sovereignty, tourism, roads, infrastructure building, and housing and habitat.

Secondly, PetroCaribe, which has its origin in previous bilateral agreements, was reinforced by the Venezuelan government, firstly with Cuba and later extended to several Caribbean countries to achieve regional energy self-reliance and diminish the energy dependence of Caribbean countries on the U.S.

Venezuela used PetroCaribe to take advantage of its strength as an oil country and foster energy cooperation at a time when the oil prices in the international market recorded a significant rise. Through this agreement, partner countries received Venezuela's oil, gas, and other hydrocarbon commodities at preferential prices or in exchange for other goods produced by these countries.

As well as ALBA-TCP, despite the political motivations that could have been behind these organizations, based on official data from international organizations such as SELA, the IMF, or UN-ECLAC, the energy cooperation and long-term finance schemes established by Venezuela caused a positive impact on Caribbean economies, helping them to have economic growth. This impact was more evident in small Caribbean countries like Guyana, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Belize, where the impact on the GDP was at 4.7%, 4.3%, 4.1%, and 3.5%, respectively.

Venezuela was also an active promotor of SSC projects through UNASUR and CELAC. Following its ideas and interests, Venezuela saw in these organizations a way to achieve regional integration, decrease the U.S. influence in the region, and promote the construction of a multipolar world.

The Venezuelan government bet on UNASUR as an integrationist project that included all South American countries, without distinction of political orientation. This

organization, while it was conceived to some extent with the conception of traditional models of integration, such as the one of the European or African Union, encompassed a wide variety of issues such as political dialogue among country members, health, social development, infrastructure and planning, economy and finances, education, culture, science technology and innovation, and security and military cooperation.

However, because of the larger membership of these organizations and the economic weight of countries like Brazil and Argentina, Venezuela's influence on the initiatives developed by these platforms was not as marked as in ALBA-TCP or PetroCaribe.

Still, for President Chavez's administration, the creation of the South American Council of Defense represented an important political victory since it established a new collective doctrine of security and defense beyond the traditional one historically promoted by the U.S., where this country played a preponderant role under the concept of the war on drugs and the contention of the communist.

Also, Venezuela actively participated in CELAC, which became the principal hemispheric forum for political concertation and coordination. This organization was conceived as an alternative to the OAS to address regional issues without the interference of North American countries. The creation of CELAC allowed major political dialogue between Latin American and Caribbean governments on different topics and offered a unitary platform to achieve better negotiation conditions with other nations and regional blocs.

Moreover, and not exclusively to Venezuela, UNASUR and CELAC have also brought benefits to other countries in the region. For example, through UNASUR, the member States promoted numerous infrastructure projects to develop new land, aerial, and maritime interconnection and improve the previously existent. Likewise, through CELAC, the region has achieved new partnerships such as the EU-CELAC Summit or the CELAC-China Forum, which bring new availability of resources through FDI, new commercial opportunities, and other projects aimed at improving the existing socio-economic conditions in the region.

Chapter 5

Contextualizing what is decontextualized in Venezuela's South-South Cooperation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data and information obtained through the in-depth interview process developed during this research. It aims to generate a resignification throughout a new characterization of Venezuela's SSC during the period under study, based on the commonalities found through the different visions of a selected group of key informants who played an active role in the different phases of the Venezuelan foreign policy, and especially, in the SSC policy.

Resignification refers to giving a different meaning to Venezuelan SSC from the commonly accepted, based on a new understanding of it, from the point of view of the involved social actors, which allows giving a new meaning to the Venezuelan SSC initiatives after a different interpretation from previous studies in this area.

In this direction, the chapter provides the results of the analysis made by the author following this structure 1) Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the governmental sector, 2) Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the academic sector, 3) Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the media sector, 4) Result of the analysis, and 5) Resignification of Venezuela's SSC.

For the purpose of this study, a vision here is understood based on what Ferraotti (1986) defined as a "historical horizon," which constitutes a point of view, of departure, of approaching complex processes that constitute the reality of study and that situate the path to generate the analysis and consequently located the epistemic position of the author.

Therefore, the key informants' visions of the SSC policy allowed the author to understand the complexity of the object of study through its intricate and complex dialectic. In this direction, whichever was the vision assumed by each informant, every one of them provided inputs to the reconceptualization and construction of a broader vision of the Venezuelan SSC and the understanding of the different points of view regarding Venezuelan foreign policy from 2007 to 2013.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that previous studies on Venezuela's SSC have mainly focused on specific and individual initiatives³⁹, such as ALBA-TCP and UNASUR, rather than analyzing all of them as part of a comprehensive foreign policy. In addition, the main focus has been centered on understanding these initiatives through the perspective of a new wave of regionalism⁴⁰ in Latin America and the Caribbean and not as a part of SSC policies promoted by a State, in this case, Venezuela with the support and coordination with other states of the region.

Moreover, the few studies⁴¹ that focus on Venezuela's SSC from the perspective of foreign policy usually relied on secondary sources for their analysis rather than the vision of the policymakers of the study period and the perception of other national and international sectors.

Hence, to generate a resignification of Venezuela's SSC policy in the period of study and avoid the biases of specific political sectors, the author conducted forty (40) interviews with three (3) sectors of key informants, grouped as follows:

Table 5.1: Key Informants' sectors⁴²

Sector	Quantity
Governmental actors (High-ranking officials of the Venezuelan MoFA, including current and former diplomats; high-ranking military officers, including military attachés; other governmental actors.	23
Professors and scholars in political science and international relations from public and private national and international universities, research centers, and think tanks.	10
Professionals from the media with experience covering Venezuela's international affairs.	7
Total⁴³	40

Source: Elaborate by the author (2022) researched

³⁹ For example, Muhr (2011, 2013), Emerson (2013), and Cusack (2019) examined ALBA-TCP, Cederlöf and Kingsbury (2019), and Jardon, Kuik, and Tol. (2019) researched about PetroCaribe, Llenderroza (2015), Nolte and Comini (2016), and Mijares and Nolte (2018) investigated UNASUR, and Bonilla and Jaramillo (2014) explored CELAC.

⁴⁰ For more information, consult Sanahuja (2011, 2014), Giacalone (2013), Diamint (2013), Morales (2013), Pardo and Schaposnik (2015), Rocha (2015), Beaton and Kennedy (2016), Aceves and Lo Brutto (2016), among others.

⁴¹ For more information, consult Romero, C (2010b), Benzi and Zapata (2013), Briceño (2018), and Santander and Alonso (2018).

⁴² For detailed information about the key informants, please check Appendix 1.

⁴³ The author also interviewed Ambassador Hidehiro Tsubaki. However, due to his professional profile, he was not included in any of the three sectors.

The selection of these groups allowed the author to gather information from the principal actors involved in Venezuela's SSC policy-making process (governmental sector) during the period of study, as well as the vision of two other sectors linked to the topic, which have different perceptions and assessments due to their focuses and the level of closeness and interaction with the governmental sector.

Likewise, intending to avoid institutional and geographic bias, the author conducted interviews with professors, scholars, and journalists with diverse political orientations and visions regarding Venezuela's government from different public and private national and international universities, research centers, think tanks, and media conglomerates.

Nonetheless, at this point, it is necessary to point out that, with the different degrees of independence that these sectors have with regard to the Venezuelan government, the academic sector in general, and especially Venezuelan national autonomous universities such as Universidad Central de Venezuela and Universidad Simón Bolívar and private institutions as IESA, have had since 1999 a critical posture regarding the object of study. In contrast, due to internal political factors and the government's significant influence over the majority of the media sector, this tends to have a more positive assessment of Venezuela's SSC.

It is also important to mention that the author tried to conduct a similar number of interviews per sector, reaching out to several more specialists beyond the ones who participated from the academic and media sectors. However, due to the study's particular specificity and the topic's polarization, some declined the invitation to participate in this investigative effort.

Even though the author aimed to conduct as many interviews as possible, special consideration was given to the postulates of Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Glaser (2002) regarding qualitative research, particularly Grounded Theory, which establishes that the researcher must put emphasis on the key informants' quality, expertise, and credibility in the topic rather than the number of samples.

The treatment of the information gathered as a result of the in-depth interviews was framed into the same dimensions explained in the introduction of this doctoral thesis and used in chapter two to characterize and compare SSC and NSC. These dimensions are institutions (political models), ideas (principles), interests, and organizations proposed by

Lancaster (2007) and channels or schemes based on Kragelund's conception of vectors (2019).

The theoretical resignification of Venezuela's SSC during the period under study was elaborated by applying Grounded Theory as the methodology for analyzing the content, as explained in detail in the introduction of this dissertation. Therefore, the author proceeded in the following way:

1. Conducting in-depth interviews with key informants
2. Screening of information
3. Selection of quotes
4. Assigning codes to the information under the pre-established dimensions
5. Axial codification
6. Conceptualization

It is important to highlight that the analysis conducted from points 2 to 6 was made with the support of Atlas.ti, computer software for qualitative data analysis.

The process of data analysis began with the selection of quotes. It was done by examining the contents of all the in-depth interviews, which were initially compiled in "hermeneutic units" clustered by the groups of key informants. Based on these hermeneutic units, the author conducted the speech analysis to generate a conceptual resignification of Venezuela's SSC based on the commonalities found through the information provided by each sector. Therefore, achieving the necessary saturation in the answers obtained about specific topics, which means that no additional data was found whereby the researcher could develop properties of the dimensions.

From these "hermeneutic units," the most relevant quotes for this research were selected and grouped in open and axial coding under the six (6) dimensions previously mentioned (Institutions, Ideas, Interests, Organizations, Vectors/schemes, and Regional Organizations), which permitted for each group of informants the conformation of six networks of meaning, allowing a first approach to the conceptual resignification of Venezuela's SSC.

Consequently, the outcomes of this phase of the research are presented as follows:

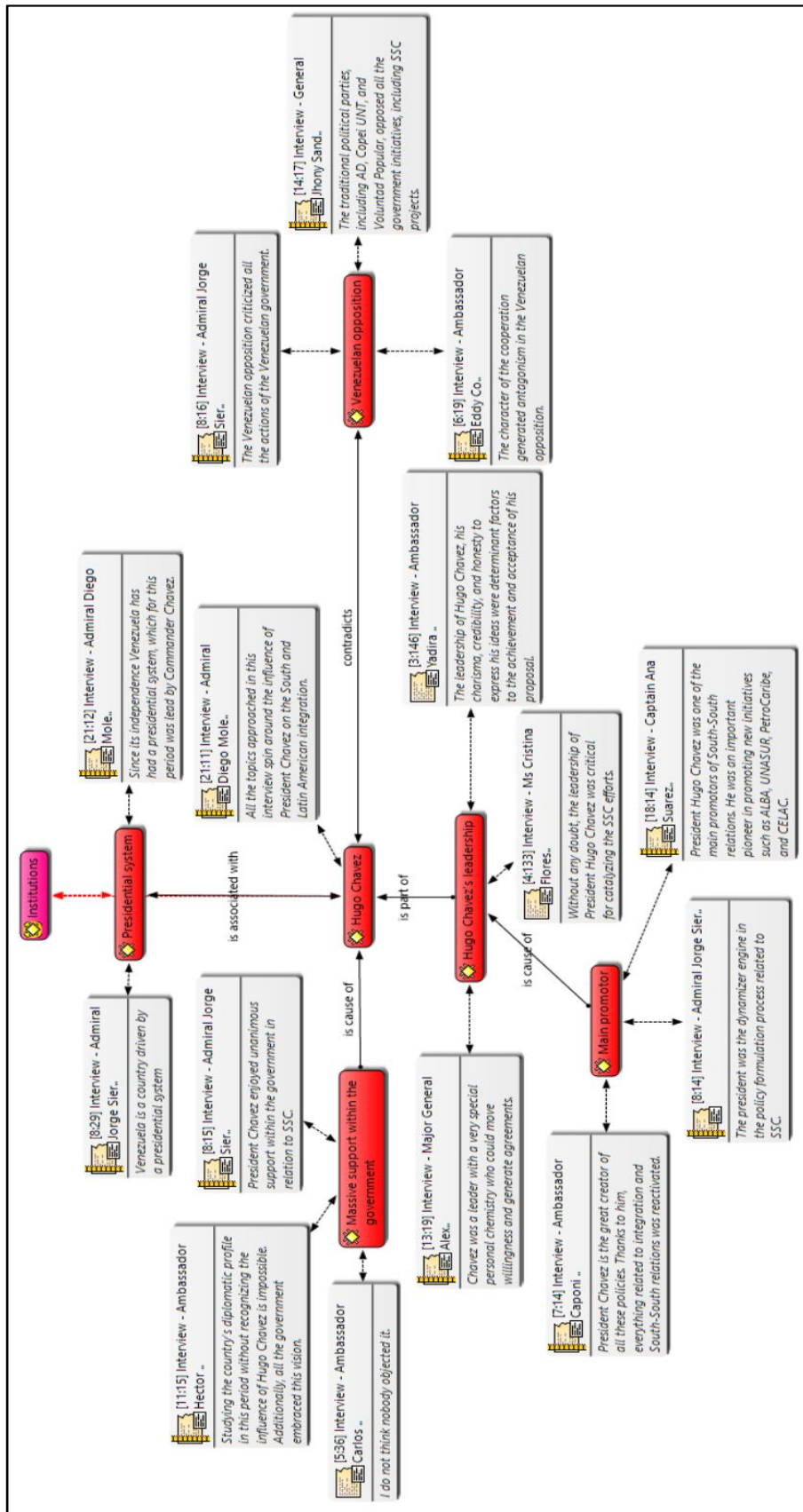
5.2 Venezuela's SSC from the vision of government actors

The information provided in this section results from interviews with twenty-three (23) government officials: the (1) Minister of Borders, nine (9) ambassadors, a (1) high-ranking MoFA official, a (1) former Minister of Defense, a (1) former General Commander of the Venezuelan Army, seven (7) former military attaches, a (1) deputy of the General Assembly and former Ministry of Trade, a (1) former vice-minister for strategic communication and a (1) director at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

5.2.1 Institutions

Figure 5.1 contains the most relevant quotes regarding the political institutions that allowed Venezuela's SSC during the period under study that emerged from the interviewees conducted by the author with this group of key informants.

Figure 5.1: Network of meaning (Institutions)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The figure can be read through the association between the main dimension, “institution,” in pink, and the saturated codes highlighted in red, establishing relations among them to label the connections and show the most relevant quotes related to these aspects. This dynamic also applies to the following networks of meaning presented in this chapter.

The information provided by the key informants linked to the governmental sector unveils that the “presidential system”, which has been historically the political model established in Venezuela since the beginning of its republican history, was the main institution for promoting Venezuela’s foreign policy, including SSC initiatives.

However, during this period, the presidential system was centered entirely on the figure of “Hugo Chavez,” who proactively defined the orientation of Venezuela’s foreign policy. Therefore, it can be said that the Venezuelan case is an example of the personification of a country’s foreign policy in its president since the decision-making process regarding SSC initiatives, among other topics, revolved exclusively around the figure of President Chavez.

This particular way of dynamizing SSC policies by President Chavez was validated through the saturation of information provided by the key informants, such as the one presented by Ambassador Constant, who emphasized that:

Studying the diplomatic profile of the country in this period without recognizing the influence of Hugo Chavez is impossible. President Chavez had the capacity to bring together far and close countries to the South-South vision and the reconceptualization of the South. Consequently, his influence was absolute.

Similarly, former Vice Minister of Social Development and former Ambassador to South Korea, Hidalgo⁴⁴, considered that:

The leadership of Hugo Chavez, his charisma, credibility, and honesty to express his ideas were determinant factors to the achievement and acceptance of his proposal, as well as the formulation of SSC policies embodied in the Simon Bolivar National Project 2007-2003.

In this context, President Hugo Chavez used his leadership based on charisma, influence,

⁴⁴ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 5th, 2021.

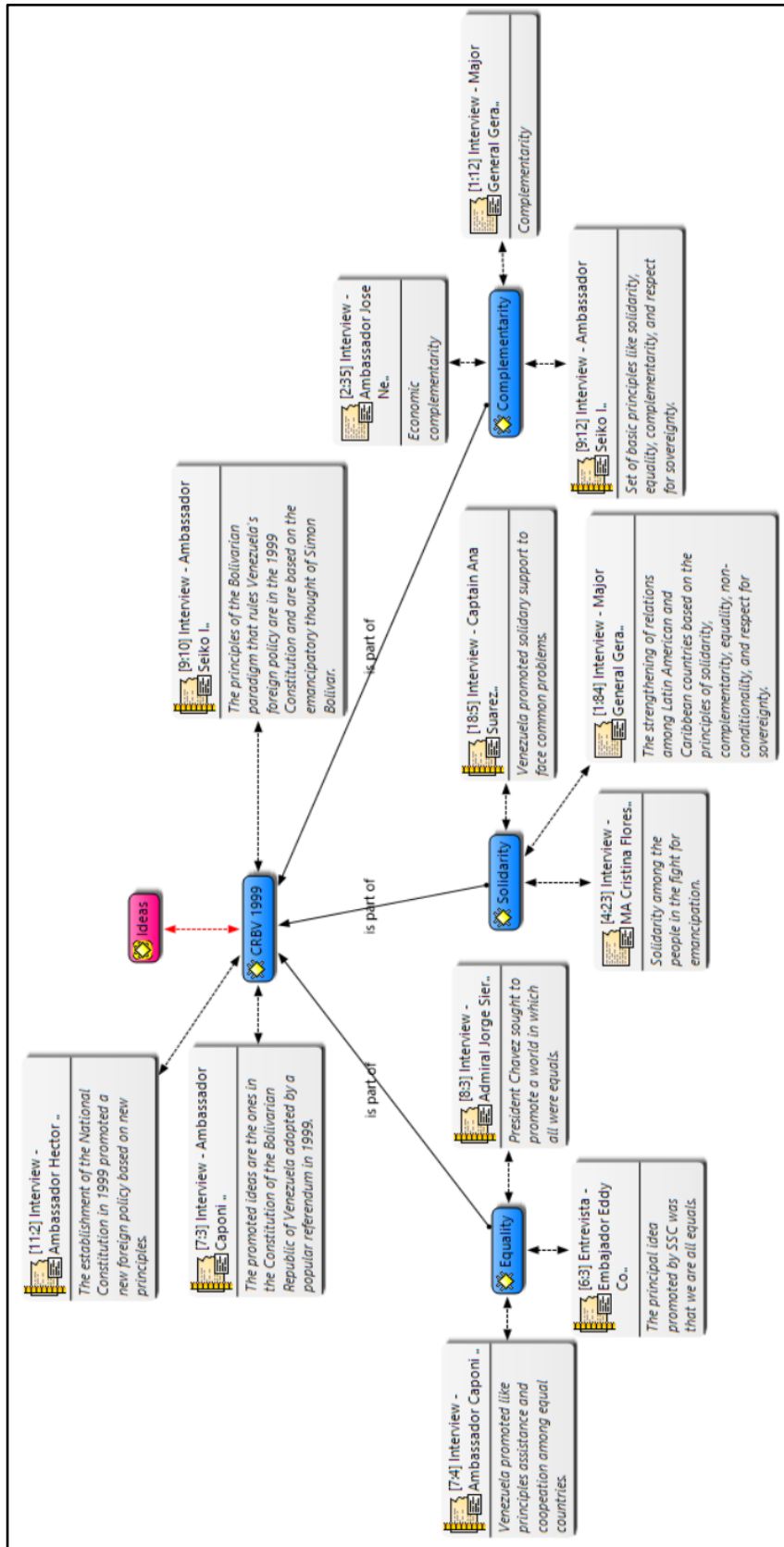
and personal connections to guarantee the massive support of his initiatives within the government (Executive branch, Legislative branch, Judicial branch, Electoral branch, and Citizen branch), his political party, and the majority of the electorate. Similarly, this leadership was replicated to some extent at the regional and international level projecting President Chavez as one of the main promoters of SSC and generating new relationships and agreements that allowed the establishment of different SSC projects between Venezuela and partner countries.

Even though President Chavez received strong support from his government, his political party, and the majority of the population during the period under study, traditional parties linked to the Venezuelan opposition, among these Accion Democratica, COPEI, Un Nuevo Tiempo, and Voluntad Popular continuously criticized and opposed his policies, including those related to foreign policy and specifically SSC.

5.2.2 Ideas

Similarly, Figure 5.2 reflects the most relevant statements provided by the key informants of the government sector concerning the ideas promoted by the government of Venezuela through SSC from 2007 to 2013.

Figure 5.2: Network of meaning (Ideas)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Note: CBRV1999 is the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela enacted in 1999.

As well as in the previous section, the graphic can be understood by looking at the connection of the main dimension in pink “ideas” with the interrelated saturated codes in blue, which portray the most relevant quotes stated by the informants in relation to these elements.

Consequently, based on the information provided by the key informants, such as ambassadors Constant, Ishikawa, Cordova⁴⁵, Montiel, and Caponi⁴⁶, it can be said that the ideas embraced by the Venezuelan government to promote SSC initiatives from 2007 to 2013 are reflected in the 1999 National Constitution. In this sense, the preamble of the constitutional text specified that the State “embodies the values of freedom, independence, peace, solidarity, the common good, the nation’s territorial integrity, comity, and the rule of law.”

However, it is important to highlight three ideas continuously mentioned throughout the in-depth interviews regarding Venezuela’s cooperative relations with countries of the Global South. These were the ideas of “solidarity,” “equality” among nations, and “complementarity.”

The preponderance of these three ideas within the governmental sector reaffirms the findings of previous studies conducted by Briceño (2018) and Roniger (2021), which highlighted “solidarity,” “equality,” and “complementarity” as central ideological elements for Venezuela’s foreign policy.

The idea of “solidarity” is conceived within this group of key informants as the moral obligation among countries of the Global South to provide mutual assistance to mitigate common problems.

Similarly, “equality” for this group of participants is understood as a condition where all the parties involved in SSC have the same treatment and status. Consequently, there is no leverage’s power produced by donor-recipient relationships but a collaboration in which partner countries interrelate in equal conditions.

⁴⁵ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on September 25th, 2021.

⁴⁶ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 2nd, 2021.

Additionally, “complementarity” for the key informants of this sector means a relationship or situation in which two or more states use each other’s strengths to improve their current situation through SSC. For example, based on the information provided by the current Minister of Borders, Major General Izquierdo⁴⁷, during the study period, Venezuela and Argentina implemented SSC using their capabilities to complement the other part. This dynamic translated into the first using its energy strengths, while the second put its agriculture and livestock sector to the service of the cooperation promoted by both countries.

5.2.3 Interests

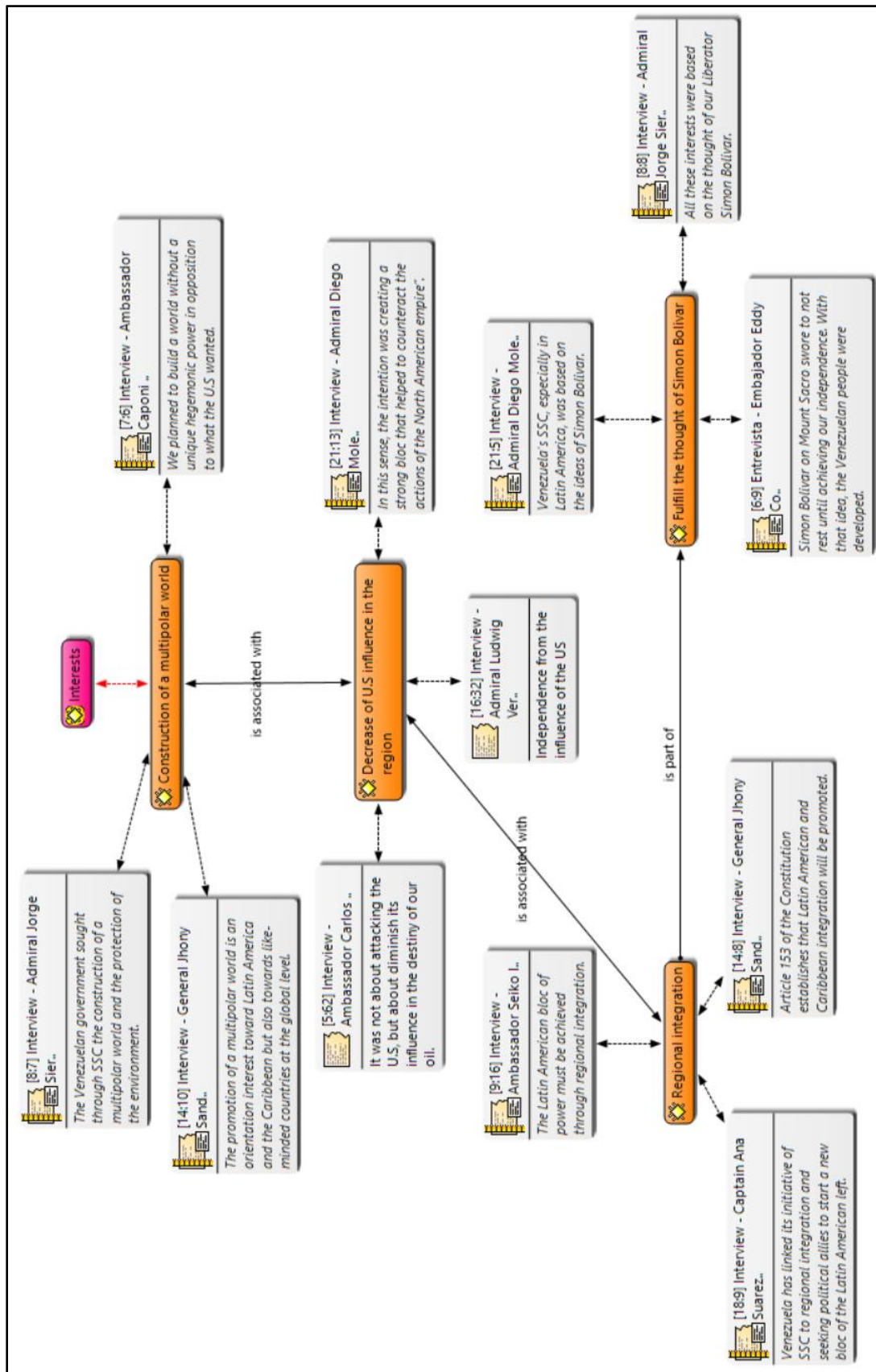
Before entering into the details of this section, it is necessary to clarify a few aspects. Some of the interests mentioned by the key informants of this and the other two sectors are intrinsically related to the identity of the Venezuelan government for the study period, which from the international relations perspective would be considered as a matter of ideas instead of interests. However, as readers will see in this and the other sections related to interests, many interviewees considered ideological aspects such as the construction of a multipolar world and fulfilling the thought of Simon Bolivar as interests and expressed this vision through the interviews.

In this sense, the author treated and analyzed the data of the interviews, for this as well as other sections, as it was provided by the key informants without any prejudice or modification. Hence, the discussion and arguments are based on the result of the data analysis provided by the key informants.

The information provided by the interviewees allowed the elaboration of figure 5.3, which shows the view of the key informants from the governmental sectors about the interests pursued by the government of Venezuela through SSC.

⁴⁷ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on November 19th, 2021.

Figure 5.3: Network of meaning (Interests)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The inputs given by this group of key informants, among them Caponi, Sierralta⁴⁸, Montiel, and Sandia⁴⁹, reveal that President Chavez's government established the "construction of a multipolar world" and "regional integration" as central purposes to achieve through the promotion of SSC policies to counteract hegemonic practices from traditional powers, and especially the "decrease of the U.S. influence in the region."

In this direction, Minister Izquierdo stated that:

One of the interests promoted through SSC under the period of study was the necessity of diversifying the political, economic, and cultural relations to create new poles of power based on the characteristics of the people of the South and their governments under the establishment of new areas of geostrategic interest.

Likewise, Admiral Molero⁵⁰ expressed that:

We must understand that at that moment, there was a hegemony produced by the influence of the U.S. in different Latin American countries; with the emergence of the leadership of President Hugo Chavez Frias, the idea was bringing all the countries of the South to what the Liberator Simon Bolivar considered as the South American Confederation of Nations. In this sense, the intention was to create a strong bloc that helped to counteract the actions of the North American empire.

Based on this information, it is important to point out that the Simon Bolivar National Project 2007-2013 explicitly expressed the desire of the President Chavez administration to foster cooperative relations with the new poles of powers which, according to this document, were: 1) Latin America and the Caribbean, 2) Iran, Syria, Belarus, and Russia, 3) China, Vietnam, Malaysia and circumvented areas, 4) Europe, 5) Africa, 6) OPEC countries and 7) North America.

Evidence points out that the government sector conceived the "construction of a multipolar world" as a response to the necessity to break with hegemonic practices established by world powers, and specifically the decrease of the U.S. influence, which through its capitalist and the neoliberal model of domination shape the system of global

⁴⁸ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on November 6th, 2021.

⁴⁹ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on November 12th, 2021.

⁵⁰ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on May 24th, 2022.

governance. For example, the U.S. established the U.S. dollar as the main currency for international trade, imposed macroeconomic packages to countries of the South through the IMF, the World Bank, and the IDB, and even more, promoted the English language as the main channel of communication in world affairs.

Following this logic, President Chavez built new strategic alliances, which encompassed cooperation in different fields such as political, economic, technological, and military cooperation with non-traditional partners like Cuba, Russia, China, India, Turkey, Iran, Belarus, and African countries, among others.

Similarly, the need to create and consolidate new poles of powers led Venezuela to take a preponderant role in regional affairs, aiming to achieve the “regional integration” of Latin America and the Caribbean as other of its main interests through the reinforcement of South relations and encouraging SSC.

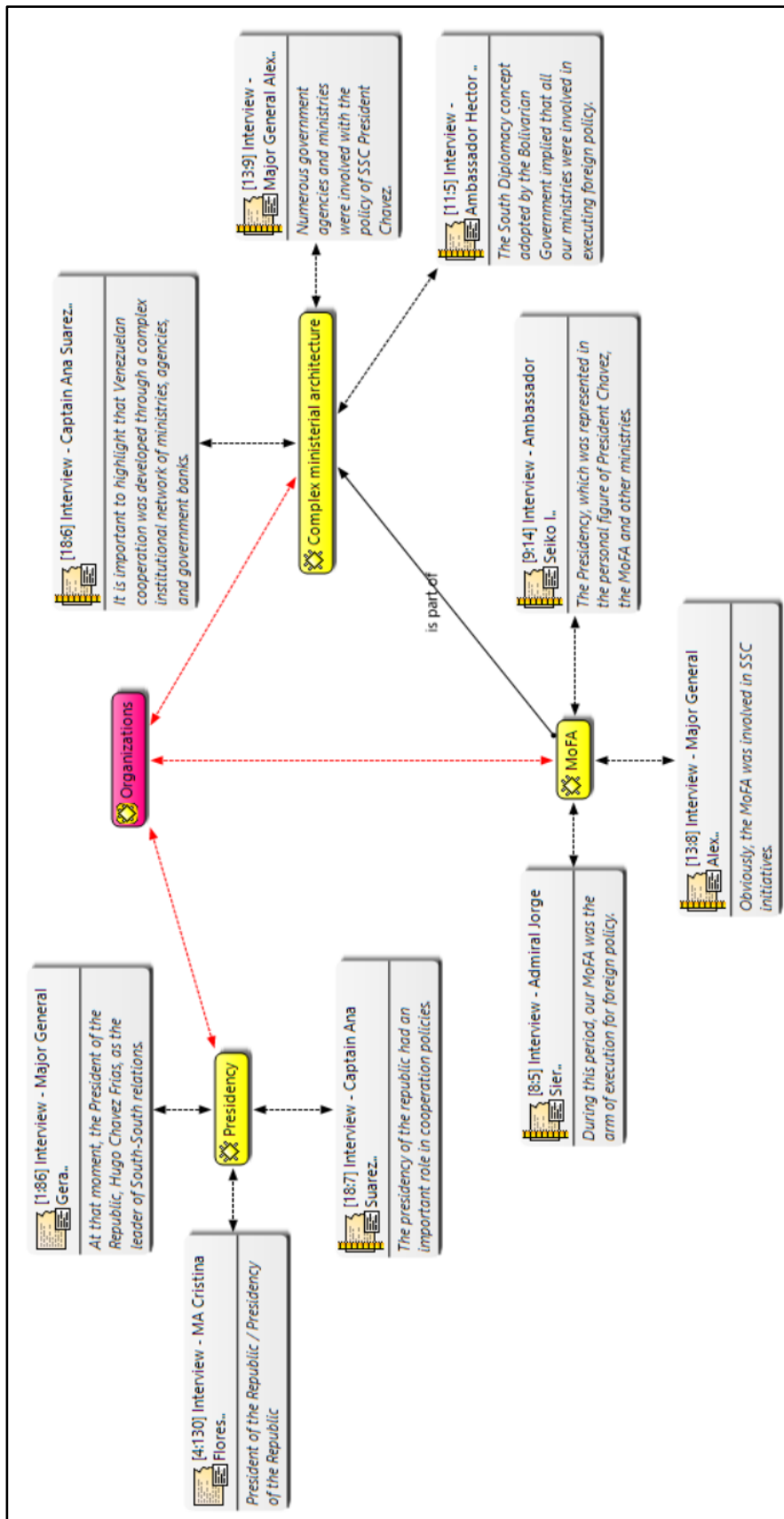
The regional integration promoted by Venezuela during this period was particularly different from previous economic-oriented initiatives such as the one that originated the European Union, the ones promoted by the UN in Latin America like the ECLAC, or those led by the U.S. and promoted by its allied countries in the continent. This regional integration aimed to achieve a more comprehensive integration, prioritizing political aspects, and considering economic, social, military, and cultural elements as well as energy integration.

The interest in achieving “regional integration” promoted by President Chavez was also influenced by his desire to “fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar,” who, in the 1826 Congress of Panama, intended to bring all the Latin American countries together to reject imperial intervention in the continent.

5.2.4 Organizations

Likewise, the data provided by the interviewees of this sector served to elaborate figure 5.4, which draws the organizations involved in the different initiatives promoted under the concept of SSC:

Figure 5.4: Network of meaning (Organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Taking into consideration the information provided by the key informants of this sector, such as Izquierdo, Sierralta, and Flores⁵¹, it can be said that Venezuela's SSC initiatives during the period of study were led by the "Presidency" of the republic, and especially by the figure of President Chavez, who, as expressed in previous sections, used his leadership to generate new agreements and strategic alliances and reshape cooperation initiatives within the region and with other countries of the Global South.

Additionally, Molero, among others, pointed out that "almost all the ministries of the executive power were involved in South-South cooperation." Therefore, it can be said that the work of the "Presidency" was backed up by a "complex ministerial architecture" that was not limited to the "MoFA." The government presided by Hugo Chavez promoted a holistic approach to implementing SSC policies; consequently, a variety of ministries took part in different stages of the policy-making process. Among the most mentioned by the key informants are the state enterprise Petroleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anonima (PDVSA), the Ministry of Oil, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance.

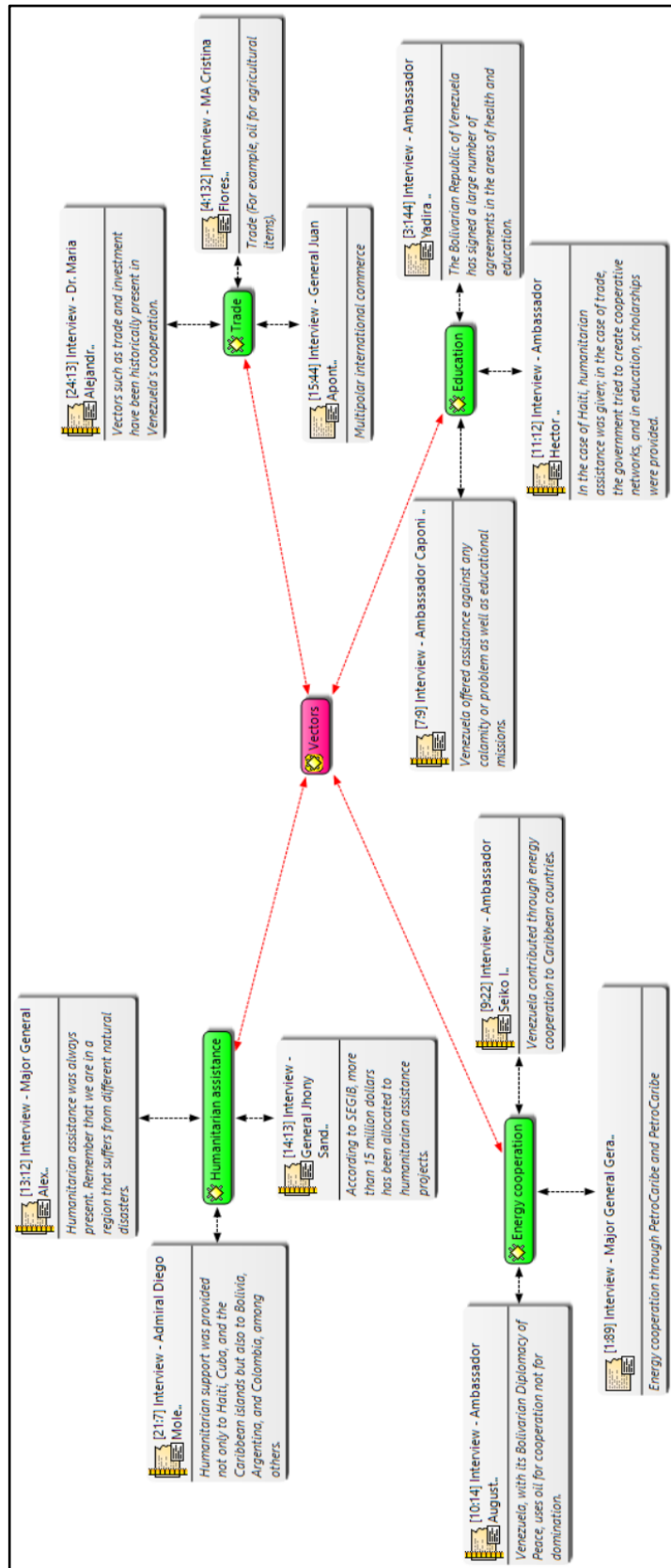
Nevertheless, even though the cooperation initiatives were not exclusively delegated to the "MoFA," it played a crucial role as part of this "complex ministerial architecture," acting as the coordination body among all organizations involved in SSC as well as the executing organization of foreign policies after receiving the guidelines of the "Presidency."

5.2.5 Vectors/ schemes

Figure 5.5 compiles the most relevant quotes expressed by the participants of this sector regarding the schemes of cooperation used by the Venezuelan government to implement SSC projects during the period of study, which were "humanitarian assistance," "education," "trade," and "energy cooperation."

⁵¹ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 8th, 2021.

Figure 5.5: Network of meaning (Vectors/schemes)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Firstly, Venezuela provided “humanitarian assistance” to different countries of the region, especially Caribbean countries, which usually get affected by natural disasters due to this area’s geographical and meteorological conditions. This assistance mostly comprised donations of basic goods, safeguard and rescue missions led by the International Brigade Simon Bolivar, and infrastructure reconstruction after catastrophic events. For example, the Venezuelan government sent cargo airplanes to supply essential goods to the population of Haiti after an earthquake of magnitude 7.0 hit this country in January 2010 (UN-OCHA, 2010).

Another important scheme of cooperation was the initiatives promoted in the field of “education” among Venezuela and its partner countries.

In this context, Ambassador Hidalgo stated that:

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has signed a wide variety of agreements in education with Cuba, among these the Education Missions: Mision Robinson, through which 1.800.000 people were put out of illiteracy; Mision Yo Si Puedo, which gave access to primary education; Mision Ribas, for people that could not finish high school, and Mision Sucre to obtain a university education.

In the same direction, former Venezuelan military attaché to Belgium and the Netherlands, Admiral Vera⁵² pointed out that "in the framework of UNASUR, Venezuelan military officials went to study in Argentina and other Latin American countries, and Venezuela received military officers from other countries too."

Consequently, different scholarships and educational exchanges were promoted for civilians and military officers in Cuba, Russia, China, and other Latin American countries. Venezuela also received different batches of international students, mainly from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, who went to the country to study in public universities. Likewise, the government led by President Chavez implemented educational programs called “Misiones Educativas,” intending to promote free education at all levels.

Venezuela also used its vast oil reserves to promote energy cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries. According to Ambassador Montiel, “Venezuela and

⁵² Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 1st, 2021.

the Bolivarian Diplomacy of Peace used oil and hydrocarbons for cooperation, not for domination.”

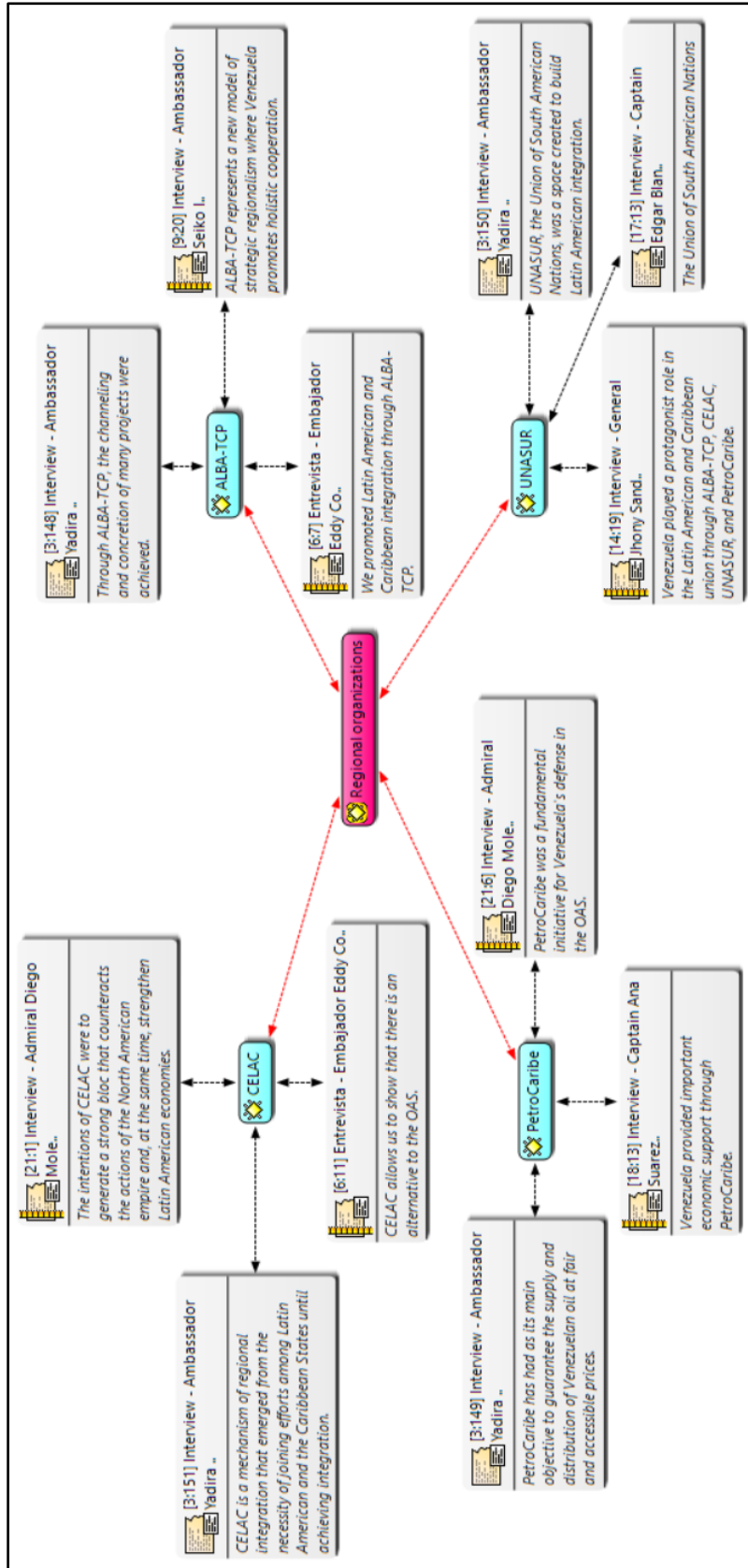
Hence, the most emblematic examples of energy cooperation can be found in the different energetic agreements implemented in the framework of PetroCaribe, where Venezuela supplied oil to its partners with beneficial economic conditions. The Venezuelan government also encouraged the creation of PetroAmericas and PetroSur, initiatives similar to PetroCaribe to supply oil to South American countries. Even though these initiatives were not as successful as PetroCaribe, this situation did not stop bilateral energy cooperation with countries like Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil.

Likewise, President Chavez’s government established an alternative kind of “trade” or good exchange using oil as a payment method for different kinds of products coming from partner countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Global South.

5.2.6 Regional Organizations

In relation to the regional or international organizations, figure 5.6 exhibits some of the most relevant information provided by interviewees of the governmental sector concerning the regional organizations through which Venezuela promoted SSC initiatives from 2007 to 2013.

Figure 5.6: Network of meaning (Regional Organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

During the study period, the Venezuelan government channelized SSC initiatives through four (4) main regional organizations: ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. Each of them had different scopes, and within their frameworks, Venezuela had different degrees of influence.

ALBA-TCP and PetroCaribe are initiatives created by the Venezuelan government. Within these frameworks, Venezuela promoted an active SSC policy relying on political alignments and the economic revenues allowed by its oil resources.

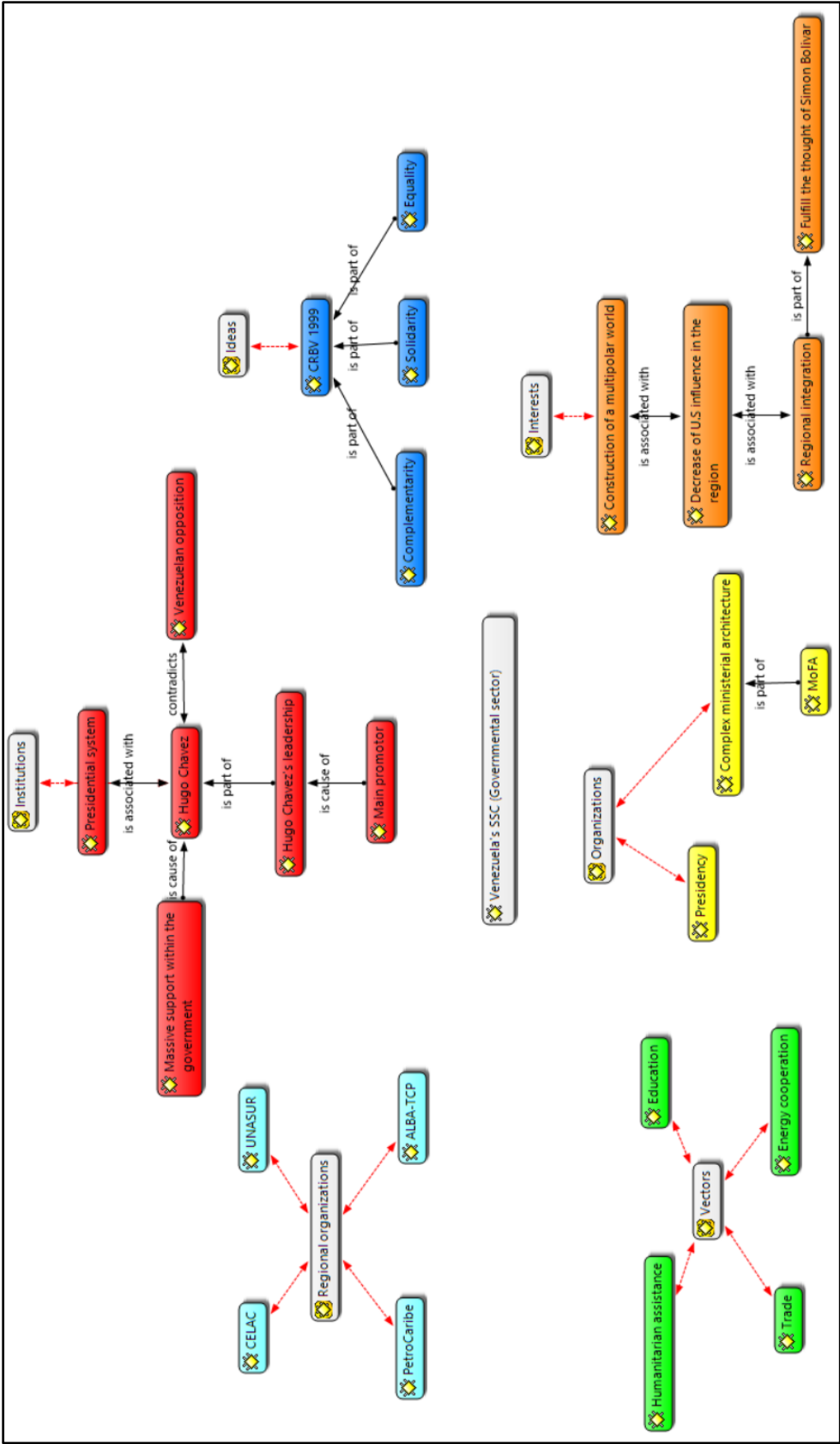
While PetroCaribe focused mainly on achieving energy security in the Caribbean region through energy cooperation, ALBA-TCP was initially conceived as an alternative to the Free Trade Area of the Americas proposed by the U.S. to Latin American countries. Later it progressively became an integration initiative with a broader scope ranging from trade and investment to health, food security, social movements, and sports, among others.

CELAC was initially conceived by the idea of President Hugo Chavez to create a political coordination body among Latin America and the Caribbean without the intervention of the U.S. and Canada and as an alternative to the OAS. Even though it was a Venezuelan initiative, the more significant number of countries in comparison with PetroCaribe and ALBA-TCP, and the diversity of political orientations of its governments, slowed the SSC initiatives promoted by President Chavez in this framework.

Finally, UNASUR was an initiative of regional integration adopted by twelve South American countries. This organization had proactive participation by three major actors involved in SSC during the period of study, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. Through its framework, diverse initiatives in military cooperation, political coordination, infrastructure, and human mobility, among other areas, were undertaken.

Based on the previous explanation, figure 5.7 illustrates the vision of the governmental sector regarding Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013:

Figure 5.7: Venezuela’s SSC from the vision of the governmental sector



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Consequently, the vision of the government sector shows that Venezuela's SSC was promoted primarily by the institution of the "presidential system" represented in the figure of "Hugo Chavez" as president of Venezuela. As part of his strategy, he used his "leadership" to become one of the "main promoters" of this kind of cooperation, relying on "massive support within his government." However, he was constantly contradicted by the "Venezuelan opposition".

Venezuela promoted SSC based on the ideas contained in the "Constitution of 1999" especially "solidarity," "complementarity," and "equality." Using these ideas, Venezuela pursued the interests of the "construction of a multipolar world," which was associated with the interests of "decreasing the U.S influence in the region" and achieving "regional integration" which is part of the historical interest of "fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar."

At the national level, the leading organization in charge of SSC initiatives was the "Presidency." It relied on a "complex ministerial architecture" led by the "MoFA." The national organizations involved used several vectors to channel SSC, such as "humanitarian assistance," "education," "trade," and "energy cooperation."

Finally, the governmental actors pointed out that during the period of study, Venezuela promoted SSC through four main regional organizations: "ALBA-TCP," "PetroCaribe," "UNASUR," and "CELAC."

5.3 Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the academic sector

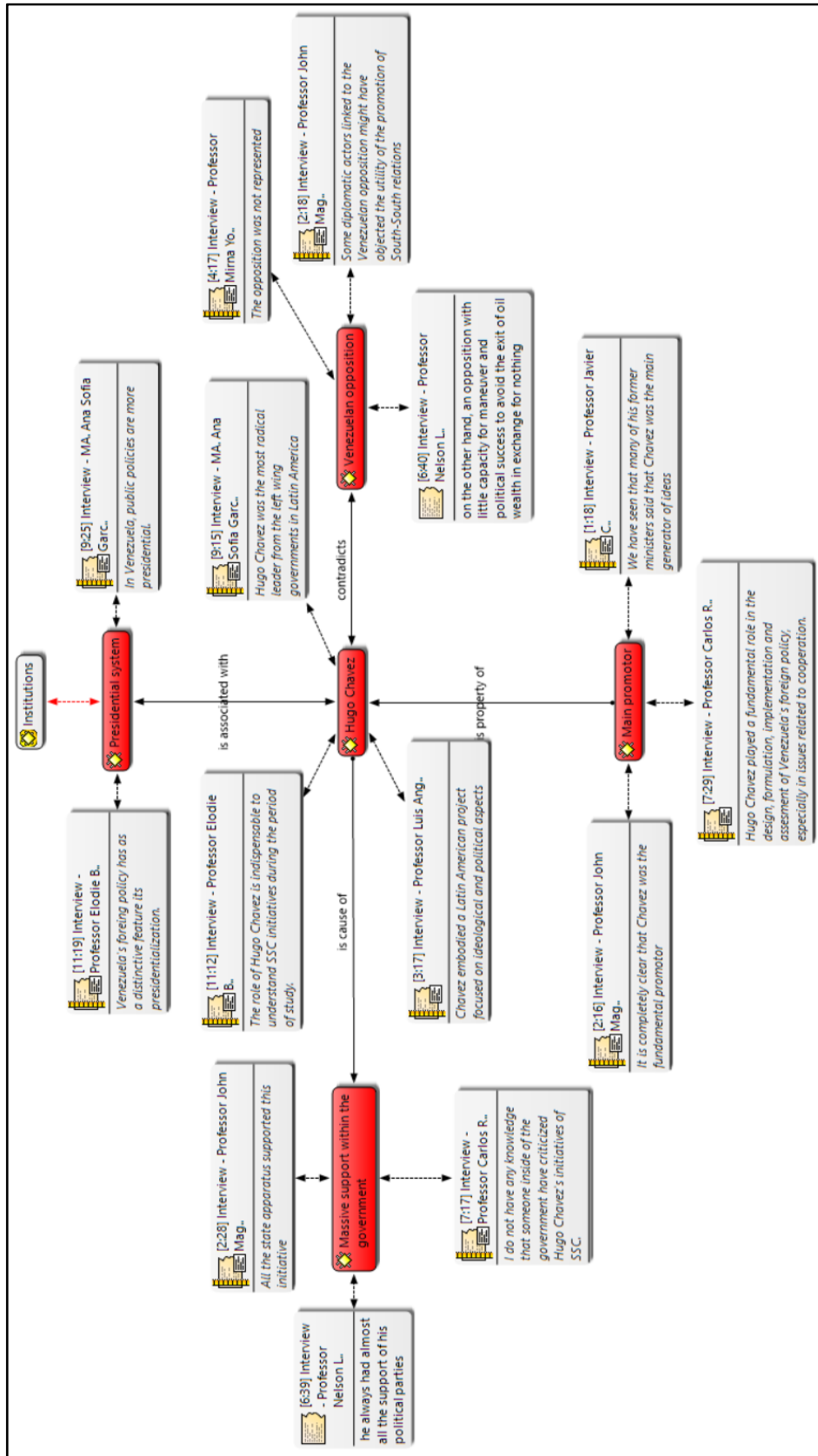
This section shows the results from interviews with ten (10) professors and scholars from the political science and international relations fields who have conducted research linked to Venezuela's foreign policy in public and private national and international universities, research centers, and think tanks.

The selection of these informants was based on their credibility and recognized prestige within the Venezuelan University System due to their high academic level and recognized intellectual production.

5.3.1 Institutions

Figure 5.8 showcases the most relevant quotes that emerge from the interviews of the academic sector regarding the institutions that shaped SSC initiatives from 2007 to 2013:

Figure 5.8: Network of meaning (Institutions)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Similar to the vision of the governmental sector, the key informants related to the academia agreed that the central institution for promoting Venezuela's foreign policy, including SSC initiatives was the "presidential system." Historically, Venezuela has been characterized by the presidentialization of its foreign policy. This situation could be seen during the governments of Romulo Betancourt and Carlos Andres Perez, who actively promoted their foreign policy agenda.

However, the key informants highlighted the overreach of power and functions compared with previous administrations assumed by President "Hugo Chavez." Consequently, the preponderant and exclusive role of president Chavez in the different stages of the policy-making process exemplifies the concentration of power in the executive branch that has characterized Venezuela's presidential system since 1999.

In this sense, Professor Brun emphasized that:

In Venezuela, foreign policy has as characteristic the presidentialization, which implies the important role of the chief of the executive branch in the design and orientations that are given to foreign policy. Therefore, Hugo Chavez's thought was essential to designing the project. The hyper activism of President Chavez and the multiple trips he made generated the opportunity to launch different ideas and projects of cooperation. Consequently, his role is indispensable to understanding SSC's development in the period under study.

Similarly, Professor Romero stated that "it is indubitable that Hugo Chavez played a fundamental role in the design, formulation, implementation, and assessment of the foreign policy of Venezuela, particularly about cooperation initiatives."

The concentration on the design and promotion of foreign policy in the executive power allowed Hugo Chavez to be the "main promotor" of SSC initiatives within the national institutional architecture. It also empowered the figure of the president to assume a preponderant role in the promotion of new initiatives of cooperation at the regional and international levels.

During this period, President Chavez relied on the "massive support within the government," including all the ministries, other public branches, the armed forces, and his political parties. However, even though the "Venezuelan opposition" was

underrepresented in the national political system (fewer representatives in the legislative and electoral branches, no representation in the judicial and citizen branches, and fewer governors and mayors at the regional level) and did not have enough capacity to influence SSC policies, it constantly contradicted the initiatives promoted by the government. It also found, to some extent, support in the diplomatic sectors of foreign governments that were not aligned with the Bolivarian revolution.

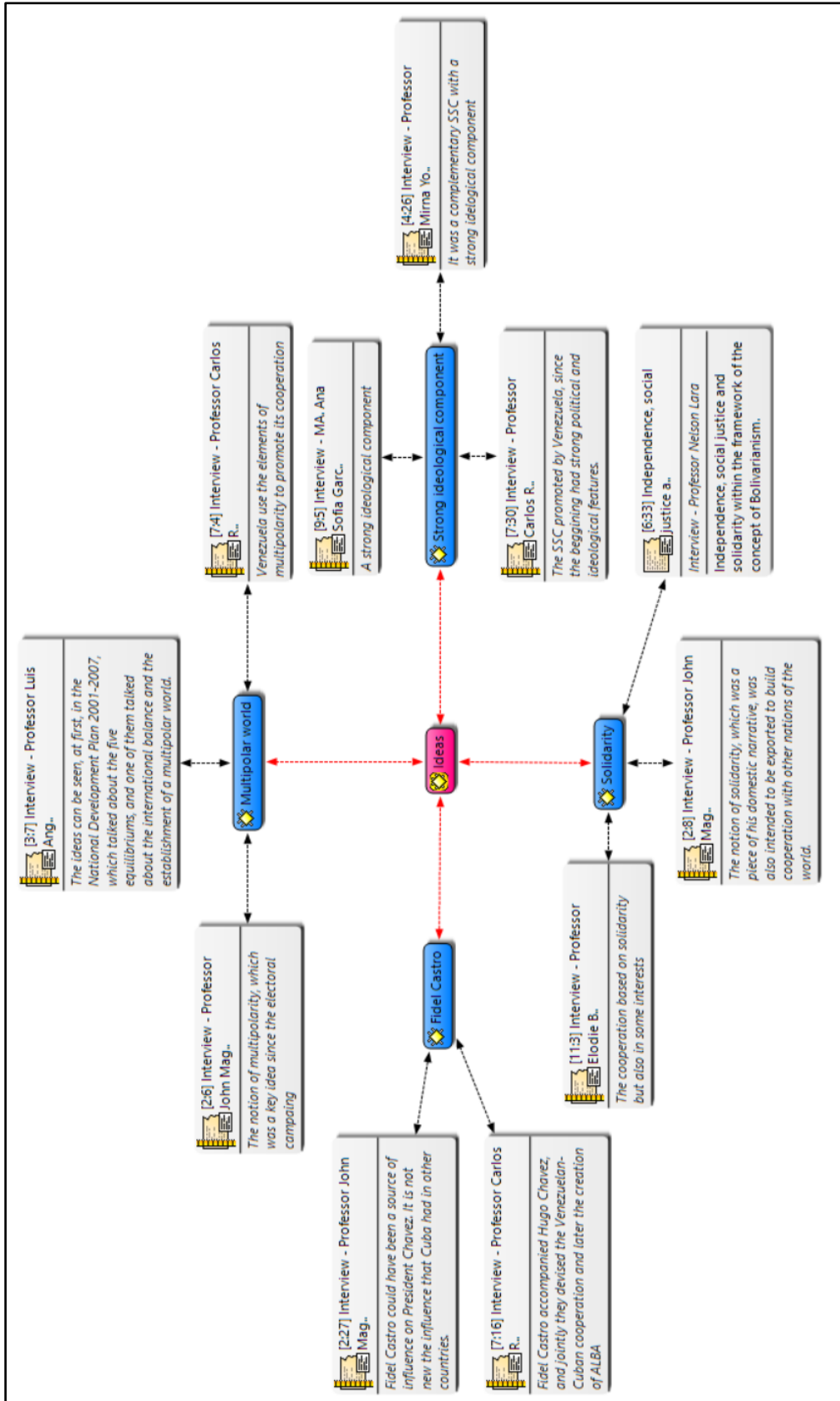
In this sense, Romero, C (2012) explained that “various foreign institutions and media have served as the sounding board for Venezuelan opposition behavior: governments, parliaments, multilateral organizations, friendly parties, opinion centers, the press, professional congresses, political assemblies, universities, non-governmental organizations, and individualities.”

Some of the most notorious examples of foreign governments supporting the Venezuelan opposition political causes were seen in 2005, 2009, and 2010. On May 2005, President Bush received the opposition political leader Maria Corina Machado at the White House to discuss democratic freedom in Venezuela (Voice of America, 2005). Similarly, in 2009 the State Department sponsored the visit of student leaders linked to opposition parties to the U.S. under the program “International Visiting Leaders -Venezuela” to present the political situation in Venezuela (Golinger, 2009). Likewise, in 2010, the government of France showed concern after the non-renovation of concessions by the Venezuelan government to Radio Caracas Television and other media companies, which had an editorial line opposed to Chavez’s administration. This concern was also expressed by Human Right Watch (ABC Internacional, 2010; Europa Press, 2010).

5.3.2 Ideas

In figure 5.9, the readers can find the most relevant quotes from the academic sector’s participants regarding the ideas promoted by Venezuela through SSC:

Figure 5.9: Network of meaning (Ideas)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Concerning the ideas promoted by the Venezuelan government from 2007 to 2013, the information provided by the interviewees of this sector, for example, Romero, Yonis⁵³, and Garcia, showed that Venezuela's cooperation was marked by "strong ideological components" linked to the Bolivarianism and the Socialism of the 21st century promoted by president Chavez as the national political model, which was also intended to be nurtured in partner countries through SSC initiatives.

In this direction, Professor Magdaleno pointed out that "the ideas promoted by the government were in part a reproduction of its principal ideas in domestic politics, such as the recognition of the excluded."

At this point, it is necessary to remember that since his political campaign in 1998, and even after assuming power, President Chavez characterized himself as a person who came from the social sectors most in need. Hence, one of his proposals was to empower the lower popular classes, which in his vision were marginalized by previous governments, with more political participation.

Therefore, in Professor Magdaleno's view, "it would not be fortuitous promoting cooperative relations with other countries of the South, highlighting here the member states of the Non-Aligned Movement."

Another of the main ideas promoted by President Chavez through SSC was the one of a "multipolar world," understanding it as an international system with multiple political, economic, and military centers that bring balance to world dynamics and serve as a deterrence to unilateral actions historically promoted by hegemonic powers such as the U.S.

This point shows how, as explained in section 5.2.3, the conception of a "multipolar world" can be considered as a matter of ideas, as reflected here, as well as a matter of interests, as also conceived by this sector in the next section as well as the other sectors.

Additionally, the idea of "solidarity" as the moral obligation among countries of the Global South, especially like-minded political-oriented ones, to provide assistance to mitigate problems of partner countries was also mentioned by the key informants.

⁵³ Interview through personal communication via Zoom on October 9th, 2021.

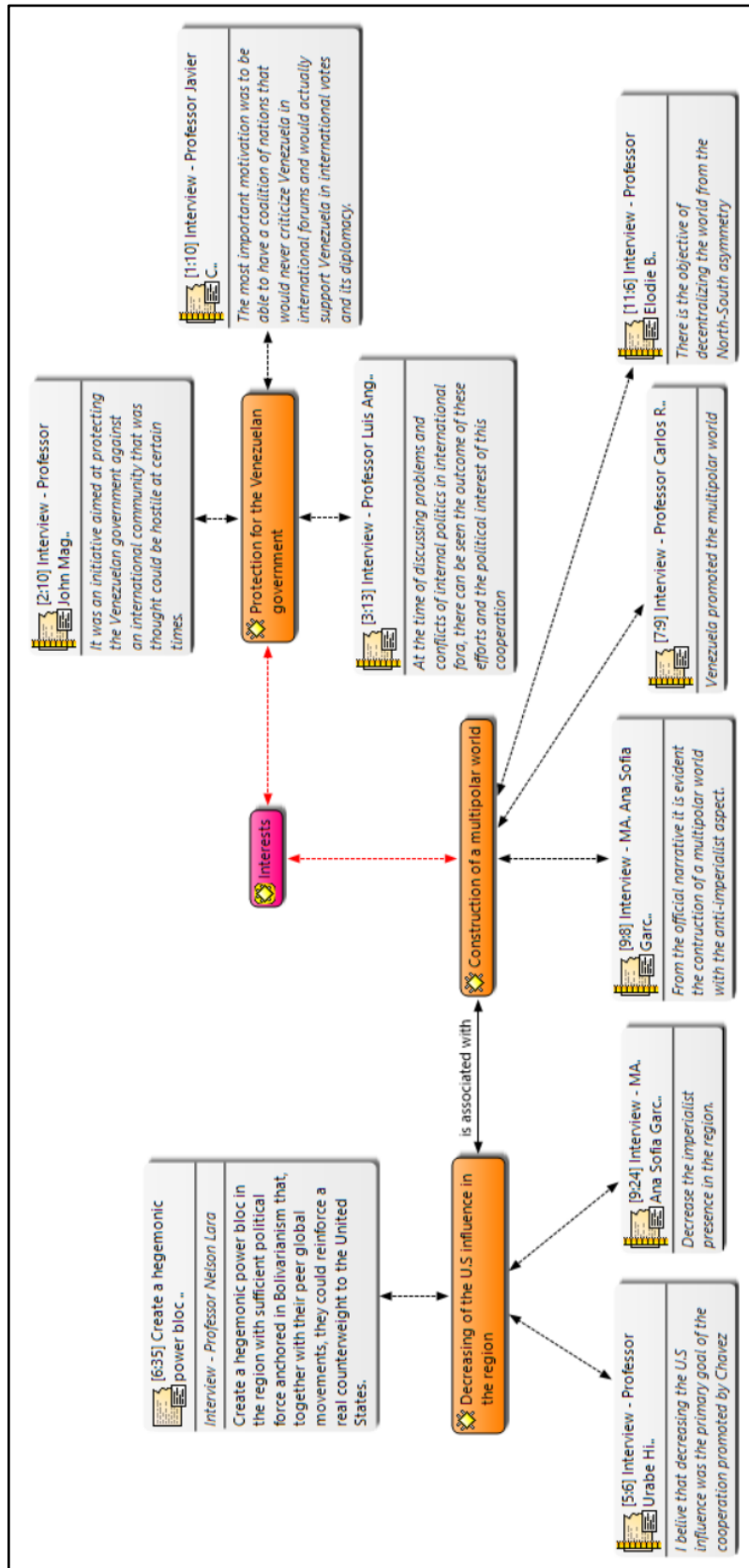
It is important to emphasize the influence of the Cuban revolutionary leader “Fidel Castro” and his anti-imperialist fight in the ideas promoted by President Chavez during this period. For President Chavez, Fidel Castro was his principal mentor. On multiple occasions, he praised the Cuban political system and its development model of cooperation, which despite the U.S. embargo, managed to have significant achievements in health, education, sports, and military cooperation, among other fields.

Moreover, the cooperation initiatives between Cuba and Venezuela, initially in a bilateral manner and later under the ALBA umbrella, allowed the political formation and consultation of Venezuela’s high-ranking civil and military officials in Cuba. These experiences could have influenced, to some degree, the SSC policies promoted by the Venezuelan government.

5.3.3 Interests

Similarly, figure 5.10 contains the network of meaning created with the most important quotes of the key informants of this sector regarding the “interests” pursued by the Venezuelan government from 2007 to 2013.

Figure 5.10: Network of meaning (Interests)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

According to the academic sector's key informants, the Venezuelan government pursued different interests through SSC during the study period. Firstly, Brun, Romero, and Garcia, among others, pointed out that Venezuela aimed to bolster the "Construction of a multipolar world," establishing and strengthening strategic alliances with traditional and emerging powers such as Russia and China.

In the framework of these strategic alliances, Venezuela became one of the most important destinations in Latin America for foreign direct investment, exports, and military cooperation from these countries. In exchange, Venezuela offered to be a reliable energy partner and its unconditional support in matters related to global governance in the international system.

The interest in the "construction of a multipolar world" was intrinsically linked to "decreasing the U.S influence in the region," another of the interests pursued by the Venezuelan government in this period.

In this context, Professor Lara pointed out that one of the interests of Venezuela was to "create a hegemonic power bloc in the region with sufficient political force anchored in Bolivarianism that, together with their global peer movements, they could reinforce a real counterweight to the United States."

To contextualize Lara's argument, it is necessary to mention that after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. government did not have to focus on the contention of communist governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Moreover, after the 9/11 attack, the U.S. government shifted its foreign policy priorities to fight the War on Terror in the Middle East. This situation allowed a political phenomenon known as the turn to the left in Latin American governments, which started in 1999 with the election of Hugo Chavez as President of Venezuela.

This new regional dynamic allowed President Hugo Chavez to pursue the goal of diminishing the influence of the U.S. in the region, based on his leadership and the extraordinary revenues provided by the oil sector.

Therefore, the Venezuelan government strongly opposed the ALCA initiative proposed by the U.S. to Latin American countries and proposed the foundation of ALBA-TCP instead. Venezuela also aimed to undercut the energetic dependence of Caribbean

countries on the U.S. and created PetroCaribe as a mechanism to achieve regional energy security. Additionally, Venezuela tried to counteract the role of the OAS, in which the U.S. has strong influence and Cuba is excluded, with the creation of CELAC, a regional organization that included Cuba and excluded North American countries. Moreover, Venezuela joined efforts with Brazil and Argentina to create a regional integration project like the EU called UNASUR.

Likewise, the government of Venezuela became the most antagonistic government to the U.S. in the region after Cuba, criticizing its political and economic model. This situation led to volatile bilateral relations characterized by constant accusations and tense diplomacy from both parties.

Besides, according to the interviewees of this sector, Venezuela promoted SSC initiatives to achieve “protection for the Venezuelan government.” For example, Professor Magdaleno described Venezuela’s SSC as “an initiative aimed at protecting the Venezuelan government against an international community that was thought could be hostile at certain times.” Consequently, “Venezuela pursued the creation of an international allies’ network, in which authoritarian and democratic regimes were combined.”

Therefore in his view:

Venezuela aimed to increase its influence capacity, utilizing soft power tools, and protect itself from eventual questions and difficulties that could be faced in the future with the development of the political model, the scheme of the decision-making process, public policies, and the economic system in Venezuela.

Based on this argument, it is essential to point out that during President Chavez’s administration, the Venezuelan government was accused on different occasions of using authoritarian practices to limit political opposition, among these: excessive use of public forces to control civil manifestations, limit the freedom of speech, closure of media companies, unfair electoral process, and violation of other human rights.

These accusations, made by political sectors opposed to the Venezuelan government and replicated by other foreign governments, brought on different occasions the topic to international forums such as the UN, the OAS, the Americas, and Iberoamerican Summits,

and even Mercosur with the aim of achieving consensus to take collective actions against the Venezuelan government. Consequently, to mitigate the criticism made by other governments and stop possible collective actions through consensus reached within international organizations, the government provided SSC to obtain political support from partner countries inside these organizations.

Likewise, the Venezuelan government tried to shield itself from antagonistic actors by obtaining significant participation in spaces related to global governance. In this sense, Venezuela made an extravagant bid for a seat in the UN security council, and even though the country did not win the Latin American seat (until 2014, when Venezuela was elected as a non-permanent member), it helped to reinforce the leadership of Hugo Chavez in the Global South.

In this context, Professor Romero stated that “Venezuela’s foreign policy since 1999 was framed in the interest of looking for an international position more flexible and farther away from western countries”.

Consequently, in his opinion, Venezuela promoted:

A rupture with western countries since it was not only a political or economic rupture, looking for new markets and partners, but it was also an ideological rupture because the content and the ideological thought of Venezuela totally changed, not only in the rhetoric but also in the diplomatic exercise. During 2007-2013 the Venezuelan diplomats were consolidated as government agents, which implied a high politicization of the diplomatic activity.

Proof of this argument drawn by Professor Romero was seen in section 3.3 when showing that the 2005 Law of the Foreign Service eliminated the designation quota limit for people outside the diplomatic career, allowing the president to appoint 100% of the chief of all the diplomatic missions.

Similarly, a report made by Peñaloza (2016) for the NGO Transparencia Venezuela pointed out the appointment of former government party congress members, former ministers, retired military officers, and even family members of high-ranking government officials in Venezuelan diplomatic posts around the world.

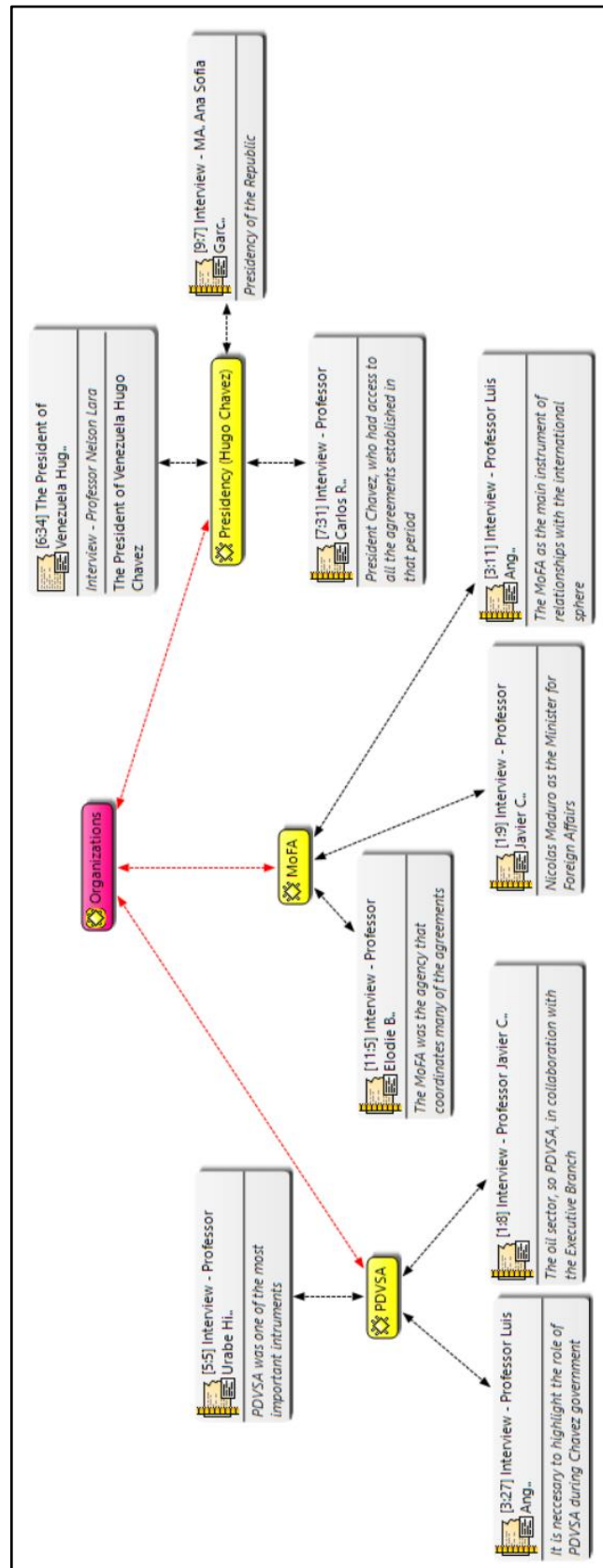
Professor Romero also emphasized that:

There was a rupture with the past (previous political models), which materialized in a different discourse and a different conception of the world, a new cosmovision. This situation led to three things 1) a distance from the U.S. and its allies, 2) deeper ties with non-wester countries such as Russia, China, Turkey, Iran, and other African countries, and 3) the promotion of a multipolar world,” reinforcing the previous analysis made by the author based on the information provided by other key informants of this sector.

5.3.4 Organizations

Figure 5.11 provides the most relevant quotes from this group of key participants linked to the organizations promoting Venezuela’s SSC.

Figure 5.11: Network of meaning (Organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Regarding the organizations involved in SSC initiatives, even though the key informants acknowledged the participation of different ministries and agencies, they specifically highlighted the involvement of three main organizations in cooperation projects promoted by the Venezuelan government: the “Presidency (Hugo Chavez),” the “MoFA,” and “PDVSA.”

Firstly, the Presidency was the leading organization involved in all the phases of the policy-making process related to SSC initiatives. This organization was led by President Chavez, who acted as the main promotor and the enabler in reaching diverse agreements with partners in the region and other countries of the Global South.

The role of president Chavez was emphasized since he could intervene in every phase of the policy-making process and, based on his leadership, approve, reject, or modify every initiative promoted by the Venezuelan government, as well as establish new agreements with other foreign dignitaries without previous consultation with the national bureaucracy.

Second, the role of the MoFA as the central organization in executing foreign policy, including SSC policies, was highlighted. In this sense, the participants referred to the MoFA as a coordination body between the Presidency, other internal organizations, and partner countries involved in various cooperation agreements.

In other words, after President Chavez designed or approved any public policy related to foreign policy or established new agreements with partner countries, the MoFA was in charge of establishing further connections at the diplomatic and technical levels with its counterparts, inform to other internal organizations the role they would play in the execution of the agreements, guarantee the compliance of these policies regarding international law, follow up the implementation of the initiatives and report back to the Presidency, among other coordination activities.

Inside this ministry, some key informants also mentioned the importance of the former Minister for Foreign Affairs and current President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, as one of the key people for achieving the SSC promoted by Venezuela from 2007 to 2013.

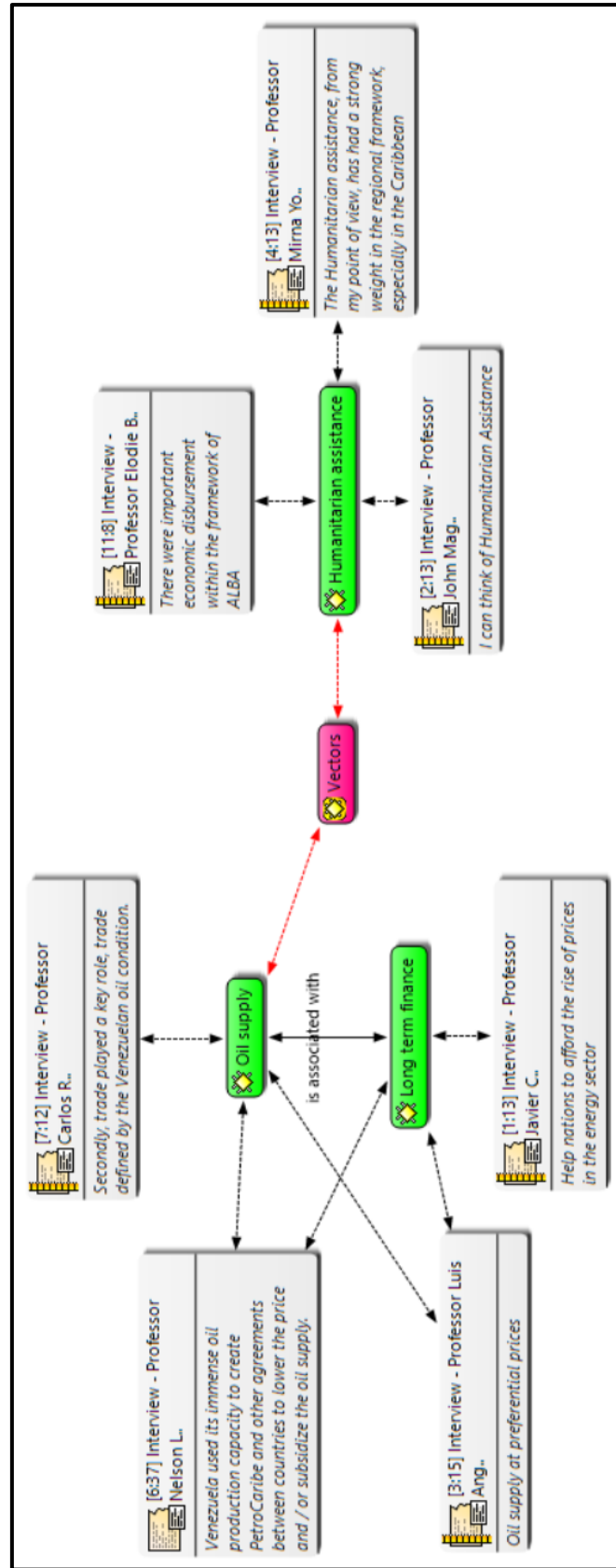
Also, the state’s enterprise, PDVSA, was mentioned as one of the essential organizations linked to SSC projects at the implementation level. PDVSA had total operational control of the petroleum refineries and tanker fleet at the national level. Additionally, as

mentioned in part 4.3.4.2, PDVSA administered the ALBA-Caribe Found and managed multiple subsidiaries such as PDV Americas and PDV Caribe. Consequently, during the study period, the state company was the national agency in charge of executing all the cooperation agreements in the energy field, including oil supply and financial disbursements through bilateral channels or multilateral initiatives like PetroCaribe, PetroSur, and PetroAmericas.

5.3.5 Vectors/schemes

Regarding vectors, figure 5.12 illustrates the most relevant information provided by the professors and scholars who participated in the interviews:

Figure 5.12: Network of meaning (Vectors/schemes)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Based on the information provided by the interviewees from the academic sector, Venezuela provided SSC through three main vectors: “Humanitarian Assistance,” “oil supply,” and “long-term finance.”

Regarding “Humanitarian assistance,” similarly to the interviewees from the governmental sector, the key informants from this group expressed that Venezuela provided aid to countries in need after catastrophic events. Particular emphasis was placed on the Caribbean region due to its geographical conditions, which make it prone to natural disasters such as tornados, landslides, and earthquakes.

Proof of this can be seen when Professor Yonis affirmed that: “Humanitarian assistance, from my point of view, had a strong weight in the regional context, especially in the Caribbean region because of its high vulnerability to the effects of climate change.”

However, humanitarian assistance initiatives could also be seen throughout the South American continent. For example, Venezuela sent 7 tons of essential goods and 27 experts in risk mitigation to Chile in 2010 after an earthquake of 8,8 magnitude hit this country (UN-OCHA, 2010). Similarly, Venezuela sent 4 tons of basic goods to Colombia in 2011 while the country was being affected by intense rainfalls (Notimerica, 2011).

Another important vector for the promotion of SSC was “oil supply.” Venezuela poses the largest proven reserve of oil in the world. Consequently, like some of his predecessors, Hugo Chavez used the country’s oil strength to promote SSC initiatives. However, President Chavez widened the scope of reach of this kind of cooperation by diversifying energy alliances with countries in South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia.

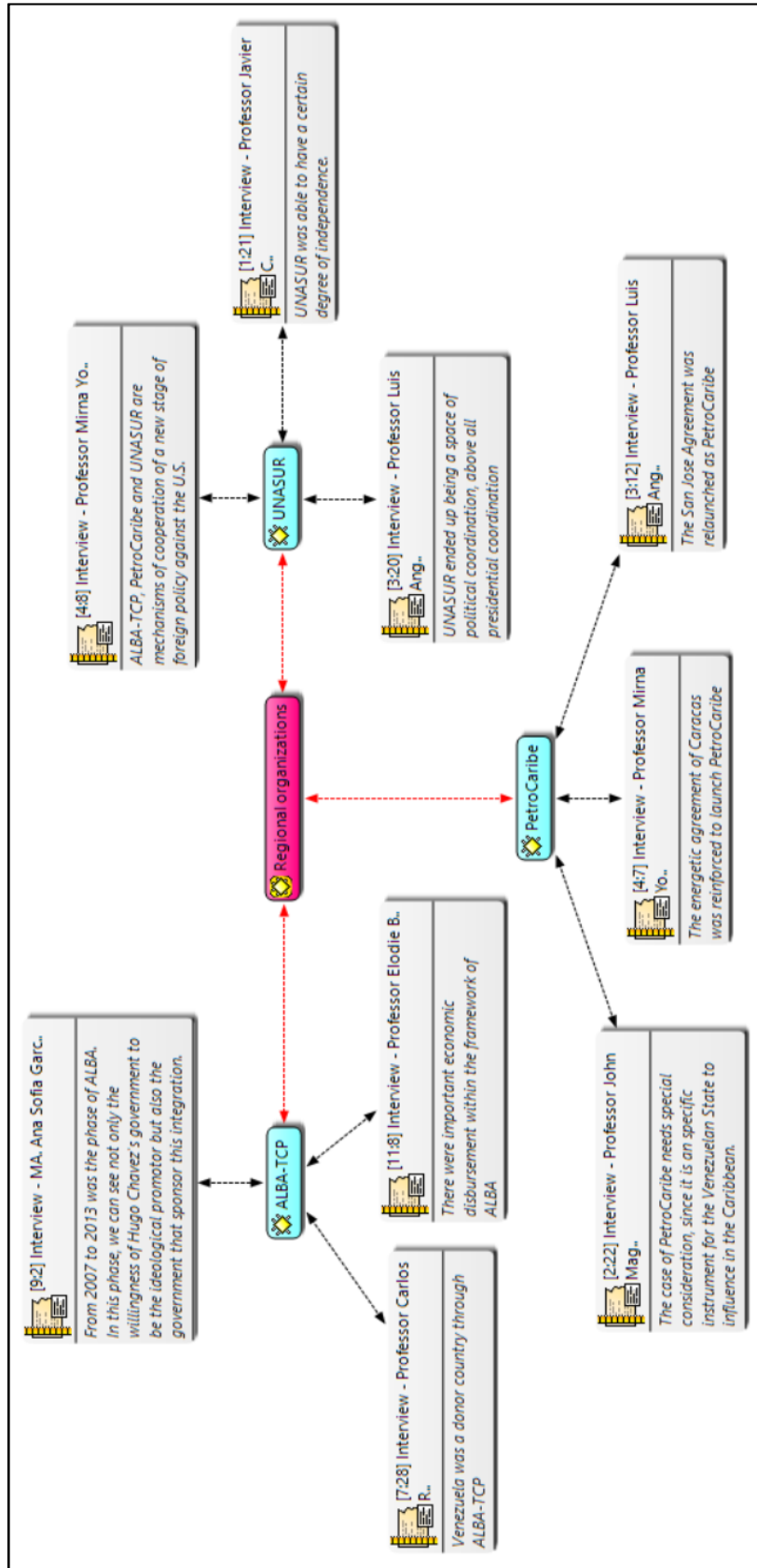
The “oil supply” was linked to the “long-term finance” vector since Venezuela provided oil at preferential prices, especially to Caribbean nations through PetroCaribe. Therefore, even though the country had to comply with OPEC’s market prices, the agreement condition allowed partner countries to pay in different installments within an extended time frame of 25 years.

Moreover, the payment for Venezuela’s “oil supply” could be made through other goods instead of currency payments. For example, in 2011, Guyana agreed to ship US\$48 million worth of rice to Venezuela to help pay for the oil it received from its neighborhood each month under preferential terms (Guyana Chronicle, 2011).

5.3.6 Regional organizations

Figure 5.13 illustrates the most relevant quotes linked to the regional organizations for Venezuela's SSC activities:

Figure 5.13: Network of meaning (Regional organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

In relation to regional organizations, the key participants established that the government of Venezuela relied on three leading organizations to promote SSC initiatives: ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, and UNASUR.

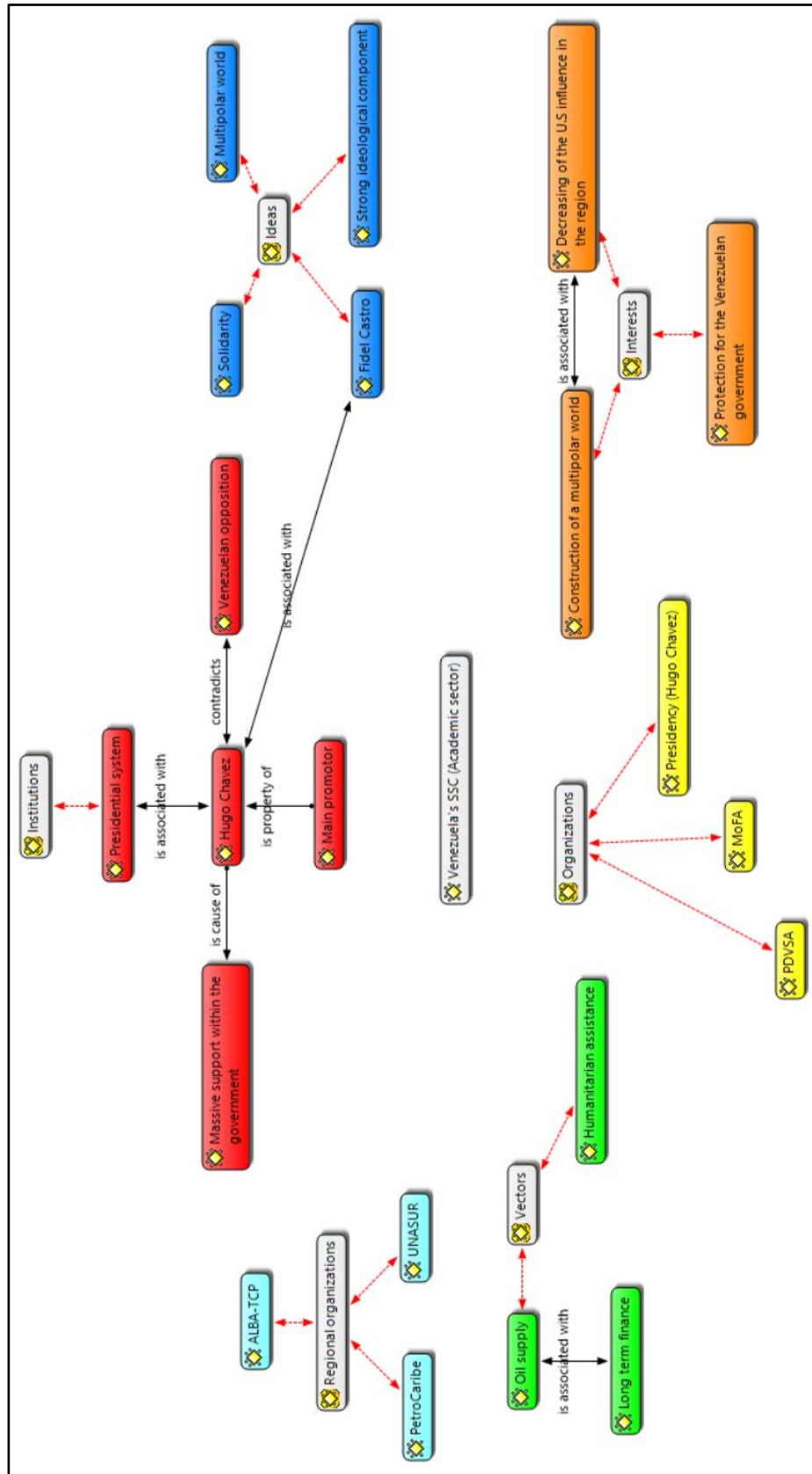
Concerning the first two, the government of Venezuela was the founder and main promotor in terms of dynamism, participation, and economic disbursement. Through ALBA-TCP, Venezuela promoted SSC based on political alignments since this organization was conceived as an alternative to counteract neoliberal policies promoted in the continent by the U.S. Therefore, the other country members in ALBA-TCP were, to some extent, supporters and political allies of the Venezuelan government and its model of development.

PetroCaribe is an organization that emerged in 2005 from the ideas of the San Jose Agreement of 1971, in which initially Venezuela and Mexico would provide oil to Caribbean countries at preferential prices. Through this organization, Venezuela aimed to achieve regional energy security through oil supply and diminish the energy dependence of Caribbean countries on the U.S. Even though Venezuela promoted SSC based on political aspects, the country provided oil to sixteen other members with different political models, which in some cases were not aligned with the Venezuelan socialism model, and its governments were allies of the U.S.

On the other hand, although Venezuela had a preponderant role in UNASUR for promoting different cooperation initiatives, according to the key informants, this organization achieved a certain degree of independence. In this sense, despite Venezuela being one of the major providers of aid in the region, within the UNASUR framework was also Brazil, which at the same time was one of the countries with the highest economic growth in the region and offered multiple opportunities for trade and foreign direct investment. Therefore this organization was considered a platform where Brazil and Venezuela had to find a consensus for promoting SSC initiatives in the South American region.

Consequently, in line with the previous explanation, figure 5.14 demonstrates the vision of the academic sector regarding Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013:

Figure 5.14: Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the academic sector



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The vision of the academic sector suggests that Venezuela's SSC was primarily influenced by the institution of the presidential system led by President "Hugo Chavez," who became the "main promotor" of this kind of cooperation. As a cause of it, he obtained "massive support within the government." Nevertheless, the Bolivarian government had to deal with the "Venezuelan opposition," a sector that constantly contradicted policies promoted by President "Hugo Chavez," including SSC initiatives.

Also, according to this vision, Venezuela's SSC was shaped by the ideas of "solidarity" and achieving a "multipolar world." The ideas promoted by the Venezuelan government had "strong ideological components," such as the influence of President "Fidel Castro," a leader with whom President "Hugo Chavez" had a unique association, being Castro his political mentor. These ideas with "strong ideological components" were translated into specific interests such as the "construction of a multipolar world," which was intrinsically associated with the interest of "decreasing the U.S. influence in the region." Additionally, the country promoted SSC to obtain "protection for the Venezuelan government" against criticism and collective action that could have been taken against Chavez's administration due to internal political issues.

From the perspective of the interviewed professors and scholars, the SSC projects relied, at the national level, on an organizational structure led by the "Presidency" and especially President Hugo Chavez, as well as the "MoFA" and the state oil company "PDVSA." These organizations channeled SSC initiatives mainly through the vectors of "humanitarian assistance," and "oil supply," which, based on its concessionality, was linked to the "long-term finance" vector.

Finally, the key informants from the academic sector established that at the regional level, Venezuela relied on ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, and UNASUR as the leading regional organization for the promotion of its SSC initiatives.

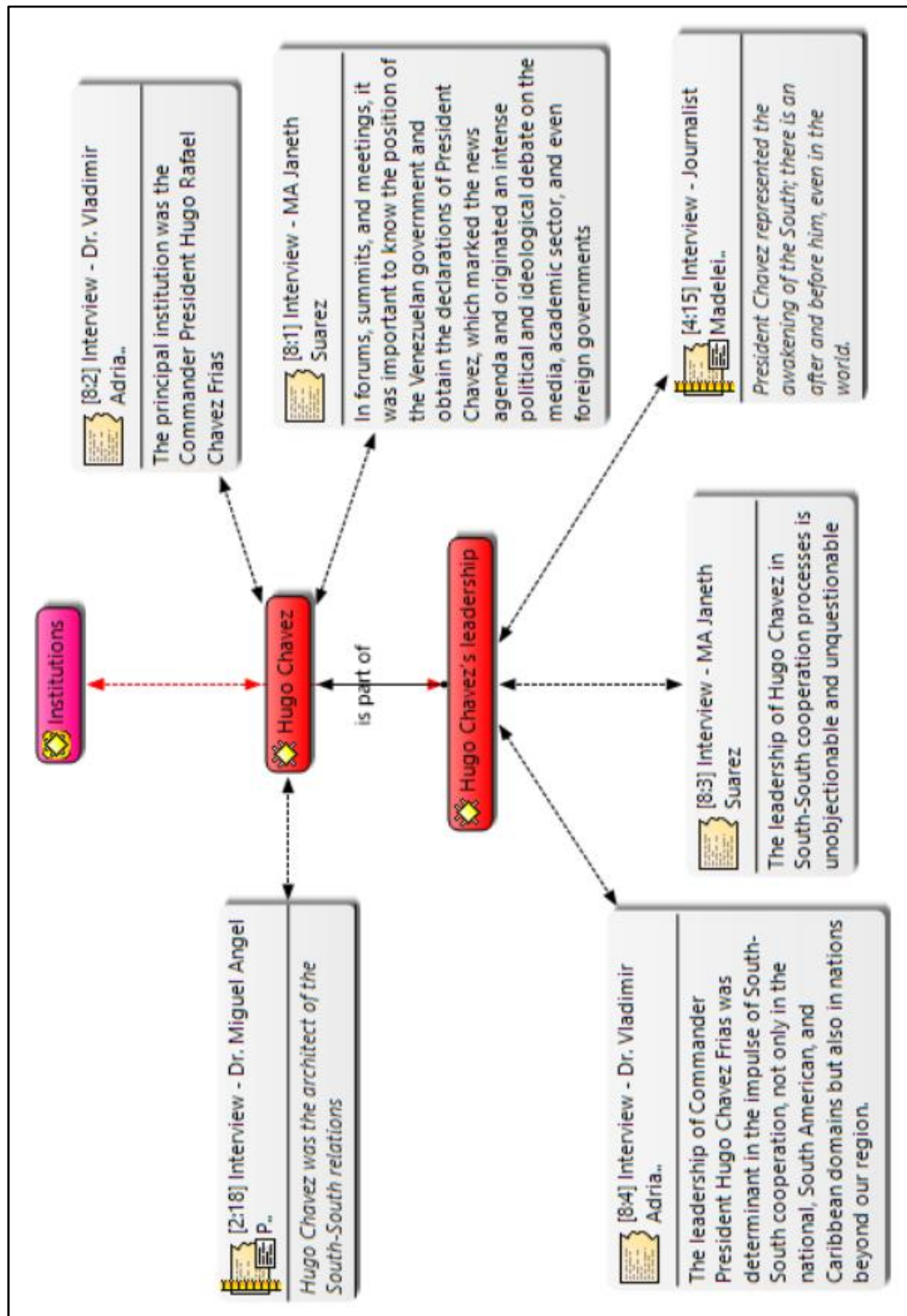
5.4 Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the media sector

This section contains the outcome of the in-depth interviews with key informants from the media sector. These key informants are (7) journalists who have worked in public or private media or independently and have been linked to Venezuelan politics, especially foreign policy and international relations.

5.4.1 Institutions

The information provided by the key informants allowed the construction of figure 5.15, which reflects the most important quotes regarding the institutions involved in Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013:

Figure 5.15: Network of meaning (Institutions)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

In line with the information expressed by the key informants from the two previous sectors, the participants linked to the media came to an agreement that the principal institution for the promotion of SSC during the period of study was President “Hugo Chavez,” who was the Head of the State and the representation of the presidential system established in Venezuela.

For the key informants of this sector, President Chavez had a preponderant role in the policy-making process regarding SSC being the principal designer and advocate of this kind of cooperation at the national level, in the region, and became one of the most influential leaders in the Global South.

Proof of this can be seen through the information provided by the journalist Suarez⁵⁴, who stated that:

In forums, summits, and meetings, it was important to know the position of the Venezuelan government and obtain the declarations of President Chavez, which marked the news agenda and originated an intense political and ideological debate on the media, academic sector, and even foreign governments.

Similarly, Dr. Adrianza⁵⁵ emphasized that “the leadership of Commander President Hugo Chavez Frias was determinant in the impulse of South-South cooperation, not only in the national, South American, and Caribbean domains but also in nations beyond our region.”

Hence, the preponderant role of President Chavez in policies related to SSC was based on his leadership and communicational capacity, which allowed him to project influence in like-minded political sectors, mark national and regional debates, and generate alliances with other governments across the Global South.

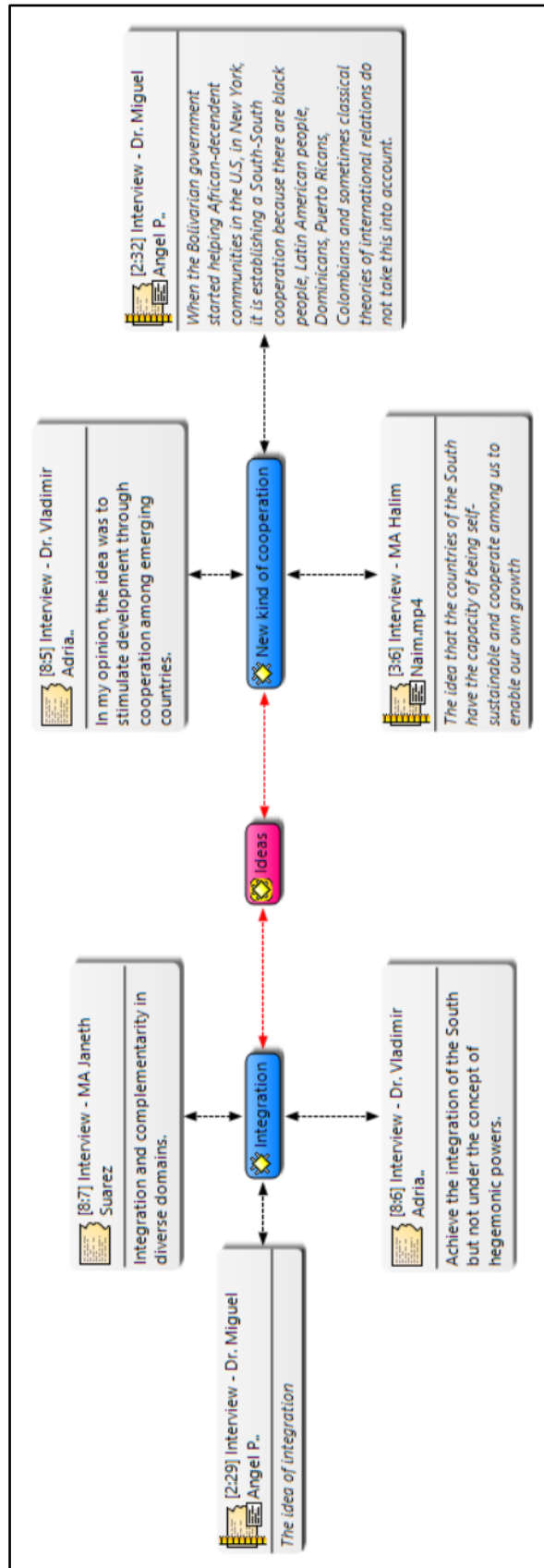
5.4.2 Ideas

Figure 5.16 shows the most relevant quotes obtained through the interviews with the key informants from this sector in relation to the ideas promoted by Venezuela through SSC:

⁵⁴ Interview through personal communication via written response, received on March 24th, 2022.

⁵⁵ Interview through personal communication via written response, received on February 21st, 2022.

Figure 5.16: Network of meaning (Ideas)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Based on the information provided by the key informants of this sector, the Government of Venezuela based the promotion of its SSC on two main ideas: “integration” and “new kind of cooperation.”

Regarding “integration,” the government of Venezuela promoted the idea that countries of the Global South must come together based on commonalities and merge as a collective unit to face common threats and problems, usually, in the Venezuelan government’s words, represented by northern countries. Consequently, the idea of “integration” promoted by Venezuela was not the kind of integration usually promoted by the U.S. or European countries, which emphasizes economic and commercial aspects, but rather an “integration” based on political and cultural aspects, affinities, and common historical claims.

Additionally, President Chavez’s administration promoted the idea that a “new kind of cooperation” was possible, which was not characterized by the traditional donor-recipient relationship promoted by countries of the North but by the emerging countries of the Global South, which with their own strengths have the capacity to promote development cooperation and being self-sustainable.

Relying on this idea that a “new kind of cooperation” was possible, Venezuela diversified its SSC, reinforcing and expanding initiatives such as the San Jose Agreement, which became “PetroCaribe,” and establishing new ones in a bilateral or multilateral way with countries across the Global South.

This cooperation sometimes did not fit the classical characterization of State-State cooperation since, in some cases, the Venezuelan government provided cooperation to local governments, social movements, and other alternative actors.

For example, when explaining the idea of a “new kind of cooperation,” Dr. Perez Pirela used the emblematic case in which the Venezuelan government provided oil supply at preferential prices to African and Latin American communities in the Bronx, New York, through PDVSA’s affiliated company, CITGO. In this sense, he pointed out that:

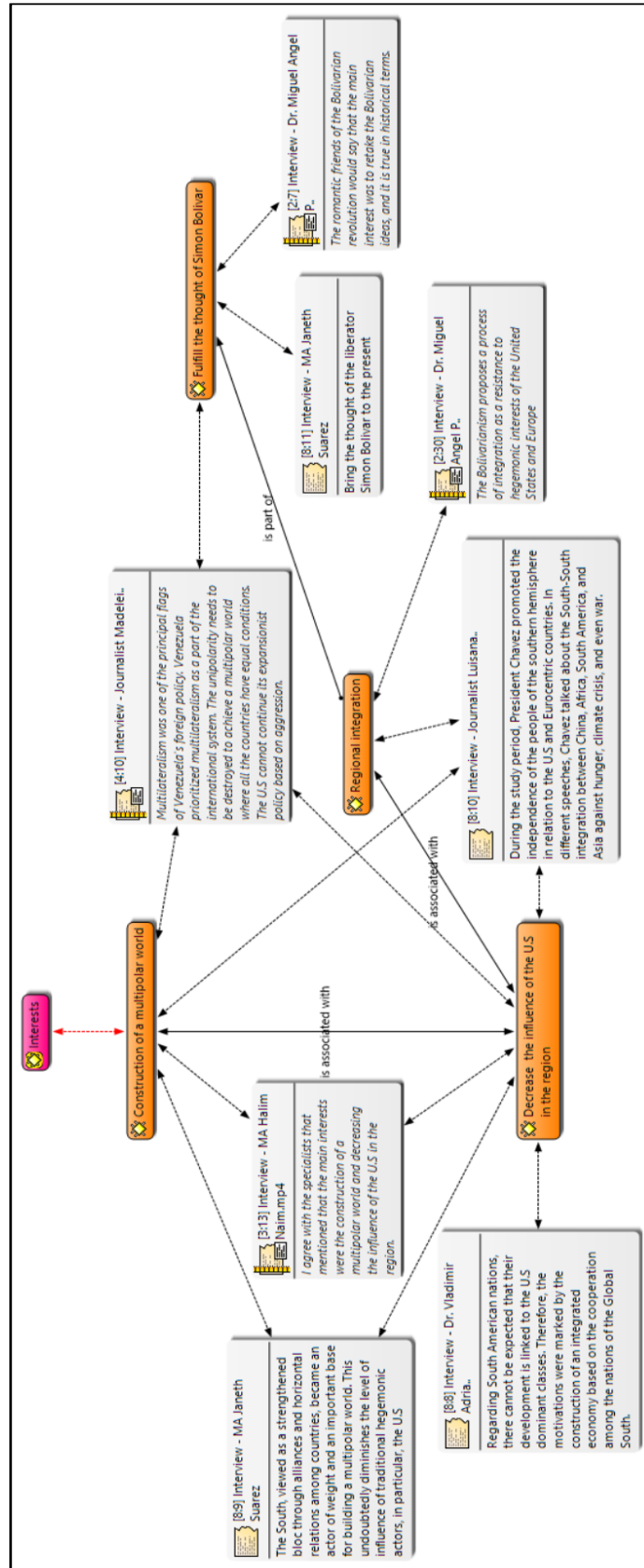
When the Bolivarian government started helping African-descendent communities in the U.S, in New York, it is establishing South-South cooperation because there are black people, Latin American people, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and sometimes classical theories of international relations do not take this into account.

These examples of a “new kind of cooperation” based on alternative ways of engagement are not exclusive to the cooperation with the African American community in the U.S. These were also seen in other projects with national, regional, and local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, as well as social movements in these regions.

5.4.3 Interests

In figure 5.17, the readers can observe the most notable quotes related to the opinions of the key informants from this sector regarding the interests pursued by the Venezuelan government through SSC during the period of study:

Figure 5.17: Network of meaning (Interests)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

The key interviewees from the media highlighted the “construction of a multipolar world,” “decrease the influence of the U.S. in the region,” “regional integration,” and “fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar” as the main drivers of the Venezuelan government for promoting SSC.

For example, these interests were drawn by Journalist Colomine, who emphasized that:

During the study period, President Chavez promoted the independence of the people of the southern hemisphere in relation to the U.S. and Eurocentric countries. In different speeches, Chavez talked about the South-South integration between China, Africa, South America, and Asia against hunger, climate crisis, and even war.

Based on this, it can be said that President Chavez aimed to reinforce different poles of power, fostering strategic relations with emerging countries such as China, Russia, India, and Iran, among others, through cooperation to balance world relations, increase the bargaining power of emerging countries, and counteract individual hegemonic nations that promote unilateralism in world affairs.

This search for the “construction of a multipolar world” was intrinsically linked to the interest in “decreasing the U.S. influence in the region” since, historically, the Latin American and Caribbean region has been conceived as the central area of influence of the U.S., and a region that serves its strategic interests due to its geographical closeness, its economic dependence, and political and military weakness.

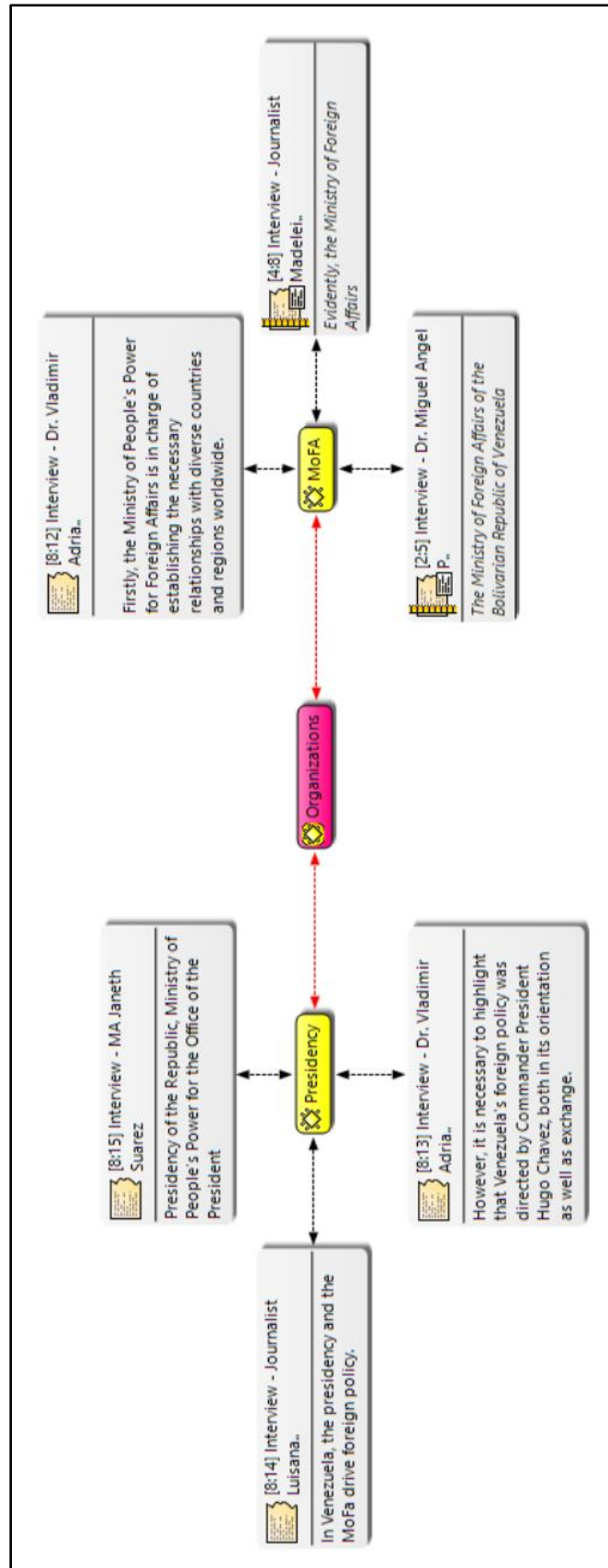
Consequently, Venezuela also had the “regional integration” of the LAC region as one of its main interests since this situation could translate into the consolidation of the region as a pole of power, relying on shared interests and structural capacities and at the same time would lead to diminishing the presence of the U.S.

It is important to point out that the interests in achieving “regional integration” and “decrease of the U.S. influence in the region” have been historically linked to the Latin American project led by Simon Bolivar since the independence of Venezuela in 1811. Therefore, Hugo Chavez, who was strongly influenced by the emancipatory ideas of the Liberator, tied the interests mentioned above to the one of “fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar.”

5.4.4 Organizations

Figure 5.18 provides the most relevant quotes from the participants of this sector regarding the organizations involved in SSC:

Figure 5.18: Network of meaning (Organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

According to the key informants from the media sectors, the organizations linked to SSC initiatives were diverse, including different ministries and governmental agencies. Nevertheless, in line with the information expressed by the interviewees from the Government and the Academia, the participants from this sector highlighted the preponderant role of two central organizations involved in every stage of the policies related to SSC: the Presidency and the MoFA.

Firstly, the Presidency was mentioned as the organization where the decision-making process was concentrated. In this sense, President Chavez, as the head of the executive, was in charge of planning and leading Venezuela's foreign policy, including all the SSC projects established by the government.

In addition, the MoFA also played an essential role in the policy-making process since it was in charge of coordinating tasks with different organizations at the internal level and establishing and nurturing the necessary relationships with other states at the regional and global levels.

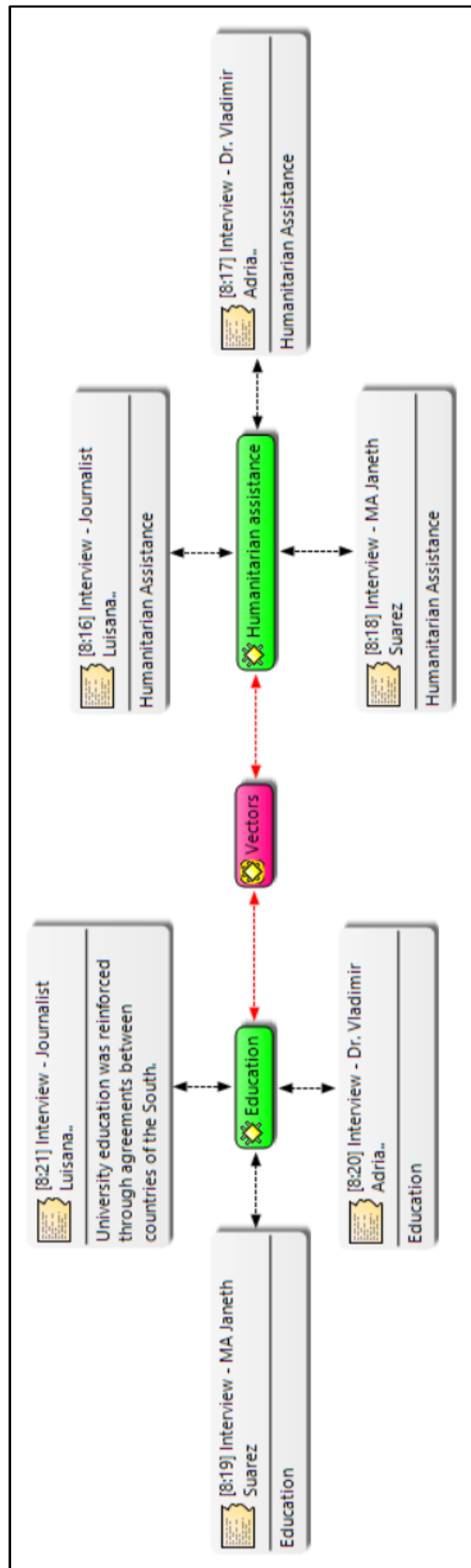
To prove this dynamic, Dr. Adrianza said that:

In principle, the MoFA is in charge of establishing the necessary relationship with diverse regions and countries of the world, although it is necessary to point out that President Commander Hugo Chavez directed Venezuela's foreign policy in person, both in the aspect related to policy orientation and exchange.

5.4.5 Vectors/schemes

Regarding the vectors/schemes through which Venezuela promoted SSC initiatives, figure 5.19 illustrates the most relevant quotes of the key informants linked to the media:

Figure 5.19: Network of meaning (Vectors/schemes)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

According to the key informants from the media sector, Venezuela established SSC mainly through “humanitarian assistance” and “education.”

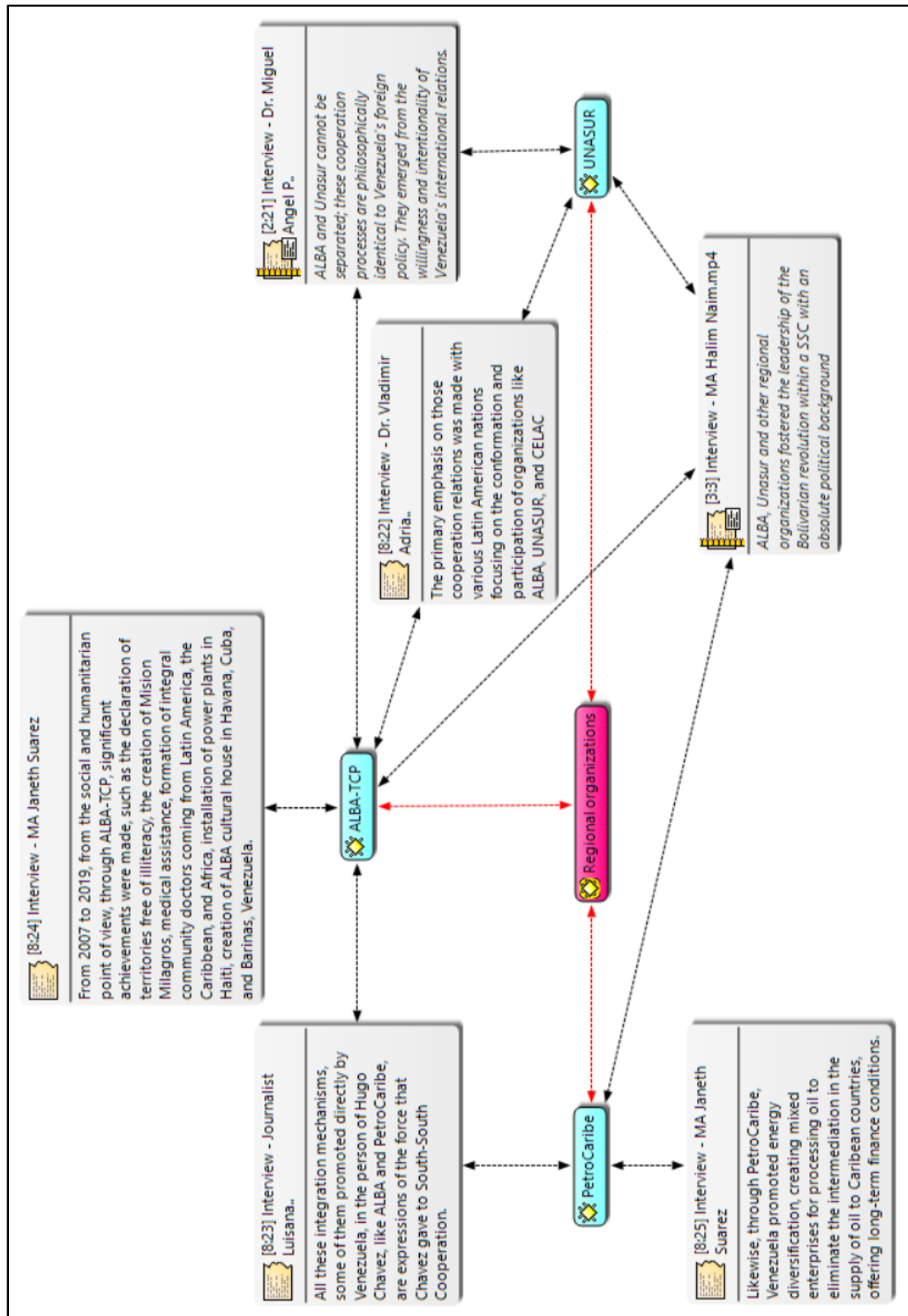
As expressed in previous sections, Venezuela was a proactive provider of “Humanitarian Assistance” to the LAC region during the study period, especially after natural disasters such as earthquakes, intense tropical depressions, and landslides. This “humanitarian assistance” comprised mainly of the donation of basic goods like nutritious food, clean water, and medical equipment.

Likewise, Venezuela implemented SSC with different partners through “education.” For example, through the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation, the Venezuelan government sent Venezuelan citizens to study abroad in undergraduate and graduate programs in Russia and China. Similarly, Venezuela created the Latin American School of Medicine with Cuba, headquartered in la Habana. This school provided scholarships in the field of medicine to people from Global South countries who wanted to study medicine. Moreover, Venezuela also received students from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa who wanted to study at a Venezuelan public university.

5.4.6 Regional organizations

Figure 5.20 has the most illustrative quotes from the key informants of this sector in relation to the regional organizations used by Venezuela to promote SSC efforts:

Figure 5.20: Network of meaning (Regional organizations)



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

According to the media sector participants, the government of Venezuela relied on three leading regional organizations to promote SSC. These were ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, and UNASUR.

Even though the key informants of this sector acknowledge the specific scope of these organizations, for example, while through ALBA-TCP cooperation was promoted in different areas such as health, education, and social issues, and PetroCaribe mainly focused on energy cooperation, in their view, all these regional bodies shared a similar identity and rather than being separated, they complemented each other in the promotion of Venezuela's foreign policy, especially in SSC.

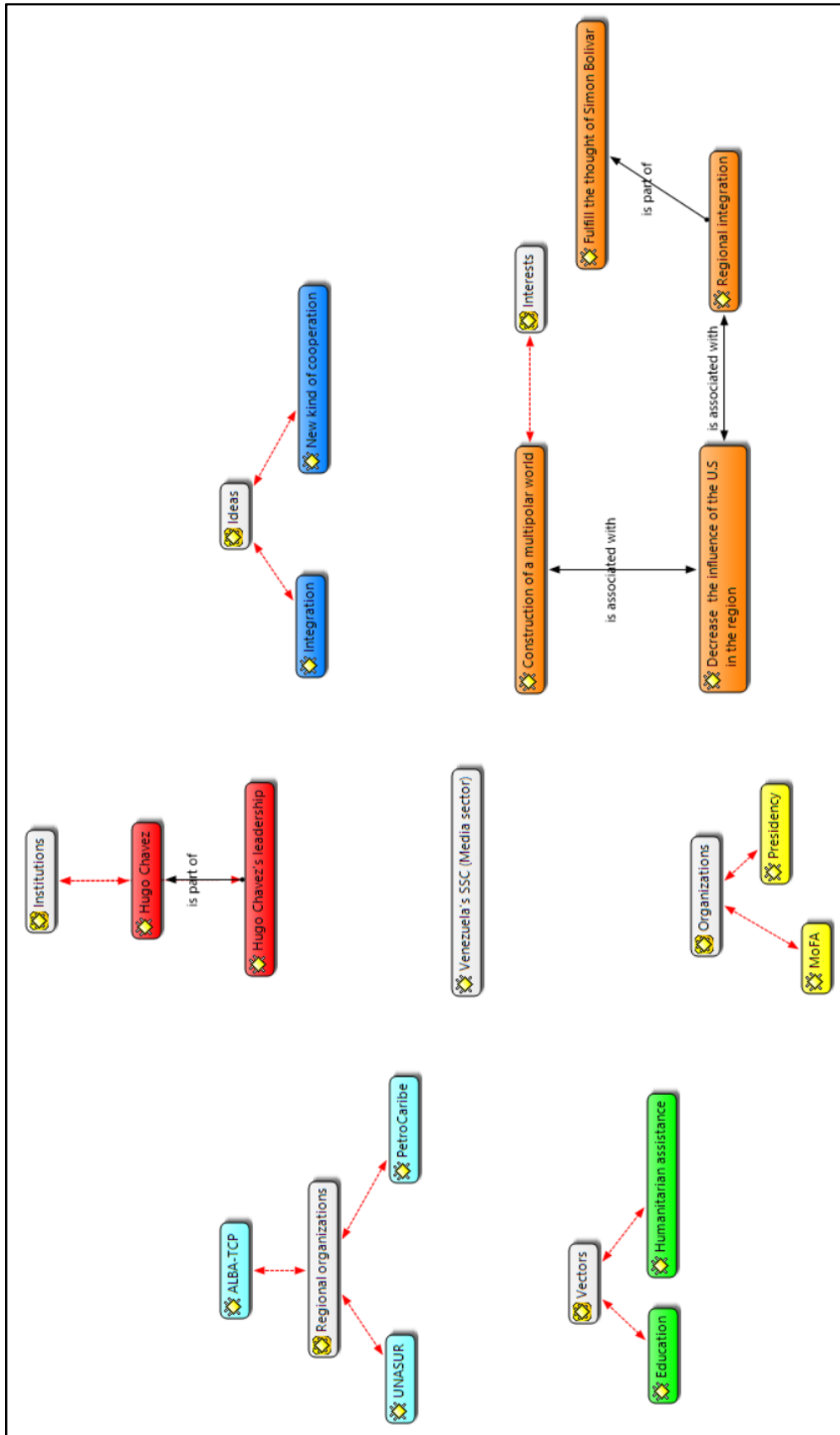
In this direction, Dr. Perez Pirela stated that "ALBA and Unasur cannot be separated; these cooperation processes are philosophically identical to Venezuela's foreign policy. They emerged from the willingness and intentionality of Venezuela's international relations".

Also, M.A. Naim emphasized that "ALBA, Unasur, and other regional organizations fostered the leadership of the Bolivarian revolution within an SSC with an absolute political background."

Therefore, unlike the key informants of the diplomatic and academic sectors, these did not highlight the role of Brazil in UNASUR or stress the strong political component exclusively in the ALBA-TCP initiative. On the contrary, the informants of this sector emphasized the predominant role of the government of Venezuela within these organizations and the critical political influence that Venezuela imprinted on these to nurture the regional leadership of Hugo Chavez and achieve the country's foreign policy goals.

Based on the previous explanation, figure 5.21 illustrates the vision of the media sector regarding Venezuela's SSC during the period of study.

Figure 5.21: Venezuela's SSC from the vision of the media sector



Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Consequently, it can be said that Venezuela's SSC was promoted within a presidential institutional framework led by President "Hugo Chavez," who was the head of state and a prominent political figure of this period. "Hugo Chavez's leadership" played a crucial role in the establishment and reinforcement of relations with countries of the Global South and the reemergence of SSC.

The Venezuelan government embraced the idea that the country could promote a "new kind of cooperation" based on the "integration" of the Global South, especially the LAC region. This new kind of cooperation was based on partnerships and commonalities, not on a donor-recipient relationship, which characterized NSC modalities.

By promoting SSC, the Venezuelan government aimed to achieve different interests, such as the "construction of a multipolar world" and "decrease the influence of the U.S. in the region." The last one was also associated with the interest of achieving "regional integration," which has been part of a historical interests of President Chavez's administration, "fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar."

At the national level, the leading organizations involved in SSC during the study period were the "Presidency" and the "MoFA." These organizations made it possible for the country to provide cooperation through mainly two vectors: "humanitarian assistance" and "education."

At the regional level, Venezuela relied on the platforms established by three main new regional organizations, ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, and UNASUR, to promote SSC initiatives.

5.5 Result of the analysis

From the visions provided by each sector through in-depth interviews with key informants, a set of codes under each dimension emerged. These allowed the conceptualization of Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013. Therefore, table 5.2 shows the definition of each code that makes it possible to conceptualize Venezuela's SSC during the period under study:

Table: 5.2 Conceptualization

Code/concept	Meaning
Institutions	
Presidential system	The political system in which the head of the state is entrusted to the executive branch and the president has a predominant role in the policy-making process regarding public policies, including foreign policy.
Hugo Chavez	President of Venezuela from 1999 to 2013 and leader of the so-called Bolivarian Revolution.
Hugo Chavez's leadership	The ability of President Chavez to influence or guide the policy-making process regarding foreign policy, especially SSC policies, and to create and reinforce strategic alliances with other countries of the Global South.
Main promotor	Condition of President Chavez of being the principal advocate for SSC within his government and one of the principal leaders of the Global South who backed up this kind of cooperation.
Massive support within the government	President Chavez had the support of his cabinet, other public branches (legislative, judicial, electoral, and citizen branches), the Armed Forces, the majority of regional and local governments, and his political party to design, promote, and execute Venezuela's foreign policy, including SSC policies.
Venezuelan opposition	Political sector that opposed the initiatives promoted by President Chavez's administration. It comprehends traditional political parties such as Accion Democratica and COPEI, as well as others created after 1999, like Primero Justicia, Un Nuevo Tiempo, and Voluntad Popular, among others.
Ideas	
CRBV 1999	It refers to the national constitution approved by a referendum in 1999, which contains the values adopted by the republic for its national development and acts in the international systems.
Solidarity	Moral obligation among countries of the Global South to support each other and employ mutual assistance to mitigate common problems.

Equality	A condition in which all the parties involved in SSC have the same treatment and status. Consequently, there is no power leverage produced by donor-recipient relationships but a collaboration where partner countries interrelate in equal conditions.
Complementarity	A relationship or situation in which two or more states use each other's strengths to improve their current situation through SSC.
Multipolar World	International system with multiple political, economic, and military centers that bring balance to world dynamics and prevent unilateral actions of world powers.
Strong Ideological Component	Kind of cooperation marked by ideological affinities, government alignments, and the export of a political model rather than economic or technical approaches.
Fidel Castro	Leader of the Cuban Revolution, who served as a mentor of President Chavez and inculcated him with revolutionary ideas against the neoliberal model promoted by the U.S.
Integration	The conception that promotes the union of southern countries based on commonalities to achieve common development and face common threats and problems.
New Kind of Cooperation	The notion that a different type of cooperation beyond the traditional relationship donor-recipient was possible based on the strengths and commonalities of countries of the Global South.
Interests	
Construction of a Multipolar World	Foster strategic partnerships and cooperative relations with economic, political, and military emerging powers such as China, Russia, India, Brazil, Iran, and Turkey, among others, to counterbalance the actions promoted by traditional powers and their allies.
Regional integration	Achieve the political, economic, social, energy, military, and cultural integration of the Latin American and Caribbean region with the intention of transforming it into a pole of power.
Fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar	Historical conviction of the President Chavez administration of achieving the political integration of the South American continent to eliminate the intervention of imperial powers in the region. This conviction is based on the integrationist project promoted by Simon Bolivar after the independence of South American countries and drawn in the 1826 Amphictyonic Congress of Panama, which intended to

	establish a military alliance with a supranational parliamentary assembly against the Spanish crown.
Decrease the U.S. influence in the region	Diminish the political, economic, energy, and cultural impact that the U.S. has had in the region due to its geographical closeness, political and economic power, and historical interventionist policies.
Protection for the Venezuelan government	Promotion of SSC to establish political alliances, gain support in international fora, and mitigate external criticism and collective action regarding internal issues.
Organizations	
Presidency	The leading organization in the design and planning of foreign policy, especially SSC initiatives.
Complex Ministerial Architecture	A bureaucratic network comprised of several ministries involved in SSC projects.
MoFA	Organization in charge of executing Venezuela's foreign policy after receiving instructions from the president. It plays a key role as a coordination body among all the ministries involved, to some extent, in SSC projects.
PDVSA	State-own company in charge of all the matters related to oil, gas, and other energy resources.
Vectors/schemes	
Humanitarian Assistance	Donations of essential goods, safeguard, rescue missions, and infrastructure reconstruction after catastrophic events.
Education	Promotion of educational exchange with partner countries, provision of scholarships to Venezuelan citizens to study abroad, welcoming international students to study in public universities free of tuition, creation of universities, and promotion of basic educational programs through social missions.
Trade	Promotion of commercial exchanges between partner countries based on their own specific strengths. In the case of Venezuela, the country used its oil as the main product of export in the regional and global markets.
Energy cooperation	Provision of cooperation through fossil energy sources, including oil, coal, and natural gas.
Oil Supply	Provision of oil to Latin American and Caribbean nations as well as other strategic allies of the Global South.

Long-term finance	Energetic supply at international market prices with preferential treatment for payment. For example, the energetic supply through PetroCaribe was financed at various concessional rates between 1.0 and 2.0 percent over a maximum period of 25 years.
International Organizations	
ALBA-TCP	An organization created by Venezuela and Cuba as an alternative to the ALCA initiative, promoted by the U.S. It has a membership of 10 countries and encompasses a wide variety of issues like political, economic, and social cooperation, health, education, and agriculture, among other topics. This organization is known for its strong political rhetoric against U.S. actions.
PetroCaribe	An energy alliance initiated by Venezuela to supply oil to Caribbean countries at market prices with preferential conditions of payment with the aim of achieving regional energy security. During the period of study, these alliances counted 18 member states.
UNASUR	A regional intergovernmental organization founded by twelve South American countries. It addressed different subjects related to regional integration, such as energy, health, social development, infrastructure and planning, economy, education, culture, science, technology and innovation, and defense. Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela were the most proactive countries in the promotion of SSC within this organization.
CELAC	Political forum created to discuss regional affairs with the inclusion of Cuba and excluding North American countries (the U.S and Canada). It originated as a counterpart of the OAS.

Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Additionally, to complement the qualitative content analysis carried out so far, where the interest centered on developing dimensions as close as possible to the content provided by the key informants, the result of the constant comparison method is presented below, where the level of saturation of these codes was identified.

The constant comparative method proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) allows researchers to generate a theory from the comparative and systematic analysis of the contents and requires the saturation of the data and not the proof or verification of one or more hypotheses.

Following this criterion, Table 5.3 shows the product of the constant comparison among the groups of key informants of the previously conceptualized codes associated by dimension. In this direction, codes in green are those with the highest frequency in terms of mention and, consequently, the ones in which saturation is reached; codes in yellow represent the ones that have been mentioned only by some of the key informants, while codes in red obtained few or no mentions.

Likewise, the table shows the level of intensity of each code, understanding the level of intensity as the summation of mentions from the three groups. Therefore, if a code obtains saturation in at least two sectors, it is considered to have a high intensity. If some informants from two different sectors mentioned a code, or if the code reached saturation in one sector and was mentioned by some of the informants of another sector, it is considered to have medium intensity. On the contrary, if a code obtains only a few or no mentions in two of the three sectors, it is considered to have a low-intensity level.

Table 5.3: Outcome of the constant comparison process

Meaning	Highly mentioned (Reach saturation)	Mentioned by some of the key informants	A few or no mentions
Color			

Code/Sector	Government officials	Professors and Scholars	Media	Code intensity
Institutions				
Presidential system				High
Hugo Chavez				High
Hugo Chavez's leadership				High
Main promotor				High
Massive support within the government				High
Venezuelan opposition				High
Ideas				
CRBV 1999				Low
Solidarity				High
Equality				Low
Complementarity				Medium
Multipolar World				Medium
Strong Ideological Component				Low
Fidel Castro				Medium
Integration				Low
New Kind of Cooperation				Low

Interests				
Construction of a Multipolar World				High
Regional integration				High
Fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar				High
Decrease the U.S influence in the region				High
Protection for the Venezuelan government				Medium
Organizations				
Presidency				High
Complex Ministerial Architecture				Medium
MoFA				High
PDVSA				Medium
Vectors/schemes				
Humanitarian Assistance				High
Education				High
Trade				Medium
Energy cooperation				Medium
Oil Supply				High
Long-term finance				High
Regional organizations				
ALBA-TCP				High
PetroCaribe				High
UNASUR				High
CELAC				Medium

Source: Elaborated by the author (2022)

Table 5.3 shows that Venezuela's SSC, during the study period, can be characterized through different elements depending on the vision of the sector that evaluates it.

On the one hand, through the information provided by the participants from the three studied sectors, there is possible to find commonalities regarding the characterization of SSC, such as the relevance of President "Hugo Chavez" as the main representation of Venezuela's "presidential system" from 2007 to 2013, the interest of promoting SSC for the "construction of a multipolar world," which was intrinsically linked to "diminish U.S. influence on the region," the preponderance of the "presidency" and the "MoFA" as the main organizations involved in SSC initiatives, the importance of "humanitarian assistance" as one of the vectors to promote cooperation, and the fundamental role of ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, and UNASUR at the regional level for the promotion of SSC, among other common elements.

On the other hand, the interviewees from each sector provided specific elements that shaped their respective visions and allowed the contrast of perceptions regarding Venezuela's SSC. For example, while the governmental sector pointed out that the ideas for the promotion of SSC are those reflected in the 1999 National Constitution, the academic sector highlighted the "strong ideological component" in the ideas promoted by President Chavez's government through SSC. Likewise, in relation to the interest, while the government and media sectors mentioned "regional integration" and "fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar," the academic sector emphasized the promotion of SSC to obtain "protection for the Venezuelan government."

The previous examples are just some of the commonalities and differences expressed by the three studied sectors. However, the diverse elements contained in each vision allowed a deeper understanding of the phenomena of study and a broader and more accurate characterization of Venezuela's SSC promoted during the government of President Chavez, especially from 2007 to 2013.

5.6 Resignification of Venezuela's South-South Cooperation

This chapter has presented the empirical research findings resulting from a close inspection of the data; however, the results are not only generated by the coding and recovery of data fragments and the rigorous analysis of the narrative structures, nor is it exhausted with the construction of the semantic relationships presented here. It implies "going beyond the data" to develop ideas related to Venezuela's SSC and formally present them, that is, to show the process of generalization and theorization.

Therefore, theorizing has been an integral part of data analysis and not an independent stage in the research process. The analysis strategy used until now has allowed us to think based on the data and information collected, and this has been a step towards building new ideas about SSC and theorizing around it.

In this way, the use of the data⁵⁶ resulting from the interactions with key informants to think about Venezuela's SSC, taking into account the author's own ideas about the

⁵⁶ For the resignification, the author took into consideration the codes that reached high and medium intensity. The codes with high intensity were considered since they obtained saturation in at least two sectors. The codes with medium intensity were also included since they reached saturation in at least one of the sectors and were mentioned by another, or they were mentioned by some informants in at least two different sectors.

phenomenon under study and influenced by the theoretical frameworks proposed by Lancaster (2007) and Kragelund (2019), allowed to integrate into a coherent and logic form the results of the research, improving it with the inputs collected from the previous literature review after a contrasting procedure. This process allowed the author to build the resignification that is presented below as an attempt to generate new knowledge about Venezuela's SSC during 2007-2013.

5.6.1 Discussing the result of analysis

This is how, firstly, Venezuela's SSC must be understood as a part of the Venezuelan foreign policy, which, since 1999, with the ascension of President Hugo Chavez to power, was framed within the Bolivarian paradigm and the political model entitled "Socialism of the 21st century" and sought to break with the foreign policy orientation implemented by previous administrations.

While it is true that since the beginning of its republican history, Venezuela has been managed under the institution of the "presidential system", it was not until 1999, when Chavez's administration took power, that the role of the presidency, and particularly the figure of President "Hugo Chavez", gained an extensive preponderant role in the planning, execution, and control of foreign policy, including SSC policies. This was possible due to "Hugo Chavez's leadership", which, based on his charismatic personality, revolutionary ideas and rhetoric, and military authority, made it possible for him to create a strong connection with different actors, which translated into political support, with the poorest sectors of the populations, which represent the largest electoral population, and other political sectors at the national level.

Likewise, at the regional and global level, this leadership allowed President Chavez to create strategic ties with other leaders such as presidents Lula Da Silva (Brazil), Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez (Argentina), Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Evo Morales (Bolivia), Michelle Bachelet (Chile), Fidel Castro (Cuba), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Hu Jintao (China) among others, based on strong personal connections. Consequently, President Chavez's national and international political support allowed him to become one of the "main promoters" of SSC initiatives at the regional and global levels.

Besides the political support from the majority of the electorate at the national level and his international allies, President Chavez's had "massive support within the government",

including his cabinet, all the public branches, the Armed Forces, which for this period started to play a prominent role in Venezuela's political life, and the regional and local governments.

In this context, the only counterpart that President Chavez's had to face at the national level was the "Venezuelan opposition", represented in traditional political parties, a part of the business and the mass media sectors, and a part of the Academia, which all the time opposed to every political initiative promoted by the national government, including SSC initiatives. However, it is important to highlight that because of the low representation of these sectors at all government levels, these had a small or non-existence influence on the policy-making process regarding foreign policy.

The Venezuelan government, led by President Hugo Chavez, promoted SSC within an ideological framework contained in the 1999 national constitution, which recovered traditional principles and historical claims from countries of the Global South, which are embodied in the NAM, the NIEO, or the revolutionary and emancipatory thought of leaders like Fidel Castro, as well as ideas influenced by emerging countries like China and Brazil, whose governments were betting for a more proactive role in global politics and economy from a more pragmatic approach.

While it is true that the most resounding ideas were the ones of international "solidarity" between countries of the Global South, "complementarity" in order to obtain mutual benefits through each country's strength, and a "multipolar world" to counteract unipolarity and democratize the international system; there were other transcendental ideas that president "Hugo Chavez" used to boost SSC, such as the rupture with the traditional North-South cooperation model.

These ideas served as justification for the interests that the Venezuelan government aimed to achieve during the period of study through the promotion of SSC, which were: First, "the construction of a multipolar world" that can be possibly made through the reinforcement of alternative political, economic, and military centers opposed to the traditional western world system led by the U.S. and its allies, and the establishment of new strategic bilateral and multilateral alliances between countries of the Global South.

For this purpose, the second interest of the Venezuelan government was to achieve "regional integration". In President Chavez's conception, the "construction of a

multipolar world” passed through the conformation of different poles of power, in which the Latin American and Caribbean pole of power played a relevant role.

The model of regional integration promoted by Venezuela during this period sought an integration based on the strategic regionalism conception, a model of integration that includes political, economic, social, military, cultural, and energy cooperation, among other topics.

The interest in the “construction of a multipolar world” and creating the Latin American and Caribbean pole of power through “regional integration” were intrinsically associated with a third interest: “decrease the influence of the U.S. in the region”. As it is known, Latin America and the Caribbean have historically been under the influence of the U.S. due to its economic and military power as well as the geographical closeness to the region. Consequently, the U.S. has shaped regional politics through foreign aid, political and economic alliances, security cooperation, and in some cases, even military interventions. This country’s enormous influence is evident in regional organizations such as the OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank. Therefore, Venezuela opposed every initiative proposed by the U.S. and became one of the most antagonistic countries to U.S. policies in the region. This confrontation was clear when Venezuela rejected the ALCA initiative introduced by the U.S. and instead proposed the ALBA as a counteroffer to Latin American countries.

Additionally, through PetroCaribe, Venezuela aimed to undermine the U.S. influence in the Caribbean through the offering of alternative energy resources. With CELAC, the intention was to diminish the role of the OAS in hemispheric affairs, exclude the U.S. and Canada from Latin American issues, and bring Cuba back to political deliberations since this was expelled from the OAS in 1962. Moreover, with UNASUR, the idea was to create an integrationist project, similar to the E.U, which could promote a holistic integration in different fields, including military cooperation that did not include U.S. participation.

The interest in achieving “regional integration” and “decrease the influence of the U.S. in the region” had a historical interest as a background, the interest of “fulfilling the thought of Simon Bolivar”, who, during the independentist process promoted efforts to achieve “regional integration” to counteract hegemonic interventions from the imperial power of the time, that is, the Spanish empire and the U.S., which was already emerging as a world

power. In this direction, Simon Bolivar stated in a letter in August 1829 that “the U.S. appears to be destined by Providence to plague America with misery in the name of liberty.” This conception was deeply embedded in the revolutionary movement led by Hugo Chavez, and it was an essential part of his foreign policy.

In addition to the interests previously explained, linked to a macropolitical project, Chavez’s administration also promoted SSC initiatives to seek “protection for the Venezuelan government.” It is important to highlight that during the study period, Chavez’s administration raised serious concerns in sectors of the international community regarding democratic principles, lack of freedom of speech, and violation of human rights, among other topics. This situation mobilized national and international opposition sectors in the quest to promote collective actions to condemn authoritarian practices and even remove President Chavez from power. As a response to these attempts of collective action by part of the international community, the Venezuelan government promoted SSC initiatives as a way to obtain political support in international fora as well as reinforce and extend its circle of political allies in the hemisphere and the Global South.

At the national level, Venezuela’s SSC, from 2007 to 2013, relied on a “complex ministerial architecture”. For President Chavez, all the ministries should be involved to some degree in the conception and execution of foreign policy. Consequently, different ministries, such as Health, Education, Culture, Oil, and Finance, were involved in the SSC initiatives promoted during this period.

Nevertheless, three organizations were central to establishing this kind of cooperation: Firstly, the “Presidency” as the leading organization in policy-designing and decision-making processes. President Chavez held extensive influence in all the phases of the policy-making process, having the power to promote new cooperation initiatives without previous consulting with other entities and the veto power to block initiatives that he considered were not aligned with the orientation of Venezuela’s foreign policy for that period.

Secondly, the “MoFA” played a crucial role in the coordination of SSC policies with other ministries and entities at the national level, as well as partners abroad. At the same time, the MoFA represented the arm of execution of foreign policy for the executive power.

“PDVSA” also had a crucial role in SSC initiatives since it was the organization in charge of executing energy cooperation, especially oil supply to partner countries, which represented one of the main vectors through which Venezuela provided SSC.

At the regional level, as explained in detail in chapter 4, Venezuela relied on four main organizations to promote its SSC: “ALBA-TCP,” “PetroCaribe,” “UNASUR,” and “CELAC.” It is important to highlight that while the Venezuelan government enjoyed a high degree of influence in the first two organizations mentioned above, due to the political closeness of its member states and the important economic weight of the country in these organizations, in the last two, Venezuela had a lesser degree of influence since a larger number of member states formed these organizations and within them were other countries which were also looking for regional leadership in the LAC region, such as Argentina and Brazil. However, despite not having the same influence, Venezuela was a relevant actor in “UNASUR” and “CELAC.”

Finally, during the study period, the Venezuelan government promoted SSC based on a holistic approach that included several vectors:

The first of them was represented by the “humanitarian assistance” that Venezuela provided to allied and opposed governments alike, based on the dispatch of essential goods such as food and medical equipment in the occurrence of calamities or natural disasters. This practice was commonly seen in the Latin American and Caribbean region. However, it was also extended to African countries.

The second vector was associated with the promotion of Venezuela’s SSC through “education”. This vector encompassed scholarships for international students to study in Venezuelan public universities, educational exchanges with partner countries, sending volunteers abroad to help in primary and secondary education through the so-called social missions, the creation of new universities in partnership with other countries such as Cuba, and sending Venezuelan students to study in partner countries of the Global South.

Additionally, Venezuela promoted “trade” with different countries. However, the “trade” endorsed by Venezuela was not the traditional “trade” ruled by market prices. It was a trade modality where the oil became the currency of payment for receiving other international products required by Venezuela from commercial partners. Through this vector, Venezuela also designed a new financial architecture based on a regional currency,

the Unified System for Regional Compensation (SUCRE), and new financial institutions such as the ALBA Bank and the Bank of the South.

Likewise, regarding oil, Venezuela promoted “energy cooperation” based on different hydrocarbons but especially through “oil supply” to partner countries. This supply had the characteristic of “long-term finance”, which implied a series of concessions regarding the payment timeline. However, it was sold at the oil price established at the moment by the international market since Venezuela is an OPEC member and must comply with its mandates.

5.6.2 The Political Dimension of Venezuela’s South-South Cooperation

In addition to the analytical process of Venezuela’s SSC from 2007 to 2013, under the dimensions established by the theoretical framework presented by Lancaster (2007) and Kragelund (2019), which represent the core of this study, and with the intention to go beyond the reach of these parameters, the author of this thesis, at the time of conducting the depth interview process with key informants, decided to inquire about the existence of a political dimension within these cooperation initiatives aiming to have a broader understanding of Venezuela’s SSC during the period of study.

In this regard, there was an extensive consensus among the key informants about the existence of a political dimension inside Venezuela’s SSC. Several participants from the three sectors characterized it as a “cross-cutting political dimension” since it did not have only one specific goal but instead encompassed multiple political aspects.

These political aspects have been already developed extensively in previous sections of this chapter. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that based on the information provided by the interviewees the political dimension of Venezuela’s SSC was seen in the following points:

- 1) The promotion of cooperation based on the idea of international “solidarity” between countries of the Global South against common problems.
- 2) The necessity of creating a “multipolar world” for the democratization of the global system and mitigating unilateral actions undertaken by hegemonic powers, where the “regional integration” of Latin America and the Caribbean played a critical role

3) The political dimension was also perceived in the leadership of Hugo Chavez and his political rhetoric, elements that at the domestic level made him become the main promotor of SSC, guaranteeing massive support within his government, securing the approval of SSC initiatives, and granting an extensive role of the president in the policy-making process. These elements also allowed a powerful leadership of President Chavez in the region, forming alliances with other left-oriented leaders and fostering the promotion of Venezuela's development model.

4) Another relevant aspect of the political dimension that shaped Venezuela's SSC was its open anti North-Americanism orientation.

At this point, it is essential to point out that to establish a reconceptualization of the object of study, the author of this thesis had as a premise that every attempt to explain a political reality is made from a specific theoretical approach. However, because of their own specificities, every approach embraces a set of dimensions from which the researcher initiates the investigative process and then consolidates the analysis and argumentation.

Therefore, to understand the different interpretations given to Venezuela's SSC was necessary to review previous studies on Venezuela's SSC. Most of these studies have mainly focused on specific and individual initiatives, and only a few have focused on Venezuela's SSC from the perspective of foreign policy.

In this sense, at the moment of addressing the political dimension, Briceño (2015), inspired by Lechini (2012), defined this as "the creation of multilateral or regional forums among developing countries to improve coordination and their bargaining power vis-à-vis the developed countries" (p.481). In this direction, Briceño (2015) characterized Venezuela's SSC as a model aiming to "a) the promotion of a multipolar world; b) the "Bolivarian" ideal of regionalism; and c) the fight against neo-liberalism" (p.485), based on the principles of solidarity, complementarity, equity, and consensus.

Similarly, Benzi and Zapata (2013) established that Venezuelan South-South integration and cooperation policies sought the economic diversification and expansion of the country, the promotion of the Bolivarian ideal, and the ideological commitment to solidarity and self-determination of the people.

Likewise, Santander and Alonso (2018) expressed that:

In the case of Venezuela, SSC aspires to be functional to the expansion of the 'Bolivarian revolution' and so-called twenty-first-century socialism as part of a disruptive strategy launched in opposition to the existing international system and giving rise to a markedly political and ideological model (p.1935).

When contrasting these conceptualizations of Venezuela's SSC with the findings obtained through this research process, some of the elements provided by previous studies were reaffirmed. For example, the interests promoted by the Venezuelan government through SSC were related to the construction of a multipolar world, diminishing the influence of the U.S. in the region, and achieving regional integration based on the thought of Simon Bolivar. Additionally, this SSC model was based on solidarity and complementarity, primarily promoted through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC.

However, one of the interests that emerged from this research and that was not considered by the scholars previously mentioned is the one related to promoting SSC for the protection of the Venezuelan government. This interest implies the establishment of political alliances to gain support in international fora, among other spaces of global governance, to mitigate external criticism and collective action regarding internal issues and guarantee the safeguarding of the political model.

Furthermore, to understand the new elements that emerged from the research process, it is necessary to remember the concept of political dimension proposed by the author, who defines it as all the processes of conflict, cooperation, negotiation, and relationship in making decisions about how resources are to be owned, used, produced, and distributed at the national and international levels, where it is possible to identify the political motivations that shape international cooperation.

Thus, even though previous studies dedicated to Venezuela's SSC took into account the processes at the regional and international level, considering the cooperative or antagonistic relationships that President Chavez had with other heads of state, these studies did not approach the internal dynamics presented by the author in the sections regarding institutions and organizations. These sections unveiled important aspects of the Venezuelan SSC model, such as the role of President Chavez as the main promotor of cooperation initiatives, the massive support within his government for these projects, and

the constant criticism of SSC from the opposition forces as well as the complex ministerial architecture in which this model of international cooperation developed.

Moreover, the previous studies did not assess the perception of the Venezuelan policymakers and other partner countries regarding SSC. On the other hand, this study undertook this task based on the impressions of the key informants and official declarations of Latin American heads of state, unveiling a positive perception by a considerable number of states.

Hence, by integrating the outcomes of the research into a coherent and logical whole, the product of a new way of analyzing already known aspects, to contrast them with the vision of key informants and with the contributions of the scholars outlined in the literature review, it has been possible to formulate a reconceptualization of Venezuela's SSC. This reconceptualization emerged from a network of relations between the dimensions, which allows the clarification of hidden or not much-studied aspects before this investigation, translating into the elaboration of a broader theoretical framework to better understand Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013, which constitutes a significant contribution in the areas of Venezuelan Foreign Policy and South-South Cooperation.

Consequently, based on the explanation provided in this section, the author attempted to give a new and more comprehensive meaning to Venezuela's SSC, understanding it as cooperation among countries of the Global South, primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean. This project of cooperation aimed to alter regional and global power dynamics, strengthening the collaboration between developing and least developed countries through regional integration, diminishing the influence of traditional powers, such as the U.S., and the relevance North-South Cooperation schemes, and guaranteeing the protection of the political identity of the government in power. The approach relied on a complex organizational structure that used several schemes to engage in cooperation with partner countries through bilateral channels or multilateral organizations such as ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC, which based on strong ideological contents inspired by vindications from the South and the principles of solidarity, complementarity, and multipolarity attempted to weaken the traditional regional cooperation structures inspired by the donor-recipient relation. Even though this cooperation approach fundamentally prioritized political interests over developmental aspects, its circumstantial economic strength from the oil revenues allowed it to generate tangible

benefits for the population of partner countries and obtain a positive perception of this model of cooperation at the regional level, elements that were materialized into political support and the enhance of Venezuela's influence through the continent.

Chapter 6

Comparison of Development Cooperation of Japan and China to Latin America and the Caribbean

6.1 Introduction

In chapters 4 and 5, readers observed that Venezuela was an active provider of cooperation through the SSC modality, especially during the period 2007-2013. The SSC approach implemented by this country was backed up by the institutional framework of the presidential system led by President Chavez. The Venezuelan model of cooperation was inspired by the ideas of solidarity, complementarity, and multipolarity, which were intrinsically linked with the interests of constructing a multipolar world, achieving regional integration, decreasing the U.S. influence in the region, fulfilling the thought of Simon Bolivar, and obtaining protection for the Venezuelan government.

Venezuela's SSC relied on a complex ministerial architecture led by the presidency, with the support of the MoFA and PDVSA, which used the vectors/schemes of humanitarian assistance, education, trade, and energy cooperation, especially oil-supply with long-term finance to establish SSC initiatives through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC.

Despite Venezuela's activism, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region full of disparities. Historically, the region's economies have been tied to the extraction of raw materials, agriculture and livestock practices, and other activities linked to the primary sector of the economy. This situation has created a strong dependence relationship with industrialized countries that, based on Cardoso and Faletto (1971), could have led to the region's underdevelopment.

Additionally, the region has been the victim of political instability, social turmoil, and even natural disasters. This situation made LAC countries historic recipients of ODA from traditional donors, especially the U.S. and European countries, as well as in recent years from emerging donors.

Amidst this reality, this chapter⁵⁷ aims to overview the evolution of the development cooperation promoted by Japan and China in the LAC region during the 21st century and compare these two case studies with the Venezuelan case.

Japan is an established traditional donor, which plays an important role due to its long history as one of the leading countries in development cooperation, being today one of the OECD countries with the highest donation of ODA globally (\$16.27 billion in 2020), just behind the U.S., Germany, and the U.K. (OECD, 2021).

Although Asia is the first destination of Japanese aid disbursements, ODA to LAC has increased steadily (Tuman et al., 2001). Moreover, after the U.S., Japan, at times, especially during the 1990s, accounted for the second-largest amount of net aid to the region, exceeding the amount given by other OECD donors. In this direction, Asplund and Soderberg (2017) suggested that Japanese foreign aid provides an extremely interesting case through which regional and even global changes in development cooperation may be understood.

Japan's Development Cooperation policy to LAC is reflected in the ODA Charter (2015) and the White Papers on Development Cooperation annually published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MoFA). There, it is observed that Japan's ODA's purpose is to contribute to closing the gaps in the sustainable development of Latin American and Caribbean nations while considering the presence of Nikkei communities in the region as a catalyst to foster cooperation processes between Japan and LAC.

In the case of China, recently, it "has displaced the U.S. as the top trade partner for Brazil, Chile, and Peru" (Myers & Wise, 2016, p.9). China's foreign aid allocated to LAC raised from 5% to 20% of its total budget from 1990 to 2016 (Maggiorelli, 2017). Moreover, Dollar (2017) highlighted that "the \$106 billion that China has already invested in LAC is significant, and the cooperation initiatives are certain to grow substantially in upcoming years" (p.3).

In contrast to traditional donors, China has been promoting development cooperation through the SSC modality. Consequently, the rise of China in the economic and political

⁵⁷ It is necessary to mention that part of the work presented in this chapter has been published in *Estudios Internacionales* Vol. 54 N. 201 (2022).

fields has challenged development initiatives promoted by traditional donors worldwide, including the LAC region.

Therefore, taking into consideration the changing dynamics in the development landscape of the LAC region, the importance of studying the cases of Japan, as a traditional donor, and China, as an emerging provider, and comparing them with the main case study of this dissertation.

6.2 Japan's approach to Latin America and the Caribbean

Japan's cooperation initiatives with LAC countries date to the early 20 century. It started as development assistance programs to support Japanese immigrant communities settled mainly in Brazil, Peru, and Paraguay, providing economic support to build essential infrastructure, foster agriculture, and small businesses (Inter-American Development Bank, 2013).

LAC has been a traditional recipient of Japan's foreign aid, and despite a lapse in the relationship-building in the 1980s and 1990s, Myers and Kuwayama (2016) claimed that the region has returned to Japan's list of economic and foreign policy priorities. Nowadays, LAC nations are viewed as essential political partners as Japan promotes its cooperation model.

LAC has also been a priority region for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). At different times through the 21st century, Japan has ranked as the top foreign donor for Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru (Myers & Kuwayama, 2016).

Institutions

Japan's development cooperation system is framed within the institution of a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament. Inside this system, several political parties coexist, the largest being the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has shaped Japanese politics, singly or in a coalition, for almost all of the period since 1955 (Lancaster, 2007).

Lancaster (2007) also showed how historically, the LDP has internally shaped ODA policies, while opposition parties have generally supported Japan's aid. This dynamic

generated a situation in which the role of the Prime Minister was restricted without significant involvement in ODA policy. However, she pointed out that since the beginning of the century, Japanese legislators have started to take more interest in the effectiveness and accountability of the country's cooperation system due to internal and external criticism, a generational change in the composition of the Diet, and episodes of mismanagement in aid budgets.

Additionally, during the second administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2012-2019), the figure of the Prime Minister had a more preponderant role. In this direction, Kamiya (2020) highlighted that:

Shinzo Abe will be remembered as a consequential prime minister who advanced a vision of the international order that would be comfortable both for Japan and the rest of the international community and promoted the international cooperation necessary to achieve such an order (p.1).

Ideas

In this context, in 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe launched the “Together” strategy to enhance bilateral relations with LAC countries. This strategy is based on three guiding principles:

1. To progress together in connectivity of economies by enhancing a free and open international economic system.
2. To lead together towards the connectivity of values supported on a rule-based multilateralism.
3. To inspire together in connective of wisdom with the aim to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

(MoFA Japan, 2021)

Likewise, the new ODA Charter states that:

Japan will provide assistance to foster an environment more conducive to economic development through trade and investment, among others, and to extend necessary cooperation against a backdrop of internal disparities which exist even in countries that have achieved considerable progress in development. Consideration will be

given to the presence of ethnic Japanese (“Nikkei”) communities in the region, which serves as a strong bond between Japan and the region. (MoFA Japan, 2015, p.8)

It is important to note that all these documents highlight the historical ties between Japan and the region due to the Nikkei community numbering more than 2 million. Thus, it is emphasized that Japan has maintained stable and friendly relations with this region for a long period.

Additionally, Lancaster (2007) expressed that historically Japan has promoted its cooperation initiatives inspired by “the obligation of the rich to help the poor.” Moreover, it is necessary to remember that Japan is a traditional donor part of the OECD-DAC. Therefore, Japan embraced the principles and ideas established in the 2005 Paris Declaration and the 2011 Busan Partnership previously explained in section 2.4.1 in chapter 2.

Interests

At this point, it is necessary to highlight that according to Orr, Jr. (1990) and Potter (2015), Japan has not aimed to take a preponderant role in LAC since the region is seen as the closest U.S. sphere of influence. Consequently, the U.S. has had to some extent, an important role in shaping Japan’s aid focus on the region. This dynamic exemplifies what Keohane and Nye (1989) defined as trans-governmental relations. Therefore, Kahn (2016) emphasized that Japan’s relations with LAC countries have established a diverse and continually evolving partnership that encompassed more than trade and included interdependencies and relations that involved governments, peoples, and corporations.

Likewise, Tuman et al. (2001) argued that since the mid-1990s, the U.S. has sought to coordinate Japanese and U.S. aid programs in LAC to help promote market-oriented reform, democratization, and poverty reduction.

Nevertheless, their study reflected that the U.S. and Japan also pursue different goals in the region. While seeking to improve human rights, the U.S. has used aid in LAC to contain communism, and more recently, socialist regimes, safeguard its strategic interests, and promote market-oriented reform. By contrast, Japan’s ODA aimed to protect the interests of Japanese financial institutions, guarantee market access for Japanese firms, and reduce poverty.

In this direction, Miyashita (2001) argued that foreign pressure is often much exaggerated and that Japanese policymakers are far more proactive and autonomous than the reactive State thesis proposed.

Katada (1997) stressed that Japan's motivation to provide aid to LAC comes from two sources: its desire to pursue political and economic benefits; and its reaction to external and internal demands. In this sense, Japan's interest in the region took various forms. For example, it may be seen in the Japanese private sector investing in LAC, the large number of Japanese immigrants to the region, the importance of U.N. diplomacy, and members' votes in favor of Japan.

Additionally, the White Papers on Development Cooperation (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019) annually published show how Japan has undertaken different initiatives in areas such as disaster risk reduction, environmental issues, climate change, economic and infrastructure development, medical and healthcare, education, and peacebuilding, among others.

Consequently, Table 6.1 shows a comparison of Japan's ODA allocation per country during 2014-2018:

Table 6.1: Japan's ODA disbursement to the LAC region (2014-2018)

(Unit: Millions of Dollars)

2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)
Brazil	117.15	Brazil	92.70	Brazil	84.86	Costa Rica	55.74	Brazil	67.73
Peru	84.58	Costa Rica	65.22	Costa Rica	45.73	Brazil	48.12	Peru	58.89
Costa Rica	27.03	Peru	49.15	Peru	43.79	Peru	37.23	Costa Rica	48.74
Haiti	22.98	Argentina	42.91	Paraguay	32.02	Cuba	35.72	Cuba	47.48
Dominican Republic	16.51	Haiti	23.47	Nicaragua	22.57	Paraguay	23.29	Haiti	43.33
Honduras	15.42	Paraguay	18.78	Haiti	21.45	Colombia	18.07	Paraguay	39.50
Bolivia	15.20	Nicaragua	16.47	Cuba	20.48	Haiti	15.38	Guatemala	21.38
Nicaragua	13.11	Ecuador	15.02	Ecuador	19.18	Nicaragua	15.31	Honduras	16.42
Mexico	12.18	Honduras	14.40	Colombia	13.21	Mexico	12.07	El Salvador	15.73
Paraguay	12.18	El Salvador	12.88	Honduras	12.75	Ecuador	11.78	Nicaragua	12.54
El Salvador	10.34	Bolivia	10.75	El Salvador	11.88	Bolivia	10.75	Colombia	9.38

Argentina	8.77	Dominican Republic	9.49	Bolivia	10.99	Honduras	9.48	Bolivia	9.20
Ecuador	8.55	Mexico	7.72	Dominican Republic	10.14	El Salvador	9.18	Mexico	7.46
Colombia	8.18	Guatemala	7.72	Mexico	9.51	Guatemala	7.92	Panama	7.44
Guatemala	6.56	Colombia	7.69	Panama	6.78	Argentina	7.05	Ecuador	7.11
Panama	6.25	Cuba	4.96	Guatemala	6.16	Dominican Republic	6.82	Dominican Republic	5.27
Cuba	5.31	Jamaica	3.58	Saint Lucia	5.59	Panama	6.45	Argentina	4.11
Chile	3.88	Chile	3.56	Antigua & Barbuda	5.14	Jamaica	5.78	Jamaica	4.09
Guyana	3.55	Saint Vincent	3.50	Grenada	4.34	Saint Lucia	4.19	Dominica	2.33
Jamaica	2.96	Panama	3.17	Argentina	3.95	Chile	3.69	Antigua & Barbuda	2.17
Grenada	2.07	Saint Lucia	3.06	Saint Vincent	3.74	Saint Vincent	2.23	Suriname	1.97
Venezuela	1.93	Uruguay	2.04	Chile	3.25	Antigua & Barbuda	2.22	Saint Lucia	1.83
Uruguay	1.69	Belize	1.88	Jamaica	3.14	Uruguay	1.87	Guyana	1.66
Saint Lucia	1.77	Antigua & Barbuda	1.53	Dominica	2.91	Belize	1.53	Belize	0.85
Belize	1.30	Grenada	1.20	Uruguay	2.29	Guyana	1.13	Venezuela	0.74
Dominica	1.08	Guyana	1.11	Belize	1.20	Venezuela	0.92	Saint Vincent	0.31
Antigua & Barbuda	0.51	Venezuela	0.53	Guyana	0.66	Grenada	0.21	Grenada	0.13
Saint Vincent	0.13	Dominica	0.46	Venezuela	0.63	Dominica	0.16		
Suriname	0.13	Suriname	0.09	Suriname	0.27	Suriname	0.11		
For multiple countries in Latin America	22.2 88	For multiple countries in Latin America	11.03	For multiple countries in Latin America	16.23	For multiple countries in Latin America	14.79	For multiple countries in Latin America	10.92
Total	434.23	Total	437.76	Total	428.94	Total	372.45	Total	452.46

Source: Elaborated by the author based on MoFA Japan (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Based on the dynamic explained above and the patterns of allocation of Japan's ODA in table 6.1, it can be observed that Japan prioritized its ODA to Brazil, Peru, and Costa Rica (green highlighted cells). The first two countries are host nations for the largest Japanese communities in the LAC region, with around 1.9 million Nikkei people living in Brazil and about 100.000 Nikkei people living in Peru (JICA, 2018). Likewise, Japan has a

strong economic interest in these countries, Brazil has the second-largest number of Japanese companies in the region, only behind Mexico (JETRO, 2019), and Peru is one of the few countries that have an Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan in the LAC region (MoFA Japan, 2020).

Japan's ties with Costa Rica have a different orientation; these two countries are partners that share basic values such as peace, democracy, and human rights. In addition, the protection of the environment plays a central role in the bilateral relation. Therefore, Japan proactively promotes its best practice to achieve sustainable development in Costa Rica. Moreover, Japan considers Costa Rica as a key partner to promote triangular cooperation and achieve economic integration of the LAC region (Embajada del Japón en Costa Rica, 2021).

Japan's interest in the region can also be analyzed in the disbursement to Colombia (yellow cells) and Venezuela (included in red cells). These two countries have similar socio-cultural identities, share one of the most dynamic borders in Latin America, and form economies of medium-high income with high inequality rates.

Despite these similarities, Colombia and Venezuela differ in their relationship with Japan. The successful relationship between Japan and Colombia is visible through the investment of Japanese companies since 2011, when the Japanese government signed the Agreement for the liberalization, promotion, and protection of investment with the Republic of Colombia, to cooperate on issues such as sustainable economic growth, environmental problems or disaster prevention and the achievement of peace. The amount of non-reimbursable financial cooperation until the 2018 fiscal year was \$114 million, \$275 million in yen credits, and \$305 million in technical cooperation. Besides, 5,206 Colombian officials have been trained in Japan, and 422 Japanese experts have been sent to Colombia. (Embajada del Japón en Colombia, 2019).

Japan has also engaged in initiatives led by the U.S. government in Colombia. For example, as part of Colombia's peace agreements, former President Obama announced that the U.S. would launch, with the cooperation of Norway, a Global Demining Initiative to help this country meet its Ottawa Convention commitment to being mine-free by 2021. Several other countries, including Japan, joined this initiative. (The White House, 2016).

In contrast, although the relationship between Venezuela and Japan has been traditionally good, in recent years, it has been limitedly developed in the areas of natural resources and energy, maintaining an economically complementary relationship. In this sense, the Japanese Embassy in Caracas reported that from 1999 to 2017, just \$3,667,117 was disbursed to Venezuela, focused on Non-Refundable Financial Assistance for Community Projects of Human Security. For 2020, a maximum donation corresponding to 10 million yen per project was planned, equivalent to approximately U.S. \$ 90,000 in ODA. (Embajada del Japón en Venezuela, 2020).

Nevertheless, backing up the U.S. approach to address the large number of Venezuelan migrants in the region, which mainly consist in the allocation of funding (\$1,654,586,880 from 2017 to 2021) by the U.S. government to different LAC countries (USAID, 2021), Japan has as well provided economic support to different countries in the region. For example, in June 2019, the Japanese Embassy in Brazil signed a cooperation agreement with the UN Refugee Agency, assigning \$ 3,6 million to promote the registration and documentation of people coming from Venezuela, multisectoral communitarian assistance, psychological support, sanitary services, and child protection in the states of Roraima, Amazonas, and Pará (UNHRC, 2019). In the same way, on March 10, 2020, the Japanese government decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of \$ 13 million for the displaced Venezuelan people who live in difficult conditions and the affected neighboring countries of Venezuela. The grant was to provide humanitarian assistance through the UNHRC (MoFA Japan, 2020).

Also, the Japanese government has participated in different coordination conferences regarding the topic, such as the International Donors Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in the Countries of the Region amid Covid-19, in May 2020, and the High-Level Coordination Meeting on Venezuela, led by the U.S. government, in February 2022. (European Union, 2020; U.S. Department of State, 2022).

These Japan's particular relationships with Colombia and Venezuela coincide with the fact that Colombia is a natural ally of the U.S. in the region due to its political and economic affinity, at least until the end of 2022 when the left-wing-oriented leader, Gustavo Petro, was elected President of Colombia, while the Venezuelan government maintains an open political confrontation with the U.S. government.

Nonetheless, and not to be naïve, the tense diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Venezuela are not the only factor influencing Japan's ODA's low allocation to this South American country. For example, as expressed before, the Japanese government gives particular importance to Japanese nationals and descendants in Latin American countries. In this direction, a small number of Japanese nationals (352) and Nikkei (820) live in Venezuela, according to estimates made in 2017 by the Japanese embassy.

Moreover, as expressed in section 3.2.1, Japanese officials have expressed concern about the complex political situation and the absence of physical and juridic security inside Venezuela.

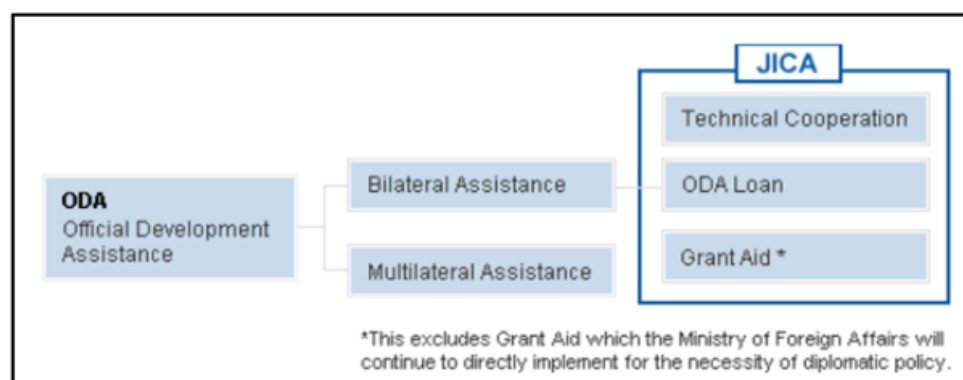
Organizations and vectors/schemes

Japanese development system took a significant restructuring in 2008 when most ODA channels were consolidated in the new JICA. Since then, JICA has managed concessional yen loans, grant aid, and technical cooperation. On the other hand, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation became the policy-based financing agency providing non-ODA lending (Katada, 2020).

Additionally, JICA, besides promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation throughout its traditional scheme (figure 6.1), has promoted two types⁵⁸ of cooperation. First, triangular cooperation involves collaboration between Japan and a former aid recipient in assisting a current aid recipient. Second, South-South cooperation in the way of the provision of aid by a former aid recipient to a third country based on lessons and skills transferred to the former recipient by prior Japanese aid projects (Potter, 2015).

⁵⁸ These types of cooperation have the following characteristics based on Japan's ODA Charter: Supports for self-help efforts, sustainable economic growth, and human security (MoFA, 2022).

Figure 6.1: Japan's ODA



Source: Japan International Cooperation Agency (2021)

Likewise, the MoFA of Japan provides the bilateral Grassroots Human Security Grant program, the lone bilateral aid budget line dedicated to human security. In this program, the Japanese government allocates financial resources to projects proposed by NGOs and local administrative units through the Japanese embassies.

Another important channel to promote development cooperation in the region has been the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program (JOCV)⁵⁹. According to official data, as of September 2020, 10,081 JOCVs have been dispatched to the LAC region. In addition to 2,206 senior volunteers and 2,089 Youth and Senior Volunteers for Nikkei Communities (JICA, 2020).

Regional/International organizations

Japan has also increased, at some periods, economic support for human security through aid programs implemented by multilateral organizations. For example, between 2002 and 2014, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security sponsored 210 projects, of which 25 were carried out in LAC, placing the region third in the world after Asia and Africa (Potter, 2015).

Another important regional organization for Japan's ODA is the IDB. It has served as the major multilateral platform for Japan's financial engagement with LAC. In addition, this

⁵⁹ JOCV is an international voluntary service, established in 1965, which JICA provides under the supervision of the MoFA. It has three main objectives: "1) to provide technical assistance to developing countries, 2) to promote friendship and mutual understanding with foreign countries, and 3) to widen the perspective of young Japanese about the world" (Okabe et al., 2019, p.2).

regional development bank has collaborated with JICA and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to deliver multiple development programs in the continent (Garcia, 2020).

Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Japan has donated 2.7 million dollars to the Pan American Health Organization aimed to mitigate the pandemic effects. (Myers et al., 2021).

6.3 The Rise of China's Foreign Aid to Latin America and the Caribbean

China had been conceived historically as a recipient country. However, in 2010 China replaced Japan as the second-largest economy in the world and has become a major competitor in providing foreign aid across the world, including LAC.

Institutions

China's cooperation model is supported by an institutional system categorized, in theory, as reflected in its constitution (2018), as a "semi-presidential system in which the National People's Congress appoints the President. However, it is necessary to point out that despite the different transformations that China has undergone in recent years due to its incredible economic growth, one characteristic remains constant, namely the political monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), China's ruling party since 1949 (Brown, 2016a).

In addition, Brown (2016b) showed how since 2012, when President Xi-Jinping became the general secretary of the CCP, there had an increasing concentration of power around his figure.

Ideas

Development cooperation provided by China differs from those of OECD members (Kragelund, 2019). Also, China rarely uses the terms aid, donor, or recipient, preferring instead to speak of SSC. Thus, "the dominant rhetoric from the Chinese side is that it is engaging with the recipients of its aid and other resources as a partner rather than being involved in a donor-recipient relationship" (Stallings, 2016, p.73).

China's development cooperation policies to the region are reflected in its Policy Paper on LAC. It states that:

Based on equality and mutual benefit, the comprehensive and cooperative partnership between China and LAC is oriented towards common development. China is committed to building a new relationship with LAC with five salient features, namely, sincerity and mutual trust in the political field, win-win cooperation on the economic front, mutual learning in culture, close coordination in international affairs, as well as mutual reinforcement between China's cooperation with the region as a whole and its bilateral relations with individual countries in the region (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

Furthermore, the document established several fields to promote cooperation initiatives between China and the region. Among them: Political, economic, social, cultural and people-to-people, international collaboration, peace, security, and judicial affairs.

Interests

Chinese aid has gained relevance in the region in the past two decades for several reasons explained by Lum (2009):

- China's aid is quick and easy, without political conditionality, safeguards, and bureaucratic procedures that traditional donors, especially OECD donors, typically impose.
- China often promotes economic projects in countries, areas, and sectors that traditional donors have avoided because of difficult conditions.
- Many Chinese projects abroad, such as national cultural centers, stadiums, and highways, are highly visible and provide tangible, short-term benefits.
- Development initiatives driven by China are often announced at bilateral summit meetings with great fanfare, powerfully symbolizing the friendship between China and other developing countries.

Nonetheless, Lum (2009) emphasized that "China's growing engagement with LAC lacks the deep historical ties it has with Southeast Asia or the legacy of its Cold War friendship with African nations" (p.12). In this context, China's growing interest in the region appears linked to its objective of access to natural resources and agricultural commodities, such as oil, ores, and soybeans. Additionally, the Chinese Communist Party seeks to

obtain political support for its position of the One-China Policy to isolate Taiwan and foster China's diplomatic presence in the region. Other goals include creating new alternative markets and opportunities for Chinese goods and investment.

Similarly, Gallagher and Irwin (2015) emphasized that Chinese finance in LAC is motivated by the goals of a developmental state. Consequently, China is securing many natural resources but without taking a significant loss. China is also projecting soft power by focusing on infrastructure and industrialization versus the development paradigms launched by the World Bank and the IDB.

China's cooperation initiatives have been targeted to LAC through investments in left and center-left-oriented countries with political ideas closer to the Chinese models, which have also been accused, mainly by the U.S. and its allies, of poor governance and lack of the rule of law, for example, Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela (Alvaro & Minaya, 2015). Similarly, China has promoted cooperation on a minor scale with other less aligned countries, such as Colombia, led historically by more conservative, pro-U.S. regimes.

Chinese banks have arisen as alternative sources of financing for countries such as Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela, which because of their large foreign debts, have faced difficulties accessing financial resources from traditional institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the IDB, and other private lenders in the U.S., Europe, and Japan.

Organizations and vectors/schemes

According to a Baker McKenzie (2020) report, although Chinese investment abroad has generally decreased in recent years, investment in Latin America has increased. Since 2017, when LAC countries began joining the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)⁶⁰, new opportunities for China – Latin America infrastructure cooperation have taken place.

It is important to highlight that there is no easy way to measure Chinese development cooperation in the LAC region. Unlike international financial intuitions and OECD

⁶⁰ Currently, nineteen LAC countries have signed agreements under the BRI: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Granada, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Nedopil, 2021).

members, Chinese institutions do not regularly publish detailed figures regarding financial activities (Gallagher & Irvin, 2015).

Therefore, China’s cooperation combines resources traditionally categorized as ODA with OOF, which are defined as official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria.

However, some estimates calculated that in numbers, Venezuela had received Chinese investments and contracts for US\$62.2 billion between 2005 and 2020; Brazil received the second-largest amount, approximately US\$29.7 billion during the same period. Ecuador and Argentina received the third- (US\$18.4 billion) and fourth- (US\$17.1 billion) largest amounts of Chinese investments, and Bolivia received the fifth-largest amount (US\$3.4 billion). Jamaica and Mexico received US\$2.1 billion and US\$1 billion, respectively. The Dominican Republic and Suriname received only US\$600 million and US\$580 million (Gallagher & Myers, 2021).

These financial flows, as illustrated in table 6.2, have two main components: grants and interest-free loans, managed by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), and concessional loans handled by the Eximbank (Stallings, 2016).

Table 6.2: Type of China’s Aid

Grants	Interest Free Loans	Eximbank’s concessional loans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support small-scale social infrastructure • Human Resources development • Technical Cooperation • Emergency humanitarian aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of public facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic infrastructure

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Stallings (2016)

The third source of financial cooperation from the Chinese government is the Chinese Development Bank, which mainly supports China’s macroeconomic policies, focusing on eight areas of development: electric power, road construction, railway, petroleum and petrochemical, coal, postal and telecommunications, agriculture and related industries, and public infrastructure (Gallagher & Irvin, 2015).

However, it is necessary to clarify that beyond the MOFCOM, the Eximbank, and the Chinese Development Bank, China's internal architecture includes several other organizations, as reflected in figure 2.6 in chapter 2, including the MoFA and the Ministry of Finance, among others.

Although due to the COVID-19 pandemic, China has slowed down the development of the BRI in LAC, and for the first time since 2006, neither the China Development Bank nor the Eximbank of China finalized any new loans or credit lines with Latin American governments, the country has increased the significance of the Digital Silk Road, bringing new opportunities through the so-called Health Silk Road. In this sense, many LAC nations have received sanitary and medical equipment from China. Similarly, these countries are using China's digital solutions to address the pandemic⁶¹.

Moreover, since the beginning of the pandemic, China has donated nearly \$215 million in supplies to the region, ranging from surgical gloves to advanced thermal imaging technologies, and has offered \$1 billion in loans for vaccine purchases (Wilson Center, 2021). Likewise, by mid-May 2020, China had exported more than 250 million Covid-19 vaccine doses globally overall, or 42 percent of its total production, being the LAC region the recipient of more than half of China's total exports, around 165 million doses (Stuenkel, 2021).

Nevertheless, aid to the region has been unequally distributed, centered mainly in Venezuela and Cuba. By total value, aid to Venezuela has far outpaced aid to other countries in the region, totaling over \$100 million. (Ray et al., 2021).

Regional/International organizations.

China's engagement with the region has been nurtured in the last decade with the CELAC platform. Proof of this is that China's commitment to the region reached a milestone on July 17th, 2014, after the conclusion of the Sixth Summit of the BRICS held in Brasilia, when President Xi Jinping and the quartet of the CELAC formally established the China-

⁶¹ For example, different companies such as Alipay and Tencent have developed health apps that generate QR codes indicating a user's health status, and Alibaba is already offering its cloud services to model regional COVID-19 outbreaks and connect patients to health professionals (Malena, 2021).

CELAC Forum. In this sense, Garcia (2020) indicated that China has preferred to engage with LAC countries in this way, which does not include Japan or the U.S.

Likewise, China's engagement in the region through the CELAC was reinforced at the first ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, held in Beijing, on January 8th and 9th, 2015. On that occasion, President Xi Jinping established a \$500 billion goal in trade with the region and \$250 billion of direct investment between 2015 and 2019. This plan relied on a "1+3+6" framework, which aimed to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development through "three engines" (trade, investment, and cooperation) in "six" fields: energy and resources, infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, technological innovation, and information technologies. (Dussel, 2021).

This new multilateral framework represented a significant development to reinforce the economic, social, and political ties between China, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as a major initiative in SSC between China and the region. (McKelvey, 2014).

6.4 Comparing the cooperation approaches of Japan, China, and Venezuela to Latin America and the Caribbean

In previous chapters, we have studied the approach taken by Venezuela during President Chavez's government to establish SSC initiatives in LAC. Similarly, the previous sections of this chapter provide an overview of Japan and China's cooperation initiatives in the region.

Consequently, this section aims to contrast the approaches undertaken by these three actors during the 21st century to identify their similarities and differences, applying the analytical framework used in chapter 2 to compare NSC and SSC as well as in chapter 5 to study Venezuela's SSC. In this direction, a comparison based on institutions, ideas, interests, organizations, vectors/schemes, and regional/international organizations of these three countries is presented as follows:

Firstly, regarding institutions, we can see that while Japan's political model is based on a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament called the Diet, as Lancaster (2007) highlighted while studying this country, China, in theory, as reflected in its constitution, (2018) implemented a "semi-presidential system in which the National People's Congress

appoints the President, and Venezuela practices a Presidential system in which the Head of State is elected through universal direct vote.

However, to not overlook the political dynamics that shape the three systems, it is necessary to consider the nature of the political regimes and the practices established within each. In this direction, the Freedom Report, annually published by the Freedom House, characterized Japan as a multiparty parliamentary democracy in which political rights and civil liberties are generally well respected (Freedom House, 2022).

On the other hand, the same report categorized China as an authoritarian regime in which the ruling CCP continues to tighten control over all aspects of life and governance, including the state bureaucracy.

Similarly, the information in the report regarding Venezuela shows that democratic institutions in the country have deteriorated since 1999. Moreover, even though during the study period (third presidency of Hugo Chavez 2007-2013), the report (2017) categorized Venezuela as partly free and democratic, recent political developments have led the country to be categorized as not free and ruled by an authoritarian government.

Moreover, in the cases of Venezuela and China, based on the information provided by D'elia and Maingon (2009), Garcia (2017), and Serbin and Serbin (2017), among others, when studying the Venezuelan case and Brown (2016b) and the Freedom House (2022), when analyzing China's political system, it could be said that both countries, to some extent, share similarities in the concentration of power in the executive branch, especially in the figure of the presidents Hugo Chavez, while he was in power, and Xi Jinping.

In contrast, as shown by Lancaster (2007), historically, Japanese prime ministers have not been a strongly predominant figure in the policy-making process regarding ODA, and even though during the second Abe administration, the Prime Minister took a more proactive role, it was under the institutional democratic frame previously explained.

In relation to the ideas promoted through the cooperation initiatives supported by these countries, first, Japan based its cooperation on "the obligation of the rich to help the poor" (Lancaster, 2007), the principles established in the ODA Charter (2015) such as sharing knowledge and best practices based on Japan's own development experience, freedom, democracy, and respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law. Likewise,

Japan embraced the principles promoted by OECD-DAC members. Moreover, when focusing specifically on the Latin American region, Japan based its cooperation on the principles established in the “Together” initiative, as reflected in section 6.2.

It is fundamental to point out that the ideas promoted by Japan through its development cooperation, as stated in the ODA Charter 2015, are “intertwined with the national interests of Japan” (p.2).

On the other hand, China built its cooperation philosophy on the rhetoric of countries of the South, based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, which are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The specific ideas promoted by the Chinese government in this region are established in China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, as explained in section 6.3

Likewise, as explained in detail in previous chapters, and similar to China, Venezuela’s SSC was fundamentally based on the ideas of solidarity between countries of the South, complementarity, and a world order relying on multipolarity.

The ideas promoted by the three countries throughout development cooperation initiatives are intrinsically linked to the interests pursued by these countries in LAC. In this direction, as seen in section 6.2, Japan's ODA to the region is driven primarily by economic and commercial interests linked to the consolidation of new markets for Japanese firms and the protection of the interests of its financial institutions. However, Japan also aims to play a part in the region's poverty reduction, protect the Japanese communities abroad, and promote democratization while maintaining the best possible relations with the U.S., its principal international ally and, historically, the most influential country in this region.

In the case of China, the country has promoted development cooperation in the LAC region primarily for the motivations of a developmental state. In this sense, China has sought access to natural resources and created new and alternative markets for Chinese goods and investment. Nevertheless, amidst the increasing global tensions, the country has also promoted its One China Policy and projected soft power in the region.

On the other spectrum, while Japan and China, as extra-regional actors, have prioritized economic and developmental interests in LAC, Venezuela pursued its interest through a highly political agenda. Hence, the Bolivarian diplomacy, especially during Chavez's

presidency, has aimed to play an active role in the construction of a multipolar world and promoted regional integration aiming to decrease the U.S. influence in the region and fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar as well as seeking protection for the Venezuelan government against possible threats from non-allied countries.

Even though Venezuela's SSC purely aimed to achieve political interests, it is essential to point out that China and Japan also promote cooperation for political purposes, such as promoting the one-China policy in the case of the first and fostering the U.S.-Japan partnership in the case of the second, reinforcing the argument that there is a political dimension in every kind of international cooperation.

At the national level, while Japan, since 2008, with the launching of the new JICA, has centered most of its ODA initiatives in this organization (Katada, 2020), China and Venezuela promote their cooperation initiatives through complex ministerial architectures.

In the case of China, as can be observed in figure 2.6, in chapter 2, three main organizations are involved in cooperation policies at the ministerial level, the MoFA, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Commerce. Additionally, Eximbank and the Chinese Development Bank, among several other organizations, take part in the different stages of the policy-making process.

Concerning Venezuela, as explained extensively in chapter 5, the leading organizations involved in promoting SSC were the Presidency, the MoFA, and PDVSA. However, several other ministries and governmental agencies, such as the Ministries of Education, Health, Oil, and Energy, played crucial roles in the implementation of SSC policies.

Although Japan unified mostly all the cooperation initiatives into JICA in 2008, the cases of China and Venezuela can be compared with Japan's previous aid architecture, which Lancaster (2007) categorized as highly fragmented since it involved several organizations such as the MoFA, JICA, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Trade and Industry, and Japan Bank for International Cooperation, among others.

At the international level, these countries differ in the regional organizations through which they engage with other countries in cooperation activities.

Firstly, Japan has historically promoted cooperation initiatives in LAC through bilateral channels. However, when engaging with regional organizations, Japan prefers to partner with the UN and the IDB to establish regional cooperation projects. Second, China has bet on the China-CELAC forum as the only regional organization to promote cooperation projects with the region. Third, as seen in chapters 4 and 5, Venezuela established and highly relied on ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC as the platforms for SSC initiatives.

Finally, in relation to vectors/schemes and leaving aside the discussion about definitions of criteria addressed in section 2.4.5 in chapter 2, when comparing vectors/schemes of NSC and SSC, Japan has provided cooperation to LAC through the main schemes of NSC established by the OECD, which are grants, loans, and technical cooperation. The country has also included other cooperation initiatives under the concept of OOF in recent years. This cooperation has translated into multiple projects in disaster risk reduction, environmental issues, climate change, economic and infrastructure development, medical and healthcare, education, and peacebuilding, among others.

Similarly, even though China considers itself a SSC practitioner, it has also promoted cooperation with the Latin American region through grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, and other activities of financial cooperation, replicating, to some extent, and without taking the payment conditions and field of investment into consideration, the approach used by Japan.

On the other hand, Venezuela, which does not follow the standards of the OECD-DAC, provided SSC to the region through the vectors of humanitarian assistance, education, trade, and energy cooperation, especially oil supply with long-term finance.

6.5 Conclusion

Historically, Japan has been a proactive actor in providing development cooperation. Even though LAC is not the main destination for Japan's ODA, the region has received constant cooperation during the 21st century. On the other hand, China has risen as an emerging donor to the region, challenging the preponderance of traditional donors such as the U.S., the European Union, and even Japan.

When comparing these extracontinental actors with the Venezuelan case, we can find some similarities as well as differences, as seen in section 6.4. For example, in the dimension related to institutions, it is possible to see that, based on the Freedom Reports annually elaborated by the Freedom House, while Japan is considered to have a democratic institutional system, the institutions in Venezuela and China have implemented authoritarian practices linked to governance, including the state bureaucracy.

Additionally, the Venezuelan and Chinese models share similarities in the concentration of power in the executive branch, especially in the figure of the presidents Hugo Chavez, when he was the Head of State, and Xi Jinping.

In relation to the ideas promoted through these cooperation approaches, while Japan promotes concepts such as freedom, democracy, and respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law and complies with the principles established by the OECD-DAC, Venezuela and China have framed their cooperation in the SSC rhetoric. In this sense, Venezuela and China have used similar principles like solidarity and complementarity to establish cooperative relations with their partners.

At the time of analyzing the interests that motivated the cooperation initiatives, we can perceive some interesting aspects. For example, even though Japan and China differ in their approaches, to some extent, these countries share similar commercial and financial interests related to the establishment and consolidation of alternative markets for their goods and investment. Besides, China has promoted cooperation for developmental state purposes such as securing natural resources.

In contrast, Venezuela promoted SSC based on a highly political agenda that aimed to construct a multipolar world, achieve regional integration, decrease the U.S. influence in the region, fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar, and obtain political protection for the government, aspects that highlight the importance of studying the political dimension within development cooperation.

Still, it is worth mentioning that even though China and Japan do not rely on highly political agendas, they also promote cooperation for political interest. In the case of China, it has been providing cooperation to promote the one-China policy. In the case of Japan, the country takes into consideration fostering the U.S.-Japan partnership while engaging

with LAC countries. These aspects reinforce the argument that there is a political dimension in every kind of international cooperation.

Regarding organizations, since 2008, Japan centralized most of its cooperation initiatives under the management of JICA. This situation differentiates it from Venezuela and China, which share the similarity of having a complex organizational structure to promote cooperation. However, as Lancaster (2007) mentioned, Japan's structure was fragmented before the reorganization of 2008, meaning that at some point, the three case studies shared the similarity of having multiple organizations involved in development cooperation.

Concerning vectors/schemes Venezuela promoted SSC through humanitarian assistance, trade, education, and energy cooperation, especially oil supply with long-term finance. In contrast, despite their differences (Japan is a traditional donor, and China considers itself a SSC provider), these countries provided development cooperation from more financially oriented approaches. For example, China undertook cooperation projects through grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, and other activities of financial cooperation, replicating, to some extent, and without taking the payment conditions and field of investment into consideration, the approach used by Japan based on grants, loans, and technical cooperation.

Still and without entering again into the discussion approached in chapter 2 about the criteria of definition for NSC and SSC, Venezuela and Japan have promoted cooperation in similar fields such as infrastructure development and education.

Venezuela also differentiated itself from Japan and China due to its oil strengths. Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world, 304 billion barrels (NS Energy, 2020). This oil capacity allowed the country to be an active provider of energy cooperation, especially through oil supply with long-term finance.

Finally, the three countries differ in their engagement with regional organizations for promoting cooperation. Venezuela promoted SSC initiatives mainly through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. China has decided to engage with the region primarily through the CELAC-China Forum, in which Venezuela participates. Even though Japan prioritized bilateral channels for cooperation, the country, when necessary,

has preferred to promote its initiatives through long-established organizations such as the UN or the IDB.

Beyond the similarities and differences that these countries might have, it is important to highlight that there are vast opportunities for cooperation in LAC since it is a region full of disparities and gaps to close. Viewed in this way, international agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, offer a road map to emerging and traditional donors to not overlap their efforts and make development cooperation initiatives more effective.

Moreover, despite the undeniable negative effect caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it opens new opportunities for traditional and non-traditional donors, such as Japan and China, to cooperate with LAC through the donation of sanitary and medical equipment, technology transfer, sharing of local knowledge, and experience handling the pandemic, among other different ways.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Summary of each chapter with main arguments

This thesis has sought to incorporate new elements into the debate on the international cooperation system, especially South-South cooperation, based on the case study of Venezuela's SSC during President Hugo Chavez's government, particularly during the period 2007-2013.

This case study had as a general objective to establish theoretical implications on the political dimension of the South-South cooperation promoted by emerging donors based on Venezuela's cooperation modality from 2007 to 2013. In this direction, it is necessary to note that despite modern focuses on technical, economic, and multidimensional approaches, nowadays there are still states that heavily or purely rely on SSC as a way to promote political interests. Moreover, these states are generating significant impacts at the regional and global stages. SSC was born as political cooperation more than 60 years ago after the Bandung Conference and evolved as technical cooperation through the Buenos Aires Plan of Action at the end of the 1970s. It had a resurgence at the beginning of the century as an alternative source of financial flows and after the 2030 Agenda as a catalyst to foster sustainable developments.

Consequently, for this purpose, in Chapter 1, entitled "The International System for Development Cooperation," a historical overview of the evolution of concepts and approaches to achieve development was made.

This review covered from the beginning of the 1960s, when the UN General Assembly declared the First UN Development Decade and the approach focused on structural transformations to achieve economic growth, until our days, when the international community has chosen the guidelines established in the 2030 Agenda to achieve sustainable development, based on a multidimensional approach.

In this chapter, it is possible to observe that there have been differences between the priorities promoted by the UN and the OECD-DAC. In some periods, the OECD-DAC has prioritized increasing foreign aid and demonstrating its effectiveness, while the UN has aimed for a more comprehensive development agenda.

Moreover, the chapter showed that a wide variety of actors are involved in development cooperation, from international organizations and traditional donors to emerging providers, civil society, academia, and the private sector. These actors mainly promote development cooperation through three modalities: North-South Cooperation, South-South Cooperation, and triangular Cooperation.

Chapter 2 focused on the different “South-South Cooperation Approaches” practiced by countries of the Global South. This modality of international cooperation was first conceived at the Bandung Conference of 1955, which led to the foundation of the NAM in 1961, and other important initiatives inside the UN, such as the creation of the G77, the quest for establishing a NIEO, and the elaboration of the BAPA.

Since the beginning of the new century, this modality of international cooperation has re-emerged, partly because of the rapid economic growth of the BRICS group, being considered now as an alternative source of financial resources and a catalyst to achieve sustainable developments.

Despite its evolution, and even though there have been extensive governmental, academic, and technical debates, there is not a unitary definition of SSC. This situation has translated into difficulties in narrowing the scope of activities labeled within this cooperation modality, problems obtaining accurate data, and a need for more analytical and empirical analysis to evaluate SSC initiatives.

SSC was created based on solidarity, horizontality, and complementarity, aiming to promote a more active role of the Global South in the international system and oppose the donor-recipient relationship implemented by NSC approaches. Nonetheless, nowadays, even though some countries are radically opposed to northern approaches and seek to alter the established practices within the international system, some countries aim to maintain and legitimize donor-recipient relationships. Moreover, there are countries that, instead of changing the global cooperation system, seek to play a more relevant role within it and displace established traditional donors. These different approaches are not exclusive and, in many cases, overlap.

This chapter also offered a comparison between NSC and SSC, capturing the complexity of both modalities of cooperation through the dimensions proposed by Lancaster (2007) and Kragelund (2019) which allows the understanding of the political process under study.

Chapter 3 evaluated “Venezuela’s Foreign Policy in the context of the Bolivarian Diplomacy” during the Hugo Chavez’s administration. For this, the author divided the analysis into two periods (from 1999 to 2006 and from 2007 to 2013), placing special emphasis on the second, in which Venezuela was characterized for its activism in SSC and a radical anti-U.S. foreign policy.

From 2007 to 2013, Venezuela’s foreign policy had as its principal motivations the establishment of new poles of powers, the implementation of a socialist state, achieving Latin American regional integration, decreasing the influence of the U.S. in the region, and becoming an oil energy power. In this sense, it can be said that the diplomatic priorities of Venezuela’s foreign policy were to insert the country into a new international context with goals, targets, instruments, and discourses different from previous administrations.

This foreign policy has its conceptual and legal bases on the national constitution of 1999 and the 2007-2013 Plan of Social and Economic Development of the Nation. Even though it was supported by all the public branches (executive, legislative, judicial, electoral, and citizen branches), the foreign policy-making process was defined by the strong leadership and political will of President Chavez and not necessarily by the diplomatic body, or technical staff in the organizations link to international affairs.

The changes promoted by President Hugo Chavez in the country's foreign policy generated tensions with different actors internally and abroad. These actors criticized President Chavez's approach for its radical contents, the exclusion of different sectors in the policy-making process, the concentration of power, and the lack of accountability.

Chapter 4 analyzed the ways of engagement through which Venezuela established SSC initiatives during the study period. In this direction, the author focused on the initiatives promoted by Venezuela in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC. Each of these organizations was linked to an identity and a form of relationship to promote Venezuela’s regional interests.

ALBA-TCP and PetroCaribe were Venezuela’s main organizations for promoting cooperation in the region since Venezuela was the principal founder member and the country with more economic and political strength among the members.

Venezuela was also an active member of UNASUR and CELAC. Following its ideas and interests, Venezuela used these organizations as a way to achieve regional integration, decrease the U.S. influence in the region, and promote the construction of a multipolar world.

Consequently, Venezuela was able to dismantle or diminish to some extent the influence of regional and international organizations led by the U.S. or allied governments, such as the OAS, the World Bank, the IMF, the IDB, the Andean Community, the Americas Summit, and the ALCA, which aimed to establish regional integration based on the open regionalism model and promote neoliberal macroeconomic policies. It was possible through the creation of a new regional architecture embodied in new regional organizations like ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC.

Through this new regional architecture, Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Venezuela, promoted new initiatives oriented to generate economic dynamism, deal with cross borders issues, and shape a collective voice that guaranteed an increase in the power of negotiation of the region within international fora.

Additionally, the SSC projects established through these initiatives generated tangible results for the less favored social sectors in the member states. For example, through the social missions sponsored by ALBA-TCP, such as Mision Milagro, 3,482,361 patients were operated from eye disabilities, allowing them to recover and improve their visual capability. Similarly, through educational programs such as Mision Robison and Yo Si Puedo, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela were declared countries free of illiteracy by UNESCO. Moreover, the economic cooperation provided by Venezuela through Petrocaribe generated a positive impact on the GDP of partner countries averaging from 2.5 to 3.5 and even reaching 6% for the small islands of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, according to official data of the IMF and the UN.

Chapter 5 presented the data analysis and information obtained through in-depth interviews with the governmental, academic, and media sectors developed during this research. It aimed to generate a resignification through a new characterization of Venezuela's SSC during the study period, using the dimensions proposed by Lancaster (2007) and Kragelund (2019) as a theoretical framework and Ground Theory as methodology.

After unveiling the vision of each sector, based on the information provided by the key informants, it can be inferred that Venezuela's SSC was framed within the institution of the Presidential System, which for the study period was represented in the figure of President Hugo Chavez. For this specific period, the leadership of Hugo Chavez was an outstanding factor in the promotion of SSC initiatives since it allowed President Chavez to become the main promotor of this kind of international cooperation at the national level, obtaining massive support within his government, and only being contradicted by the Venezuelan opposition.

The SSC promoted by Venezuela was inspired by the ideas of solidarity, complementary, and multipolarity. These ideas were intrinsically linked to the interests of constructing a multipolar world, regional integration, decreasing the U.S. influence in the region, fulfilling the thought of Simon Bolivar, and protecting the Venezuelan government.

Venezuela relied, at the national level, on a complex ministerial architecture led by the Presidency and supported primarily by the MoFA and PDVSA for the promotion of SSC. Likewise, at the regional level, Venezuela used ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC as the organizations to establish SSC initiatives.

The vectors through which Venezuela provided SSC to partner countries varied, ranging from humanitarian assistance, education, and trade to energy cooperation, primarily through oil supply with long-term finance.

These characteristics allowed the author to give a new and more comprehensive meaning to Venezuela's SSC, understanding it as cooperation among countries of the Global South, primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean. This project of cooperation aimed to alter regional and global power dynamics, strengthening the collaboration between developing and least developed countries through regional integration, diminishing the influence of traditional powers, such as the U.S., and the relevance North-South Cooperation schemes, and guaranteeing the protection of the political identity of the government in power. The approach relied on a complex organizational structure that used several schemes to engage in cooperation with partner countries through bilateral channels or multilateral organizations such as ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC, which based on strong ideological contents inspired by vindications from the South and the principles of solidarity, complementarity, and multipolarity attempted to weaken the traditional regional cooperation structures inspired by the donor-recipient relation. Even though this

cooperation approach fundamentally prioritized political interests over developmental aspects, its circumstantial economic strength from the oil revenues allowed it to generate tangible benefits for the population of partner countries and obtain a positive perception of this model of cooperation at the regional level, elements that were materialized into political support and the enhance of Venezuela's influence through the continent.

In Chapter 6, the author overviewed the cooperation approaches used by Japan and China in Latin America and the Caribbean and compared these cooperation models with the Venezuelan case.

Japan has long-standing relationships with the region that date to the early 20 century. In addition, at different times through the 21st century, Japan has ranked as the top foreign donor for Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru.

Even though China lacks historical ties with the region, it has recently displaced the U.S. as the top trade partner for Brazil, Chile, and Peru. Moreover, China's foreign aid to LAC raised from 5% to 20% of its total budget from 1990 to 2016, and it is expected to keep growing substantially in the upcoming years.

Given this context, the author made a comparison, considering the six dimensions used in previous chapters, to find the similarities and differences between these three cooperation models.

The outcome showed that Japan is a long-established traditional donor which embraces the ideas and principles of OECD-DAC members and provides cooperation to LAC based on the traditional schemes of NSC (grants, loans, and technical assistance).

On the other hand, Venezuela and China have established cooperative relations with partner countries using the rhetoric and modalities of SSC, highlighting the principles of solidarity and complementarity, among others.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that while Venezuela promoted cooperation initiatives in the region based on a highly political agenda, Japan and China, despite the differences in their approaches, pursue similar commercial and financial interests related to the establishment and consolidation of alternative markets for their goods and investment.

Still, it is necessary to mention that even though China and Japan do not rely on highly political agendas, they also promote cooperation for political interests. For example, in the case of China, these are related to promoting the one-China policy. In the case of Japan, these are linked to fostering the U.S.-Japan partnership while engaging with LAC. These aspects reinforce the argument that there is a political dimension in every kind of international cooperation.

7.2 Relevance of the study

Historically, within the political science field, Venezuela has been the object of different research and case studies, usually by North and Latin American scholars, due to the independentism movement led by Simon Bolivar⁶², at the beginning of the 1800s, its oil diplomacy based on the large reserve of the country, its economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s⁶³, and more recently due to the Bolivarian and Socialist doctrines implemented by Hugo Chavez.

Moreover, as seen in Chapter 3, the different perceptions that President Chavez's model generated have made it possible to produce diverse research on Venezuelan politics at the internal and international level aiming to understand the political regime, the figure and personality of President Chavez, its macroeconomic model, and its foreign policy based on crude oil from traditional and alternative approaches.

However, not many studies have analyzed Venezuela's approach during Hugo Chavez's presidency to promote cooperation at the regional and international level from the conceptualization of SSC. Consequently, this research contributed to the resignification of Venezuela's SSC, and the regional reality within it developed and provided theoretical contributions for a better understanding of the diverse SSC approaches implemented by countries of the Global South since the beginning of the 21st century. In this direction, this investigation contains innovative aspects such as:

Firstly, regarding the methodological approach, the author embraced qualitative methodologies to reach out, with an interpretative approach, to diverse actors linked to the practice and study of Venezuela's national and foreign policies, achieving forty (40)

⁶² For more information about Simon Bolivar and Venezuela's independent movement, consult Masur (1948), de Madariaga (1951), Bierck, Jr. (1951), and Harvey (2000), among others.

⁶³ For more information about Venezuela's history after the 1950s, consult Ewell (1984 & 1996), Coronil (1997), Romero, M (2002), and Tinker (2015), among others.

in-depth interviews with key informants of three different sectors (Government actors, professors and scholars, and the media), who provided their knowledge and impressions about Venezuela's SSC during the period of study. The information gathered from the key informants was triangulated, contrasted, and analyzed to generate the most accurate resignification possible of Venezuela's SSC, based on the diverse commonalities obtained through the interviews, the extensive literature review, and official documents.

Second, even though the research overviewed general aspects related to Venezuela's domestic and foreign policy, it placed particular emphasis on understanding the country's SSC approach per se, using dimensions proper from the field of international cooperation, which allowed a more comprehensive analysis and a deeper resignification of the practices promoted by Venezuela from 2007 to 2013.

Third, the research integrated into one document the analyses of the four major regional organizations that shaped the SSC in the region and through which Venezuela channelized SSC initiatives, based on official documents from the Venezuelan government, other member states, and international organizations, expanding the traditional analysis, which usually focuses on the organizations individually, and in academic materials rather than official documents.

Additionally, the research compares the cooperation model of Venezuela, a Latin American and Caribbean country, with other models of cooperation of extra-regional actors such as Japan and China. Japan has been a long-established donor and currently aims to promote its development cooperation model at the global level, reinforcing its traditional North-South Cooperation modality with triangular and even SSC practices. On the other hand, China has irrupted into the region with significant investments providing an alternative source of financial resources to countries of the region. This situation has challenged traditional donors in the region like the U.S., the E.U, and even Japan. Consequently, the dissertation allows comparing the interests and approaches of these three countries in the LAC region.

7.3 Implications

From the end of World War II, with the implementation of the Molotov plan by the URSS and the Marshall and Colombo plans by the U.S and its allies, until recent times, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the 193 state members of

the UN, development cooperation has evolved in the actors involved on it, its goals and approaches, ranging from initiatives driven by purely economic and political interests to holistic methods which aim to achieve strategic multidimensional development, beyond economic growth.

Likewise, SSC cooperation as a modality of promoting development has also undergone different changes from its origins at the 1955 Bandung Conference, where this modality was conceived as a mechanism of political support between countries of the South to raise their voice against hegemonic practices from economic powers, passing through the BAPA of the UN, which looked for a more technical approach, until the approval of the 2030 Agenda, which highlights the complementary role that SSC has with North-South and triangular cooperation to achieve sustainable development.

Although nowadays there is a broader acceptance of the potentialities that SSC brings in the quest to achieve sustainable development, and traditional donors and international organizations highlight its role as a catalyst for promoting economic growth, poverty reduction, and prosperity, there is still an ongoing debate between countries of the South about what should be considered when discussing SSC⁶⁴. Currently, the SSC scope is very broad since it includes economic, political, military, cultural, and social cooperation, among others, as well as trade and investment activities. As expressed in previous chapters, while OECD-DAC members have specific standards to measure ODA, countries of the South vary in their methodologies to analyze and assess their initiatives, leading sometimes to inaccurate data.

This lack of a unitary and consensual definition between all the parties involved in this modality of development cooperation has led to a trend that aims to reduce the scope of this modality of cooperation to financial disbursement and technical assistance.

In part, this trend to monetize SSC, that is to say, to convert or count the mobilization of resources into money to understand its value, comes from previously established practices implemented by traditional donors, which have historically measured their contributions

⁶⁴ Issues related to the assessment of SSC are mixed with political considerations regarding conceptions of international cooperation for development. In this discussion, there are different positions that Lengyel and Malacalza (2012) summarized, in a simple way, around two great paradigms of international cooperation: the aid effectiveness paradigm of the OECD-DAC, which emphasizes the evaluation of results and the use of quantitative or monetary indicators, and the paradigm of horizontality, the new architecture of South-South cooperation, which emphasize process evaluations and the use of qualitative indicators.

to recipient countries under the concept of ODA, which includes grants, loans, and technical cooperation.

Similarly, there is no central organization, such as the OECD, to which countries of the South delegate the task of guaranteed accountability and setting standards. In contrast to the OECD-DAC members, countries of the South do not have to report their activities to a supranational organization or follow specific standards in their cooperation initiatives. Therefore, organizations such as the UNOSSC, the UNDP, UNECLAC, and SEGIB, among others, have the difficult task of providing the most accurate data regarding SSC. It should be noted that it was not until 2013, when ECLAC's Committee on South-South Cooperation began, together with the Statistical Conference of the Americas, the formation of a task force made up of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela in order to design and propose a methodology and a roadmap for the measurement of SSC⁶⁵.

Although in recent years, traditional donors have started to use the term OOF to measure cooperation activities that fall outside ODA standards, as its name says, it is still reduced to financial disbursements.

In the same direction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development considers SSC in its goal 17, specifically when addressing the issue related to “mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources” and resolving to measure it through the “Volume of remittances (in USD) as a proportion of total GDP” as the indicator 17.3.2 established.

In addition, target 17.9.1, related to capacity building, established a measure of the contributions in "dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries."

Likewise, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an international instrument that addresses financing for development, “recognize the need for technical assistance through

⁶⁵ For more information details consult UN-ECLAC. (2016). “Propuesta de medición de la Cooperación Sur-Sur en América Latina y Caribe a través de un Sistema de Cuentas Satélite.” United Nations; UN-ECLAC. (2016). “Evaluación de procesos e impactos de la cooperación Sur-Sur”. United Nations. Santiago de Chile; and UN-ECLAC. (2021). “Valoración de la cooperación Sur-Sur en seis países seleccionados de América Latina y el Caribe Desafíos compartidos en la implementación de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. United Nations. Santiago de Chile

multilateral, regional, bilateral and South-South cooperation, based on different needs of countries” (UN, 2015, p.14.)

Consequently, the reduction of SSC to purely financial disbursements or technical assistance put aside many of the aspects that gave birth to this modality of cooperation, such as political cooperation, consultation, solidarity, the establishment of new relationships, exchange of knowledge, experiences, capacities, and dialogue among the peoples, which goes beyond financial disbursement and cannot be measure through traditional methods.

Still, amidst this reality where some actors involved in development cooperation, such as the UN, have tried to give a more technical approach to this modality of cooperation or reduce it to the measurement of the disbursement of economic resources from one country to another; and countries like China and other members of the BRICS are foreseeing a possible convergence between South-South modalities and OECD-DAC standards in the years to come, SSC still contains a significant political dimension to some countries of the Global South as we have observed in the analysis of the Venezuelan case under the presidency of Hugo Chavez.

7.4 Limits to Venezuela’s SSC

Venezuela was a proactive contributor to SSC initiatives in the LAC region during the period 2007-2013. The country used its economic strength and expertise in the energy, education, and health fields, among others, to implement multiple projects on the bilateral and multilateral levels. Nevertheless, Venezuela’s cooperation model had limitations which draw some lessons that can be learned to improve current and future cooperation practices promoted by this and other countries of the South and reinforce SSC modalities.

Firstly, a foreign policy, and specifically a SSC model, primarily based on the availability of economic resources from the raw materials market and the leadership of a political figure is not always sustainable since it depends exclusively on revenues coming from the commodities rent and the maintenance and stability of the head of state of the moment in power.

Based on Venezuela’s experience, it can be said that the country had its golden period for the promotion of SSC, during the first and part of the second decade of the 21st century, and more specifically from 2007 to 2013, due to the enormous availability of economic

resources coming from the oil revenues and the undeniable internal and international leadership of President Hugo Chavez. However, with the death of President Chavez in March 2013, the downfall of the oil prices since the end of 2014, and the decrease in daily production of PDVSA, Venezuela's own state oil company, the country has seen a significant reduction in the scope and quantity of its SSC initiatives.

Secondly, regional integration schemes promoted under the SSC modality should not be based solely on political alignments and personal relationships of political figures since it can undermine the stability and sustainability of the integrationist project and even bilateral relations between states.

If we take into consideration the South American political map, during the period of study, it can be observed that the majority of governments in place were led by left-wing oriented presidents such as Hugo Chavez (Venezuela), Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva and Dilma Rousseff (Brazil), Nestor Kirchner and Cristina Fernandez (Argentina), Evo Morales (Bolivia), Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Fernando Lugo (Paraguay), Jose Mujica (Uruguay), Michelle Bachelet (Chile), Ollanta Humala (Peru) and Donald Ramotar (Guyana). This situation boosted SSC initiatives within the region to levels never seen before. Examples of this are the creation of ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and CELAC, and the reinforcement of Mercosur.

However, when the political map started to change due to the election of right-wing oriented presidents like Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil), Mauricio Macri (Argentina), Lenin Moreno (Ecuador), Horacio Cartes (Paraguay), Sebastian Piñera (Chile), Pedro Kuczynski (Peru), David Granger (Guyana), in addition to the traditional right-wing oriented government in Colombia led by presidents Alvaro Uribe, Juan Manuel Santos and Ivan Duque the process of regional integration that was undergoing in South America stopped. For example, several countries decided to retire from UNASUR (only four of the twelve founding members remain in the organization), CELAC did not hold its annual summits in 2018, 2018, and 2019, PetroCaribe lost its dynamism, Venezuela was suspended from Mercosur, and other regional integration projects have emerged such as PROSUR, a regional integration body that aspires to replace UNASUR.

Consequently, regional integrationist projects should not be grounded only on political-ideological agreements but also in common economic interests, markets' complementarity, sociocultural aspects, and reduction of asymmetries, among other

aspects. Moreover, there must be an institutional framework to guarantee the continuity of the organization and bring transparency, accountability, and solution to disputes during the planning, execution, and assessments of projects when political alignment does not prevail among the parties.

Third, there must be coherence in the concept of sustainable development used by South countries at the moment of promoting SSC cooperation policies. For example, a state should not be an active promotor of cooperation abroad, expending a massive amount of public resources while not attending to internal demands and deficiencies that affect the national population.

In the specific case of Venezuela, even though President Chavez's government practiced an extensive and recognized SSC in the region and even at the global level, the constant political confrontation with opposition forces, the increasing inflation rate, the scarcity of essential goods and gasoline at some periods, the deficiencies in public services, and the lack of investment in the oil industry, among other internal aspects, generated severe criticism by some sectors of the population, which did not acknowledge the SSC policies backed by the national government.

Clear examples of the criticism and lack of acknowledgment regarding Venezuela's SSC by Venezuelan citizens were presented by Magdaleno (2011) when studying the public opinion of Venezuela's foreign policy. This study showed the results of different public opinion surveys that reflected that during 2006 and 2007, between 60% and 70% of the population rejected the foreign spending made by the Venezuelan government. According to the study, the main reason for this negative perception was that "it is very difficult for Venezuelans to reconcile a foreign policy that relies so highly on spending in other countries with the poverty in their own country" (Magdaleno, 2011, p. 64).

Beyond the previous points, the SSC promoted by Venezuela besides its regional partners shows us that regional integration initiatives, in which member states take advantage of their capacities and resources and achieve certain cohesion and political alignments, can lead to the obtention of geopolitical advantages that allows them to increase the power of negotiation in relation to other regional blocs and world powers.

Additionally, this thesis reinforces the idea that LAC countries, as well as other countries of the Global South, beyond the mainstream emerging countries, usually approached by

the academia such as the BRICS, can provide knowledge, experience, human resources, lessons, and new proposals to reinforce SSC modalities and achieve the desired sustainable development.

The comprehension of these lessons gains more preponderance in current times since a new turn to the left is taking place in Latin America. In this sense, in recent years, we have been witnessing the election of left-wing oriented leaders as presidents in Argentina (Alberto Fernandez), Bolivia (Luis Arce), Brazil (Lula da Silva), Colombia (Gustavo Petro), Chile (Gabriel Boric), Mexico (Andres Lopez Obrador), in addition to the established left-wing governments of Cuba (Miguel Diaz Canel), Nicaragua (Daniel Ortega), and Venezuela (Nicolas Maduro). This dynamic has brought again to the discussion the reinforcement of SSC modalities and the revitalization of regional integration platforms.

Still, to achieve that desirable sustainable development, historical political disputes caused by different visions of the world, unanswered claims from the Global South to the Northern countries, and historical debts must be overcome or put aside in order to generate more efficient coordination and synergy between established and emerging donors and maximize the efficiency of North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation.

It is undeniable the existence of disparities and gaps to close not only in LAC but in the Global South. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has deepened different aspects linked to underdevelopment that have broadened those unequal conditions. Consequently, it is evident the demand for cooperation from developing and less developed countries and, therefore, the necessity to improve SSC practices based on these and other lessons that could be learned from different experiences of international cooperation.

7.5 Research Prospect

South-South Cooperation in general, and Venezuela's cooperation in particular, are valuable research topics in which there are still aspects to unveil. As expressed in this dissertation, although there has been an increasing interest in studying SSC in recent decades, it has mainly focused on China and other BRICS countries. Additionally, the literature tends to focus on economic and technical aspects rather than political, cultural, and social ones. In this sense, even though the author deployed an extensive research

effort to achieve a resignification of Venezuela's SSC from 2007 to 2013, based on the visions of different sectors, official documents, and literature review to provide theoretical elements that could reinforce existing knowledge regarding SSC approaches, there are still aspects that were not approached and could serve as drivers to promote future research:

First, according to official data from international organizations, more than 5,000 cooperation agreements were signed from 1999 to 2013 between Venezuela and partner countries. However, it is unclear how many of these agreements were fully implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented. Therefore, deepening the research into the different cooperation projects signed and executed between Venezuela and partner countries could expand the understanding of their impact at the regional and international levels. This can be possible through an in-site investigation with technical staff and official documentation in the archive at the Venezuelan MoFA, other Venezuelan organizations involved in SSC initiatives, and governmental organizations in allied countries. However, due to the different travel restrictions that appeared since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this kind of research was not possible to include in this dissertation.

Second, even though this dissertation inquired about the perception of partner countries and other regional actors regarding Venezuela's SSC, the findings are based on the visions of the studied sectors, in which most of the participants are Venezuelan nationals, with the exception of several international key informants linked to the academic sector. Therefore, obtaining the perception from partner and not allied government officials as well as the civil society, media, academia, and other sectors regarding SSC in general, and Venezuela's SSC in particular, can generate significant contributions to understanding not only Venezuela's cooperation but also ideological alliances and the entire political dynamic of the region.

In this context, maintaining permanent monitoring and research of the degree of utility of the SSC is necessary since the findings that emerge from it, beyond specifying or verifying the "status quo" of the initiatives underway, unveil the gaps to close, which require quick and effective responses to sustain and promote this form of international cooperation.

Finally, there are other interesting case studies in the LAC region, such as Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay, which are not usually approached when studying SSC initiatives in the region and that, like the Venezuelan case, have enormous contributions to offer in the study, understanding, and reinforcement of SSC modalities in order to achieve the desired sustainable development.

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Appendix 1
Conducted Interviews

Name	Institution	Position	Method
Governmental sector			
MG. Gerardo Izquierdo Torres	MoFa Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Minister for the New Border of Peace (Since 2015) - Former General Commander of the Venezuelan Army (2014-2015) 	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Hector Constant Rosales		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (Since 2022) - Chair of the Programme and External Relations Commission of the Executive Board of the UNESCO (Since 2019) - Former National Coordinator at Mercosur (2015-2018) - Former Executive Director of the Pedro Gual Institute of Higher Diplomatic Studies (2006-2007) 	Interview by Zoom
MA. Seiko Ishikawa		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambassador to Japan (Since 2005) 	Interview by Zoom
Prof. Carlos Mendoza Potellá		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Ambassador to Russia and Saudi Arabia (2003-2005) 	Interview by Zoom

Dr. Orietta Caponi		- Former Ambassador to Bulgaria (2014-2019)	Interview by Zoom
Prof. Yadira Hidalgo		- Former Ambassador to South Korea. (2012-2019) - Former Vice Minister for Social Development. (2007-2009)	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Augusto Montiel		- Former Ambassador to India (2015-2019) - Special Envoy for the candidature of Venezuela in the Security Council of UN (2007) - Former Deputy to the National Assembly (2006-2011)	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Eddy Cordova		- Former Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea Bissau (2007-2018)	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Jose Nelson Duarte		- Ambassador. - Secretary of the National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO (Since 2020)	Written Interview
MA. Cristina Flores		- Coordinator of the Vice-ministry for Latin America	Interview by Zoom

Chief Admiral. Diego Molero		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Ambassador to Peru (2013-2017) and Brazil (2013) - Former Minister of Defense (2012-2013) 	Interview by Zoom
Adm. Jorge Sierralta		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rector at Universidad Nacional del Transporte. (Present) - Former Ambassador to Switzerland. (2003-2008) - Former General Commander of the Venezuelan Navy. (2002) 	Interview by Zoom
Adm. Ludwig Vera	Venezuelan Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Military Attaché to Belgium and the Netherlands. (2014-2015) - Former Director of International Affairs of the Venezuelan Navy. (2012-2013) 	Interview by Zoom
Capt. Luis Ojeda Perez		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Representative to the International Maritime Organization (2006-2012) 	Interview by Zoom
Capt. Edgar Blanco Carrero		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Navy Attaché to Brazil (2008-2009) and Colombia (2010-2011) 	Interview by Zoom
Capt. Ana Suarez		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Navy Attaché to China (2010-2013) 	Interview by Zoom

MG. Alexis Lopez Ramirez	Venezuelan Army	- Former General Commander of the Venezuelan Army. (2013-2014) - Former Rector at Universidad Militar Bolivariana de Venezuela. (2010-2013)	Interview by Zoom
Div. Gen. Jhonny Sandia		- Former Military Attaché to Trinidad & Tobago (2019-2021)	Interview by Zoom
Brig. Gen. Juan Aponte		- Former Military Attaché to Spain (2017-2019)	Interview by Zoom
Col. Levis Gonzalez		- Former Military Attaché to Ecuador (2009)	Written Interview
Dr. José Gregorio Vielma Mora	National Assembly	- Deputy (Since 2021) - Former Minister of Trade and Foreign Investment. (2017-2018) - Former Governor of Tachira State. (2012-2017)	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Juan Diaz Ferrer	Ministry of People's Power for Communication	- Former Vice Minister for Strategic Communication. (2007-2008)	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Maria Alejandra Portillo	Ministry of People's Power for Science and Technology	- Director (Since 2019)	Interview by Zoom

Academic sector			
Dr. Carlos Romero	Universidad Central de Venezuela	- Professor of Political Science	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Nelson Lara		- Former coordinator of the graduate programs at the Graduate School of Social and Economic Sciences	Written Interview
Dr. Luis Angarita		- Professor at the School of International Studies	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Mirna Yonis	Venezuelan Council of International Relations	- Director - Coordinator of the Master's Program in International Relations at Universidad Central de Venezuela	Interview by Zoom
M.A. John Magdaleno	IESA Business School	- Professor of Political Science	Interview by Zoom
Dr. Elodie Brun	El Colegio de Mexico	- Professor at Centro de Estudios Internacionales	Interview by Zoom
Prof. Javier Corrales	Amherst College	- Dwight W. Morrow 1895 professor of Political Science	Interview by Zoom
Prof. Hiroyuki Urabe	Dokkyo University	- Professor at the Graduate School of Liberal Studies	Interview by Zoom

M.A. Aki Sakaguchi	Japan External Trade Organization – Institute of Developing Economies	- Senior Researcher	Informal Talk by Zoom
M.A. Ana Sofia Garcia Salas	Universidade de Sao Paulo	Ph.D. Candidate in Latin American Integration	Interview by Zoom
Media sector			
Dr. Miguel Perez Pirela	La Iguana TV	TV producer and anchor	Interview by Zoom
Journalist Madelein Garcia	Telesur	Correspondent	Interview by Zoom
M.A. Halim Naim	Former Globovision	International Analyst and TV anchor	Interview by Zoom
M.A. Janeth Suarez	Venezolana de Television	Correspondent	Written Interview
Dr. Vladimir Adrianza		International Analyst	Written Interview
Journalist Luisana Colomine	Independent	Journalist National Press Award 2017	Written Interview
M.A. Maria Jose Gonzalez		Journalist	Written Interview

Others			
Mr. Hidehiro Tsubaki	MoFA Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Former Ambassador of Japan to Bolivia (2013) - Former General Consul of Japan in Barcelona (2010) - Former Counselor of the Japanese Embassy to Cuba (2002) - Former Counselor of the Japanese Embassy to Venezuela (1999) 	Interview by Zoom
Total: 41 Interviews conducted			

Appendix 2

Interview Script

Name:

Institution:

Position:

Question 1:

How do you describe Venezuela's South-South Cooperation during the period 2007-2013?

Question 2:

What were the ideas (values) promoted by the government of Venezuela through South-South Cooperation during this period?

Question 3:

What were the ministries, government agencies, and politicians involved in South-South Cooperation initiatives during this period?

Question 4:

According to different scholars, Venezuela's motivations for providing South-South Cooperation were wide, ranging from the construction of a multipolar world and the implementation of a socialist state to decreasing the influence of the U.S in the region, fulfill the thought of Simon Bolivar, and achieve national and regional sustainable development. In this sense, what do you consider were the interests and motivations of the Government of Venezuela for providing South-South Cooperation?

Question 5:

Understanding vectors as the way of engagement between two or more countries involved in South-South Cooperation, among these: Humanitarian assistance, trade, investment, migration, education, and global governance, in your view, what were the vectors through which Venezuela's South-South Cooperation was provided?

Question 6:

What national and international systemic factors, such as the extraordinary oil revenues or the U.S. antagonistic actions against the Venezuelan government, influenced South-South Cooperation initiatives provided by Venezuela?

Question 7:

How did the leadership of President Hugo Chavez influence the policy-making process regarding South-South Cooperation? And who supported and objected to these policies in his government?

Question 8:

What was the role of regional organizations such as ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and Celac in promoting Venezuela's South-South Cooperation?

Question 9:

What were Venezuela's most important projects promoted through these organizations? (ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, CELAC and UNASUR).

Question 10:

How was the perception of partners' countries and other regional actors regarding Venezuela's South-South Cooperation through ALBA-TCP, PetroCaribe, UNASUR, and Celac?

Question 11:

What was the impact of Venezuela's South-South Cooperation initiatives at the regional and global levels from 2007 to 2013?

Question 12: - In your opinion, did Venezuela's South-South Cooperation have a political dimension? How could it be characterized?

Question 13:

What elements can be learned from Venezuela's experience to reinforce South-South Cooperation modalities?