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THE REGION IS WHAT WE SAY IT IS:

THE SPEECHES OF LULA DA SILVA
AND HUGO CHÁVEZ
IN THE CONSTRUCTION
OF LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION

ORDEM

RAFAEL FERNANDO
CASTRO ALEGRÍA

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Konrad Adenauer Center
for International Relations and Security Studies

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Rafael Fernando Castro Alegría



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Fundación Konrad Adenauer A.C.
Río Guadiana 3
Col. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06500
Del. Cuauhtémoc, CDMX
Tel. 5566-4599

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Table of Contents

Foreword	p. 9
CHAPTER 1. Introduction	p. 11
CHAPTER 2. Methodology	p. 15
CHAPTER 3. Theoretical Framework	p. 20
3.1 Constructivism in International Relations	p. 20
3.2 Laclau and Mouffe's Theory of Political Discourse	p. 22
3.3 The Discursive Construction of Regions	p. 24
3.4 The Construction of Hegemony in Regions	p. 26
CHAPTER 4. A South American House	p. 27
CHAPTER 5. For a Second and Definitive Union (Independence)	p. 35
CHAPTER 6. Leaving the Backyard	p. 44
6.1 Synecdoche	p. 44
6.2 Historical Narrative of Integration	p. 44
6.3 Equivalences of Integration	p. 45
CHAPTER 7. Hegemony of Discourse, Union, and Division	p. 49
7.1 The Reception of Hugo Chávez's Speeches on ALBA	p. 50
7.1.1 <i>Speeches by Evo Morales</i>	p. 50
7.1.2 <i>Speeches by Rafael Correa</i>	p. 52
7.1.3 <i>Comparing the Reception of Chávez's Speeches by Evo Morales and Rafael Correa</i>	p. 54
7.2 The Reception of Lula da Silva's Speeches on UNASUR	p. 57
7.2.1 <i>Speeches by Rafael Correa</i>	p. 57
7.2.2 <i>Speeches by Álvaro Uribe Vélez and Juan Manuel Santos</i>	p. 59
7.2.3 <i>Comparing the Reception of Lula da Silva's Speeches by Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos</i>	p. 62
CHAPTER 8. Conclusion	p. 65
List of References	p. 69

Foreword

It is a great pleasure to introduce the 3rd edition of “Young Perspectives”. “Young Perspectives” is a publication series of the newly founded “Konrad Adenauer Center for International Relations and Security Studies” (KACIRSS). It gives outstanding young academics from all around the world an opportunity to publish their theses on current topics in the field of international relations and security. Above all, “Young Perspectives” allows experts at the early stages of their career to share their research, ideas, and observations with a broad audience.

While the last publication “The Impact of Outbreaks of Infectious Diseases on Political Stability” by Celina Menzel analyzed the impact that outbreaks of ebola, tuberculosis and influenza have on the political stability of countries where such outbreaks occur, this third publication directs our focus back to the Latin American region.

Other than the first two editions of “Young Perspectives”, this edition focuses on the significance of discourses in international politics. More specifically, it examines the role of discourses in the construction of regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. In doing so, the author Rafael Fernando Castro Alegría analyzes the political discourses on the region by two prominent figures: former Brazilian president Lula Ignácio da Silva with regard to the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and former Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez with regard to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA). In addition, Rafael Fernando Castro Alegría examines whether these discourses achieved discursive hegemony, i.e. whether the presidents of the other member states of the two organizations received and reflected in their own speeches elements of the discourses that were originally framed by Hugo Chávez and Lula da Silva. Throughout this publication, Rafael Fernando Castro Alegría bases his discourse analysis on a combination of theoretical and methodological elements from constructivist and poststructuralist approaches.



As our readers may know, both Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez displayed a certain talent for public speaking that was reflected in their frequent – and sometimes quite long – speeches. As two of the most prominent leaders in South America during that time, they undoubtedly influenced – for the better or the worse – regional politics. The great value of this publication lies in its contribution to a greater understanding of the impact that political discourse can have on perceptions, political actions, and the construction of a region as a political project. Moreover, Rafael Fernando Castro Alegría points out that his research “may help to provide understanding of the thematic priorities of different leaders, the geopolitical delimitation they use for the region, and the points of dispute or consensus that may hinder or contribute to consolidating integration.”

“The Region is What We Say it Is: The Speeches of Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez in the Construction of Latin American Integration” provides a distinct analytical approach to regional politics. It gives readers valuable insights on the power of language and discourse. I sincerely hope that, once again, our readers will enjoy this interesting publication within the framework of Young Perspectives and take away some memorable points.

Prof. Dr. Stefan Jost
Director of the Country Program Mexico and KACIRSS
Konrad Adenauer Foundation
Mexico, January 2018

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“A final word about the way we envisage the most urgent tasks for the Left. Several voices have been heard recently calling: ‘Back to class struggle’. [...]. But without a vision about what could be a different way of organizing social relations, one which restores the centrality of politics over the tyranny of market forces, those movements will remain of a defensive nature. If one is to build a chain of equivalences among democratic struggles, one needs to establish a frontier and define an adversary, but this is not enough. One also needs to know for what one is fighting, what type of society one wants to establish. This requires from the Left an adequate grasp of the nature of power relationships, and the dynamics of politics. What is at stake is the building of a new hegemony. So our motto is: ‘Back to the hegemonic struggle.’”

(Laclau and Mouffe, 2014, pp. XVIII-XIX)

Throughout the history of the American continent, different discourses have been constructed for regional integration. Each one of them has contained a certain geographic boundary, specific actors, and a series of ideas and values that their different proponents have considered more relevant. Two of the discourses on regional integration that have played a more representative role on the continent have been Latin-Americanism and Pan- Americanism.

The discourse about a Pan-America has been promoted since 1889 by the United States. Its idea was initially created in order to promote the integration of the entire continent through a single institutional body. In the beginning, this integration was mainly motivated by commercial interests, given that it was conceived because of a need to provide new markets to the young and growing U.S. industry. Subsequently, the discourse of Pan-Americanism was transformed into Inter-Americanism, starting in 1948 with the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) (Ardao, 1986,



p. 166). It recognized the existence of different Americas on one single continent, and gave shape to an institutional structure that no longer included the idea of simple trade integration but also the architecture of an inter-American system that, in the context of the Cold War, covered the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), a political and crisis-management forum among other duties within the OAS, and a banking infrastructure that seeks to finance development projects on the continent – the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), among other bodies.

The discourse of Latin-Americanism is considered to have emerged with a group of Hispanic American intellectuals who resided in Paris. One of them, the Colombian José María Torres Caicedo, was the first person to express the need to create a Latin American Union in a book. This idea was created in direct opposition to the U.S. doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine, and thus excluded the countries of North America. From the beginning, he defended the importance of unity between the emerging Latin American states in the 19th century. This idea was also promoted by Martí in his celebrated text “Our America”, as well as on paper and in practice by Simón Bolívar through the Jamaica Letter and the Panama Congress, respectively. Regarding its institutional expression, it had different manifestations throughout the 20th century and even in the 2st century, by means of creating organizations like the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), and, more recently, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

A discourse about the region that appealed to this Latin Americanist and Bolivarian tradition was unfolded by the former Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (2002-2013), who put emphasis on the need to build greater autonomy for and solidarity between the Latin American peoples. His discourse also included the possibility of expanding the “21st century socialism” throughout the region. This idea of autonomy incorporated as one of its essential parts the criticism of the U.S. government and its interference in the Latin American subcontinent, and found its institutional expression in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) created in 2004.

In addition to these two main discourses on regional integration that have been developed since the 19th century on the American continent, it is



possible to highlight the institutionalization of a new discourse that has been taking place since the end of the 20th century: South-Americanism. South-Americanism defines the construction of regional institutions between South American States, excluding the United States and Canada - as in the Latin Americanist vision - but now also excluding Mexico and the Central American countries (Betancourt, 2012, pp.317-325). This discourse has also sought to promote an agenda of regional cooperation beyond trade issues, including topics like regional security, political coordination, crisis management, as well as physical, energy, and telecommunications integration (Pastrana and Vera, 2012, p. 138). This discourse on regional integration is expressed principally in the creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2008. The idea of a South American region is particularly articulated in the speeches of the former Brazilian president Lula da Silva (2003-2011).

The studies done on South American and Latin American integration in the 21st century have focused in good measure on trying to a) frame both concepts within the general panorama of Latin American regionalism, and to categorize them within a specific “wave” of the processes of regionalization (Riggirozzi, 2012; Sanahuja, 2012); b) interpret them as part of a leadership or regional hegemony project that proposes a regional power or a secondary regional power (Flemes, 2010); c) evaluate the impact that citizens or regional civil society of the different member states may have in the consolidation and decision-making of these organizations (Serbin, 2007); d) propose the possibility of carrying out intra-regional and domestic crisis management processes through the institutional frameworks that have been created for regional integration (Serbin, 2009); e) compare the different interests that are present in the regional politics of Venezuela and Brazil, as well as in ALBA and UNASUR, respectively (Giacalone, 2013).

Taking the above into account, the majority of analyses that have been conducted on the processes of region building promoted by Brazil and Venezuela has originated fundamentally from either a realist base¹ measuring material capacities, balances of power, and interests of the regional power, or from a liberal institutionalist base² examining the common or divergent

¹ Principally, beginning with the premises of neoclassical realism (Flemes and Wehner, 2015; Schenoni, 2015).

²For example, in his study on the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), Germán Prieto (2013, pp. 18-22) questions the rationalist-materialist base with which studies have been done on that institution and highlights the importance that elements like collective identity may have for understanding the decisions made by the actors who participate in regional institutions.



interests of each state in the development of a certain regional institution as well as the capacity of regional institutions to fulfill their duties that may be considered to be a mutual benefit or gain by the member states.³

The void between both perspectives lies in the fact that neither of them interprets in detail how the different speeches given by the actors that are a part of these processes influence regional integration. In this sense, this research seeks to interpret, through the methodology of discourse analysis, how the region, especially regional integration, is constructed in the speeches of Hugo Chávez and Lula da Silva, who are considered great proponents of two of the regional institutions most representative of the first decade of the 21st century: UNASUR and ALBA. Accordingly, the following research question is formulated:

How are the speeches on regional integration given between 2004 and 2011 by Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez received by the presidents Evo Morales, Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe, and Juan Manuel Santos?

Thus, the general objective of this research is to interpret the reception of Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez's speeches on regional integration given between 2004 and 2011 by the presidents Evo Morales, Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe, and Juan Manuel Santos. In turn, the specific objectives are listed below: 1) Build a theoretical framework that allows interpreting region building through speeches on regional integration; 2) Interpret region building in the speeches on integration given by Lula da Silva between 2004 and 2011; 3) Interpret region building in the speeches on integration given by Hugo Chávez between 2004 and 2011; 4) Contrast the similarities and differences between region building in the speeches on integration given by Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez between 2004 and 2011; 5) Contrast the speeches on integration by Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez between 2004 and 2011 with respect to their reception by the presidents Evo Morales and Rafael Correa (Chávez's speeches), and by Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe, and Juan Manuel Santos (Lula's speeches).

³ An exception in this sense is the work of Arnoux on the Latin Americanist discourse of Hugo Chávez (2008) and on the UNASUR in their discourses (2012). It proposes interpreting the processes of regionalization with a critical analysis of discourse from the perspective of authors like Michel Foucault and Michel Pêcheux. In this analysis, the principal references are the presidential debates in meetings, joint declarations, and other documents.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

Methodologically, this investigation uses discourse analysis in the strain from the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. One of the tools that may be used for understanding the discursive process of constructing regional integration is the theoretical base of establishing hegemony, which these authors postulate through rhetoric and rhetorical devices, among other elements. Nonetheless, within the formulation that these authors posited, there is a void regarding the interpretation of these devices in a particular political discourse, that is, how these concepts may be used for analyzing a specific discourse.

With regard to this, authors like Balsa (2011, pp. 81-82) have made proposals that may contribute to the operationalization of the concept of hegemony, proposing to incorporate the use of rhetorical devices in a broader framework on the construction of equivalences and differential operations, which consists of five levels:

- a) The construction of equivalences, which may consist of creating an equivalence between one thing and another or first disjoining a pre-existing equivalence and then articulating it in a different way;
- b) Rhetorical devices and the use thereof, which include metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy and catachresis;
- c) The introduction of equivalential relationships by listing: In a discourse, additive relationships allow to dilute the differences between certain issues through the construction of equivalences. For example, by using commas in a list it is possible to facilitate a reciprocal “contamination” between terms that are generally very dissimilar.



- d) Argumentative implicatures: There may be co-textual definitions derived by 'thus' chains (and their equivalents), or transgressive chains ('nonetheless'), that continue to a specific signifier (Balsa, 2011, p. 84).
- e) Oppositions and equivalences can be built through syntagmatic contiguity: Here, the operation consists of the speaker changing a meaning in a non-explicit manner, for mere continuity between sentences, because he or she does not want to or is not able to defend it. The intermediary between these sentences builds a semantic relationship that is not made explicit in the discourse.

This research, in turn, adopts the methodological vision of historical-hermeneutic sciences, defended by Jürgen Habermas, who bluntly distinguishes the perspective of the simple observer from that of the participant in creating knowledge in such sciences. He assumes that it is impossible for the social researcher to objectively describe the reality investigated, but that the objective is to understand and interpret reality. As a consequence:

All meaningful expression—whether it is a verbal or non-verbal manifestation, an everyday artifact like a tool, an institution, or a text—can be identified from a double perspective, like a material event and like a meaningful intelligible objectification (Habermas, 2008, pp. 33-34) (Translation).

Given that researchers are mainly interested in the second perspective, as their objective is to understand and interpret a certain expression of meaning, they must recognize the fundamental consequences for their research: 1) Researchers break away from the position of mere observers, as they are involved (at least in a virtual way) in the processes regarding the meaning and validity of manifestations. By participating in communicative actions they accordingly accept the same position as those whose manifestations they try to understand (Habermas, 2008, p. 37). 2) Researchers confront the problem of understanding the context in which their research objective is presented, as they cannot presume that the participants of the communication they are interpreting start with the same practices and assumptions. 3) The researcher must take into account that in everyday life communication principally takes place over validity claims that are not related to the truth (natural world), but to how correct or incorrect a certain action is according to certain norms



and values (world of the social), and over the authenticity or sincerity of our expressive manifestations (world of the personality-social).

Consequently, researchers understand the significance of a text only if they understand why the author felt right to make certain affirmations (as if they were true), to recognize certain values and norms (as if they were just) and to express certain experiences (as if they were authentic) [...] (Habermas, 2008, p. 41) (Translation).

This research is limited to the years between 2004 and 2011, considering the extent of the analyzed phenomena (discourses) took place mostly in those years. In particular, they took place in 2004, the year in which ALBA - the institution that provides the majority of speeches analyzed - was funded. Furthermore, that year saw the formation of the Community of South American Nations, precursor to UNASUR. During the summits of this organization, Lula da Silva gave the majority of the speeches that are to serve as material for this research. The year 2011, in contrast, is considered a closing point because Lula da Silva finished his presidency in January 2011 and Chávez began to show less discursive participation as a consequence of his surgical procedures.

With regard to the development of the research objective, the proceeding is as follows:

- 1) Build a theoretical framework that allows interpreting region building through discourses on regional integration. For the development of this objective, this analysis will make use of theoretical literature around political discourses, discursive hegemony, and the social and discursive construction of regions.
- 2) Interpret the construction of the region in Lula da Silva's speeches on integration between 2004 and 2011. Regarding this objective, this analysis will interpret how the region was constructed in the speeches given by Lula da Silva between 2004 and 2011 in the Community of South American Nations (later UNASUR). These speeches were read in Portuguese, and some parts, which the author of this study considered pertinent, were translated into Spanish.



- 3) Interpret the construction of the region in Hugo Chávez's speeches on integration given between 2004 and 2011. Regarding the third objective, this analysis will interpret how the region was constructed in the speeches given by Hugo Chávez between 2004 and 2011 in the ALBA.
- 4) Identify the similarities and differences between region building in Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez's speeches on integration between 2004 and 2011. Here, the findings from the three objectives mentioned above will be contrasted to identify similarities and differences in the way in which Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez create the region in their speeches on integration.
- 5) Contrast Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez's speeches on integration between 2004 and 2011 with regard to their reception by the presidents Evo Morales and Rafael Correa (Chávez's speeches), and by Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe, and Juan Manuel Santos (Lula's speeches). In order to achieve this objective, speeches by Evo Morales and Rafael Correa (representatives of the ALBA member states) as well as by Álvaro Uribe, Juan Manuel Santos, and Rafael Correa (representative of the UNASUR member states) given in the annual meetings of these bodies between 2004 and 2011 will be analyzed.

The selection of cases for the fifth objective was made based on various criteria. Evo Morales and Rafael Correa, two of the most representative members of ALBA, were selected both in terms of the material resources of their countries and because of the political will they have shown for the development of the project. At the same time, they were the members with most speeches found (available) within the ALBA. In general, one of the difficulties encountered in this research was the absence of centralization in the speeches on regional integration in official or academic databases, which implied a great dispersal of primary sources. On occasion, this meant that some of the speeches were found fragmented, on audio tracks that were hard to understand. In some cases it was simply not possible to access them. All the above is specified in each of the references presented at the end of the study. Given this problematic, the speeches were obtained from multiple sources that included presidential websites of the respective state, websites of regional organizations, books where some of the speeches were compiled, among other digital sources. In order to complement the perspective provided by the speeches given in the ALBA and the UNASUR, this research turned to addresses that the presidents



gave in other scenarios (especially in the UN and the OAS) which explicitly mentioned regional integration.

In the case of UNASUR, taking into account the greater ideological diversity of this institution, the speeches by the presidents of Colombia and Ecuador were chosen. This selection was made because these leaders represent distinct ideologies, which could imply a different reception of Lula's discourse on regional integration. Nonetheless, as clarified in chapter seven, the speeches of former Colombian president Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) and President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-present) were included. They were considered, principally, because of the coincidences that were found in different aspects of the equivalences that both built in their speeches on integration. Furthermore, only few speeches by former president Uribe in this organization could be accessed. Aside from the reasons mentioned in the above paragraph, this is due to his absence from several of the summits, which was mostly connected to the regional tension caused by the illegal bombing of a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) camp in Ecuadorian territory by the Colombian Armed Forces, as well as to the agreement between Colombia and the United States on the use of Colombian military bases by U.S. personnel.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Constructivism in International Relations

Constructivism presents itself as an approach that provides a middle way in the debate between neorealism and institutional neoliberalism, which had turned into the principal axis of discussions on International Relations theories. One of the most important criticisms that this approach formulates is oriented toward questioning the rationalist base of the debate itself. For constructivism, the foundation of the neo-neo debate can be found in the theory of rational action. This leads to the fact that the agents' interests and identities are conceived as given exogenously and cannot be transformed. In the framework of both theories, the actors themselves are found immutably motivated by selfish interests, which explain their behavior. As a result of the rational calculus possible in an anarchic international system, with self-help as one of its ordaining principles (Wendt, 1992) neither the interests nor the identities of the agents can be transformed.

In contrast to that point of departure, constructivism builds on a reflectivist position that is linked to the fundamentals of social psychology and sociology. The postulate of pre-constituted interests and identities in international relations is questioned as this theory inquires for their process of formation. Thus, it challenges the assumption that the identities of states are determined by a certain distribution of power and within the limits imposed by a monolithic logic of anarchy. Constructivism proposes, in contrast, that the relationship one state has with another is developed based on the meaning the latter has for the former, and vice versa. That is, the actions of one state toward another are inspired not by an "objective" distribution of its material capabilities, but by the interpretations it has of that other, the intersubjective expectations, and the distribution of



knowledge. Accordingly, collective meanings compose the structures that guide our actions (Wendt, 1992, p. 397).

Reality is then conceived as socially constructed. One of the most important implications of that postulate is that the world is constructed, in large measure, through the interactions between the different actors that are part of it, i.e. through communication. That is why, in order to understand the process of the formation of state interests in constructivism, ideas and beliefs inherent to the actors' cultural formation (Wendt, 1999, p. 134) and their discourses (Onuf, 2013, p. 29) hold great relevance.

Thus, a fundamental proposition of constructivism is that society defines people and people give shape to society; there is a *co-constitutive* process between society and its members. The elements that unite those two parts are social rules.

“Rules are statements that tell people *what we should* do. [...] All of the ways in which people deal with rules—whether we follow the rules or break them, whether we make the rules, change them or get rid of them—may be called *practices* [...]” (Onuf, 2013, p. 4).

Rules also tell us about situations in which we can be active participants or *agents* in a society. Rules show us what situations we are allowed to or must not participate in, as well as what we can or cannot do in those situations. Agents can, for example, act in the name of social constructions like groups or countries, following the rules established for them (Onuf, 2013, p. 4-5).

Also present in constructivism is the concept of institutions, understood as “recognizable patterns of rules and related practices” (Onuf, 2013, p. 5). Agents operate inside of and transform the institutional context that provides them with options for action. The actions of these agents may also have involuntary consequences that are not within their intentions. The stable set of institutions, involuntary consequences, and rules give society its *structure* (Onuf, 2013, p. 6).

Constructivism defends the fact that social relationships define people and, as such, also make our world the way it is. Within these social relationships, it is not only important what we do but also what we say: saying something is considered *doing* something. That guides the idea that talking is the most important way through which we make the world what it is (Onuf, 2013,



p. 4). A society, a specific country, a nation, or a region is a social construction when we consider them autonomous worlds. The logic that different countries are considered autonomous (sovereign) entities is only possible because we talk about them as if they were.

Within the constructivism defended by Onuf (2013, pp. 10-11), the concept of speech act consists of talking in a way that aims to make another person act a certain way. In order to achieve something, that act depends on the response that people have to it. The form an act generally takes is that of a subject who affirms that a certain "order of issues" may be achieved or already exists. As indicated, when a speech act is repeated frequently and continues generating the same effect, the emergence of a *convention* takes place, in which people think that words, and not their originator, are what generates a certain effect in the world. A convention transforms into a *rule* when those who follow it stop acting a certain way because it is what they have always done, but they start to follow that action because they believe that *they must* carry it out.

From that dialogical construction of the social follows the importance of language in the construction of international "reality". As indicated, some of the postulates from theories, such as the theory of speech acts, have been adopted. It is considered that language has a locutionary, illocutionary and performative (perlocutionary) function. In the first dimension, a sender formulates a message and transmits it. In the second dimension, that message is received, decodified, and understood. Nonetheless, from the viewpoint of the social construction of reality, the third function is the most important one as it affirms that language also has a performative function, wherefore there is a possibility that our very perception of reality may be transformed. Therefore, talking has effects on the world, for example through the gestation of changes in the way we perceive a certain problematic, and thus in the way we act with respect to it (Onuf, 2013, p. 12; Habermas, 1999, p. 40).

3.2 Laclau and Mouffe's Theory of Political Discourse

This perspective of the social construction of international politics and of the importance of language and discourse in structuring them may be used in conjunction with Laclau and Mouffe's theory of political discourse, which is categorized as one of the theories of social constructivism (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 4).



In these authors' theory of political discourse, a predominant role is assigned to the discourse and hegemony categories. Discourse is considered to be a meaningful totality, going beyond the differentiation between the linguistic and the metalinguistic (Laclau, 1993, p. 15). In this theory, everything is considered discourse. It does not determine, as indicated by some critics of this focus, that reality does not exist as the authors recognize the existence of both social and physical objects, clarifying that our access to them is always mediated by systems of meanings: discourses. An example that is put forth in this sense is that of a rock, which may be considered a work of art or a projectile depending on the discursive context in which it is found (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 35).

Discourse is understood as a type of structure - in a Saussurean sense - in a relational network of fixed signs.⁴ Nonetheless, the structure of discourse is never completely closed, thus it always may be challenged by other articulations (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 29). That impossibility of a closed totality delinks the connection between signifier and signified, which means there is a proliferation of floating signifiers in society (Laclau, 1993, p. 15). From that point of view, it becomes possible to interpret political confrontations as discursive struggles that seek to establish the meaning of one or several of those floating signifiers.

Laclau and Mouffe call the success of that partial fixation between signified and signifier "hegemony" (Laclau, 1993),⁵ and use the term of "articulation" for the practice by which a relationship is established between elements in such a way that their identity is modified. In turn, the most important - most privileged - signifiers in a discourse are designated nodal points (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, p. 91 and 99). In that way, the authors explain that "the practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning [...]" (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014, p. 100).

⁴ Like knots in a fishing net.

⁵ This author argues that it is possible that a difference also represents an immeasurable totality without ceasing to be particular. In that sense, its subject is divided between the particularity it still inherits and the universal significance it assumes. This process of a particularity assuming an immeasurable universal significance on its own is what the author calls hegemony. Given that universality or totality are impossible objectives, the hegemonic identity becomes an empty signifier; it transforms its own particularity into the subject that embodies unreachable totality (Laclau, 2005, p. 95).



3.3 The Discursive Construction of Regions

A perspective of the social construction of international reality where discourses and ideas are given a much more fundamental role in the interpretation of politics can contribute to a great extent to the study of regionalism. That contribution can go beyond the realist and institutionalist focuses that have been used to study the region, that is, it can transcend the calculus of maximization of benefits and minimization of losses, of measuring material capabilities, and of balances of power inherent to these theories.

From a constructivist focus, one can part from the premise that regions are, before all else, ideas. As ideas, one can talk about them, and their existence is specifically derived from talking about them. Thus, regions are always constructed through discourses. The discursive process that gives rise to the emergence of regions as institutional facts has been called *regionification*. In that sense, "the concept of 'region' has to be regarded a linguistic tool used by actors to talk about a geographical area that is not a state but has some statehood properties." (Van Langenhove, 2011, p. 65).

Arguing that regions are social constructions implies questioning the idea that regions are only geographic, and allows to affirm, for example, that they are made up of institutions, people, and discourses. *People* are the ones who create regions, by means of *discourses* of regionification that may bring about the *institutionalization* of a certain region (Van Langenhove, 2011, pp. 66-67). It is important to highlight that, while any geographic area may be considered a region, the process of regionification may only occur as a consequence of certain discursive acts. Those acts are produced in a dialogical social context, i.e. it is not enough for a single person to talk about a region in order to create it, rather, it also requires other people (who may represent states, organizations, or other regions) who accept ("receive") that pretense of regionification.

One of the elements studied to analyze the way in which discourses construct international relations is the metaphor. Metaphors are seen to be a means of persuading others to accept or act based on what we say. At the same time, "concepts are metaphors that we no longer recognized as such." (Onuf, 2013, p. 40). The metaphor may be considered an act of affirmation through which new concepts are given names that are used for other things and, at the same time, they also give their name to new concepts. This process is called *metaphoric extension*. In general, that



extension is done with names that are familiar to us, despite the fact that in the new form they acquire with a recently created metaphor, they appear new to us. To the postulate that affirms that all metaphors are concepts Onuf adds the idea that all concepts are metaphors that have been established for constant use (naturalized), and that we give an evaluative or even normative weight to in our communication.

Metaphors can also be seen as similes insofar that something similar is at the same time different in a certain measure. Thinking in similes also leads us to create comparisons and analogies, and to “assign kinds of things to more inclusive kinds.” (Onuf, 2013, p. 42). That is, when we create metaphors we also classify, and by doing so we give order to our world through our representations.

With respect to the field of International Relations, it has been indicated, for example, that a certain idea considered to be part of common sense in international politics can be in fact a sedimented metaphors (Drulák, 2006, p. 502), e.g. when we talk about states as if they were people. With the metaphors being sedimentary, they can occasionally stop us from thinking outside of them.

However, metaphors can be transformed either by creating new metaphors or by extending the metaphors that we use by adding new elements. For example, while the metaphor of the state may continue to be the state as a person, it may turn out differently if we think about people as Hobbesian enemies or Kantian friends (Drulák, 2006, p. 503).

With respect to the topic of metaphors, the most referenced study on their use in the discursive construction of regions is that by Drulák (2006), who tries to identify the metaphors used in theories on European integration and in the discourses of the parliamentary representatives of the European Union (EU) member states. On the Latin American continent, Prieto (2013, pp. 18-22) puts forth the possibility of operationalizing constructivism to study the role of regional institutions and of the collective identity of the Andean Community (CAN), beginning with analysis of transitive verbs and metaphors to distinguish the causal and constitutive effects that ideas can have and, in turn, an evaluation of the *terms* in which actors explain their actions.



3.4 The Construction of Hegemony in Regions

The aforementioned theoretical postulates are articulated throughout this analysis as explained below. This paper departs from the statement of constructivism and from the theory of speech acts to affirm that saying something (talking) has a performative effect, insofar as it can contribute to the transformation of the perception that we have of “reality” and, as such, of the way we act. Therefore, we can assume that in order to understand international relations, it is relevant to interpret the discourses of the actors at play concerning a particular topic, in this case, of the former presidents Lula and Chávez when they talk about regional integration.

Throughout this analysis, the concept of regionification is present, considering that it is not enough for an actor to talk about regional integration, but rather that it is necessary for others to also talk in *those* terms about *that* region and about *that* regional integration. Using this theoretical postulate, the discourses of presidents Correa, Morales, Uribe, and Santos are also interpreted in chapter seven, in order to identify whether they received Lula and Chávez’s claim of regionification.

This perspective is complemented in this analysis with Laclau and Mouffe’s theoretical conception of discourse and hegemony. Chapter seven equates the interpretation of the success of regionification through the achievement of hegemony by the speeches of the former Brazilian and Venezuelan presidents. Nonetheless, before being able to elucidate that process, chapters four, five, and six analyze chains of equivalences and rhetorical devices built around the nodal point of regional integration and regional union (as Chávez calls it), using the theory of Laclau and Mouffe.

CHAPTER 4

A South American House

This chapter analyzes the speeches of former Brazilian president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, with particular emphasis on the discursive construction he makes of South American regional integration. The speeches privileged for this purpose are those given between 2004 and 2011 at the summits of the Community of South American Nations (CASA), called the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) since 2008.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework and in the methodology section, one of the key concepts in Laclau and Mouffe's theory is the construction of equivalences and the use of rhetorical devices in constructing the hegemony of political discourse. However, due to the fact that these authors do not provide elements for operationalizing these concepts in discourse analysis, this section will be supported by four elements proposed by Balsa (2011), namely the construction of equivalences, syntagmatic contiguity, and the use of synecdoches and metaphors.

One of the most important and recurring articulations in Lula's discourse is a metaphor that links South American regional integration to a FAMILY HOUSE (CASA DE FAMILIA).⁶ It is worth pointing out that this metaphor coincides with the acronym for the South American Community of Nations (CASA). When Lula refers to CASA, which symbolizes regional integration, he uses three different connotations.

First, in 2009, when talking about the need to decolonize the minds of South American elites in order for them to believe the solution to the region's

⁶ Following a style used by Drulák (2006) and Onuf (2013), in the instances when referencing metaphors used in discourses subject to interpretation, capitalization will be employed.



problems not outside of the continent but within its very countries, the metaphor takes the shape of a HOUSE where a married couple lives. In that sense, he indicates:

Well, it is as if a couple (**CASAL**), husband and wife, were inside of a HOUSE (**CASA**) with differences, and the neighbor was called to resolve the problem. It is not going to be resolved. Either the two understand each other and resolve the problem or, once the neighbor leaves, the conflict continues (DaSilva, 2009). (Translation, caps and bold added).

It may be highlighted that there are two mentions of CASA. The first, in a more indirect way, through the word CASAL, which in Portuguese means couple (married or unmarried), and which in this speech stands for a married couple. In the second mention, more directly, the need to resolve regional problems in an autonomous manner is equated to the importance of that being done inside of a HOUSE (CASA) where the married couple lives together. Foreign intervention to resolve their problems is represented by the figure of a neighbor who is called upon to resolve the situation.

That neighbor has certain characteristics. For example, the neighbor is recognized as a conciliator who may contribute to get both parties to sit at the table and agree on certain positions. Once the neighbor leaves the scene, however, the problems will continue.

Here, it is worth asking what this image of a neighbor that resolves a married couple's problems evokes. First, the neighbor is someone who lives in another HOUSE, and who presumably does not know about the couple's problems and the context of the discussion. Thus, by not inhabiting the same space as them and belonging to the couple, the neighbor does not share their ideas, their interests, or their story. Second, the neighbor is also associated with the idea of someone who at some point is going to leave, and with the neighbor's departure the conflict will continue. Therefore, he is considered incapable of solving the problem in the medium and long term.

Before and after presenting this metaphor, Lula highlights the importance of UNASUR. While Lula does not directly point out that UNASUR, the South American region or the South American community of nations is a HOUSE, we can interpret that this is his intention, taking the perspective of syntagmatic contiguity. Syntagmatic contiguity occurs when a meaning slips in a non-



explicit manner by mere contiguity between sentences, and that by not being made explicit is not directly argued by the speaker. In this case, there is contiguity between the sentence in which Lula talks about the CASA and one of the phrases in which he mentions UNASUR.

Previously in the same speech, Lula had indicated that in the 20th century the political leaders of the region did not have good relationships with one another and preferred to be friends with the Europeans and Americans. The example he provides in that sense is that during his time as a union leader in the 1980s he, was never invited to South American countries, but constantly to the European countries and the United States. Whilst the former Brazilian president does not directly establish the representation of the neighbor being tied to those countries, the previous mention he makes of them is sufficiently close to make this association by syntagmatic contiguity.

The solution of the region's problems in an autonomous manner without the intervention of foreign powers is present in all the speeches that were analyzed for this research. During a business seminar with Brazil and Peru, in a similar construction but with an economic-trade connotation, Lula stated that Peruvian and Brazilian business people have had to look toward Europe and the United States with envy. In that address, he uses the HOUSE metaphor, without explicitly mentioning it, to compare that envy to the envy of a person who, on the street where they live, envies the guy who bought a new car and the guy who bought a new house (DaSilva, 2008a). Then again, his speech presents a person (representing the countries of the region) and the neighbor (symbolizing the extra-regional powers or developed countries).

Hand-in-hand with the idea of resolving regional problems in an autonomous manner, Lula's speeches also build an equivalence between the deepening of South American regional integration and establishing the region as a political actor with its own voice, that is, a political actor at the global level. As such, South America is supposed to be able to arrive with its *head up* to negotiations and international stages. Referring to this point, the expressions tend to be synonyms for *global actor*. He also talks about the region as being a *spokeperson* and the importance of *political coordination* to set joint positions around topics such as security and regional defense, drug trafficking, and the Amazon region.

A second representation of that FAMILY HOUSE is found in a speech given at UNASUR in 2005, in which he indicates:



The **HOUSE** that we are building requires innovative financing solutions and also demands the endeavor of **our business community**. By means of BNDES and of PROEX, the Brazilian government has financed the exportation of goods and services to carry out projects with a direct interest for continental **integration**. 43 infrastructure projects with Brazilian financing are underway in the region, for a total of \$4.3 billion. To leverage our financing capacity even more, Brazil took the initiative to incorporate itself as a full member of the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), significantly increasing our participation in the institution's capital. We hope that soon the CAF can have **the participation of all the countries in the region**. This will be a decisive step toward a South American Development Bank. The evaluation of the Reciprocal Credit Agreements is another powerful tool to gather the necessary resources for **our integration**. Today we are going to advance in the harmonization of criteria and common financing standards in **our region** (DaSilva, 2005) (Translation, bold adapted).

From this section, there are several important aspects to highlight:

- a) The South American region and its institutions are newly conceived as a HOUSE, which in this case is under construction. Just like in the process of building a house, resources and financing are needed. Lula proceeds to indicate the significant contribution that Brazil makes toward financing regional infrastructure projects, as well as its incorporation into the CAF. Nonetheless, he immediately points out that he hopes to see the incorporation of other countries in the South American region in order to advance the formation of a South American Development Bank. With that quick comment, Lula discards the possibility of Brazil being the “paymaster” of the region. Thus, it can be interpreted that inside the FAMILY HOUSE the countries of the region are building, Brazil does not wish to assume the role of a parent, but casts itself as an *older brother*. One who is willing to assume greater financial responsibilities than the *younger brothers* (the other South American countries), but who is not interested in assigning itself the entire task of regional integration.
- b) When the signifier “integration” is mentioned, an equivalence is made with financial and infrastructure integration. Particularly the latter, along with energy integration for the region, is the most constant and highlighted equivalence in Lula’s speeches, to the point that in a 2006 speech he indicated that:



Energy integration, alongside the question of **infrastructure**, will be one of the two engines of the South American Community of Nations. For South America, those two pillars represent the same thing that coal and steel meant for European integration in the 50s (DaSilva, 2005) (Translation, bold adapted).

- c) In that section, the former Brazilian leader mentions what he repetitively considers in his speeches as a key actor in regional integration: the business community of the South American countries. Despite assigning a great preponderance to the Heads of State in managing integration, Lula also highlights other actors in his speeches: citizens, social movements, workers, indigenous ethnicities and groups. Thus, an important role is given to civil society in the process of consolidating South American integration. That equivalence is constructed in his speeches, indicating that South America's integration must be essentially *human*. To reach that objective, he underlines the need for a joint approach for border policies, the facilitation of citizens' mobility between South American countries, the definition of a South American social agenda, and the promotion of a shared cultural identity by, for example, turning Spanish into the second-language in Brazil and by petitioning other South American countries to promote the learning of the Portuguese language.

A third mention of the HOUSE metaphor was found in a speech that was not given at a South American regional integration summit, but at the commemoration ceremony for the Day of Diplomacy in Brazil in 2008. There he noted that:

Of course, everything begins here in our beloved South America, in our **HOUSE**. It begins with the work that we are doing in MERCOSUR and UNASUR [...]. In all these initiatives, we have always tried to promote, without renouncing our principles, **dialogue** and understanding. In the recent crisis between Ecuador and Colombia, Brazil acted with serenity and steadiness so that justice and moderation would prevail. They are **balancing postures** that, without losing sight of what is right or wrong, allow for **appeasing tensions** and finding the just path to resolve the controversies. Peace and understanding must guide the common project that we, the South Americans, want for the region. For that, we have to demonstrate political maturity [...]. With political will, desire for cooperation, and **respect for our differences**, we can advance in our integration. (DaSilva, 2008b) (Translation, caps and bold adapted).



In this case the HOUSE metaphor:

- a) Emphasizes that the priority of Brazilian foreign policy must be South America;
- b) Represents a HOUSE in which respect for differences must prevail in order to be able to deepen integration. In a context of great ideological diversity in the region, the equivalence between respect for differences and the possibility to advance in South American integration is fundamental for Lula. Here we can interpret that the HOUSE is represented as the space of encounter between the multiple figures of the family members, who tend to generate friction, but who must also be harmonized for affiliate coexistence and cooperation. In his speech at the UNASUR in 2009, the former Brazilian president indicates that respect for ideological differences must be built as one of the region's values. That is why he believes that it is not constructive to say that a certain president is right-wing, left-wing, or centrist. While he himself has his preferences, his relationship as Head of State is with everyone, without discriminating against other positions (DaSilva, 2009)
- c) Beyond the HOUSE metaphor, respect for differences is also associated with another element that was emphasized by Lula in 2009 and in the greater part of his speeches on regional integration: sovereignty. In his addresses, the former Brazilian president promotes nonintervention in internal issues and urges his peers to do the same: to respect the mandate that the people of each state have given to their leaders by democratic means (DaSilva, 2009).
- d) Along with the invitations to defend sovereignty and the principle of nonintervention, Lula mentions Brazil's role in domestic or regional crises in his speeches. The role constructed in these speeches is that of a country that wants to be a mediator in crisis, between states or between government and opposition, provided that it is called upon to do so. Thus, it seeks that position but does not intend to impose it. Considering the above, it may be interpreted that Brazil once again seeks the role of an older brother (mediator) and not a parent (sanctioner or decision-maker).

Another equivalence constructed in Lula's discourse includes regional integration and trade integration. On this point, the former president notes that fair trade must be developed in a way that takes into account the asymmetries of the region's countries, and that is on a path to close these



gaps. He emphasizes the importance of increasing intraregional trade and building regional value chains that allow South American products to position themselves in global markets.

Regarding extra-regional relationships, Lula constructs an equivalence between regional integration and the deepening of ties with developing countries, principally through South-South cooperation, solidarity and trade. It is not stated that there is a conflict with the developed countries. Instead, the idea of cordial, although not preferential, relationships is defended.

An equivalence is also constructed between South America and 'the region'. While it is clarified that with that delimitation, which is reflected in UNASUR's membership and in the Common Market of the South's (MERCOSUR) aspirations for expansion, there is no intention to set aside integration with the rest of Latin America or with other countries on the American continent. In addition, in this discursive construction of regional integration we can find a use of synecdoche. This device in the construction of hegemony can be defined as follows:

[...] in a hegemonic relationship, a particular difference assumes the representation of a totality that exceeds it. This gives a clear centrality to a particular figure within the arsenal of classic rhetoric: synecdoche (the part that represents the whole) (Laclau, 2005, p. 97) (Translation).

As indicated in the theoretical framework, a region is not a mere geographic expression, but requires the realization of certain discursive acts for its construction. One of those upheld is the synecdoche. In this device *the part* (the geographic expression that the person who enunciates the discourse considers to be *the region*) is presented as *the whole* (if we consider that the geographic delimitation could always include more countries). Lula's discourse can be interpreted in a way that what is constructed as *the region* pertinent for the regional integration of South America (the part) goes beyond other and older geographic expressions like Latin America or the Americas (which could also represent *the whole*). In other words, Lula puts forth a certain geopolitical delimitation of the region.

Finally, in his speeches at CASA and at UNASUR, the former Brazilian leader employs a certain historical narrative on regional integration, in which he



highlights that in 200 years of independent political life integration between the countries of the continent has not truly been achieved, although he recognizes the progress achieved by some of the regional institutions. He highlights that by giving institutionality to UNASUR, the unifying dream of the XIX century liberators and the heroes is becoming reality, defeating the resistances and inertia that have hindered the construction of regional unity during those 200 years. He locates the causes mainly in the heads of elites and politicians who showed great indifference toward their peers in the region. Lula explicitly indicates the occurrence of this phenomenon during the 20th century, and adds that those rulers always preferred to look toward Europe and the United States.

To sum up, in Lula's speeches on regional integration, the metaphor of a FAMILY HOUSE is often used and given different connotations. First, it is a HOUSE where a married couple (the South American countries) lives. The couple has to learn to resolve its problems in an autonomous manner, i.e. without the intervention of the neighbor (extra-regional powers). Second, the HOUSE is considered to be under construction, for which it is necessary to provide the resources, i.e. financing. In that process, Lula does not represent Brazil as a provider parent, but as an older brother who assumes leadership and an important part of the economic and financial burdens of integration. Finally, the HOUSE is a place where ideological differences must be respected and the autonomy (sovereignty) of each family member (family=region) is emphasized.

Furthermore, Lula elaborates multiple equivalences and different syntagmatic continuities, taking integration as a nodal point. In the former Brazilian leader's speeches two equivalences are privileged: energy and infrastructure integration. He builds a historical narrative, associating the elites as a fundamental cause of the failure in the regional integration process, and presenting the advance of integration as the fulfillment of the dream of the heroes and liberators of the continent. He identifies those who he considers to be the actors of regional integration: the Heads of State and their cabinets, the business community, citizens, social movements, ethnic groups, and indigenous communities. Lula makes an equivalence between the region and South America in a rhetorical movement that can be interpreted as a use of synecdoche to present South America (the part) as *the* region (the whole), to pursue a geopolitical delimitation of the region by means of this rhetorical device.

CHAPTER 5

For a Second and Definitive Union (Independence)

In this chapter, the speeches of the former Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez, with reference to regional integration are analyzed, prioritizing those given at ALBA between 2004 and 2011. As in the previous chapter, and in accordance with the theoretical and methodological postulates outlined, this analysis will be based on four of the elements proposed for discourse analysis by Balsa (2011): the construction of equivalences, syntagmatic continuity, and the use of synecdoches and metaphors.

In most of Chávez's speeches - not only in those in which he talks about region building - there is a historical narrative around the different struggles for independence waged on the continent during the 19th century, privileging stories that involve Bolívar.

[...] Hugo Chávez has put into circulation, through his speeches, his own version of Venezuela's history whose central characteristic is the construction of a temporal arc that joins the process of independence from Spain and the Bolivarian Revolution, proposing that, given that the first remained inconclusive due to the Venezuelan oligarchies' betrayal of Bolívar and his dream of integration and social justice, the Bolivarian Revolution must retake those ideals [...]. His version of history is centered on the period of independence being a story of battles in which armed men are exalted. (Márquez, 2014, pp. 529-530) (Translation).



In a similar way, one can find that:

- a) In the speeches in which Chávez makes reference to region building he builds a temporal bridge between Bolívar's failed attempt to reach a union between the States of the Americas at the Panama Congress of 1826⁷ and the creation and consolidation of ALBA. In order to achieve harmony with the regional connotation in which he gave the speeches, Chávez on multiple occasions also refers to other independence leaders like, Abreu e Lima, Túpac Katari, Artigas, San Martín, Miranda, and O'Higgins.
- b) His speeches on the region also establish a temporal arc between the processes of independence with respect to Spain and the efforts to achieve regional integration in the 21st century. As a result, there is an equivalence between the regional union in the 21st century, the processes of independence from Spain, and the efforts to advance regional integration in the 19th century. Specifically, Chávez repeatedly indicates the latter as unfinished. For example, at a Venezuela-Brazil dialogue after signing the UNASUR charter in 2008, he affirmed:

The union has to be for independence: The union is to become independent, it is the **continuation** of the struggles of Abreu e Lima, Bolívar, Túpac Katari, Artigas, O'Higgins, a process that we have **reclaimed** a century and a half later (Chávez, 2008a.) (Translation, bold adapted).

At the IV Petrocaribe Summit in 2007, he noted:

Today it must be said, **200 years after that independence cut short**, came down and collapsed as we remembered today, citing a phrase by Bolívar written around 1828 in Guayaquil, said to a Venezuelan general, seeing how the bases of the Grand Colombia project were already moving, coming down, Bolívar said: If our America is not called to order and reason, nothing will guarantee the stability of our emerging governments, of our emerging republics, and we will leave behind a new colonialism. That was what happened, governments came down, republics came down, projects came down, the great dream came down. And here we are today, two centuries later, **reclaiming the battle for our full independence**. Now, let's have each day more conscience of the fact

⁷This ideal was also put on paper in the Jamaica Letter of 1815.



that for us being truly independent and, in addition, to guarantee permanence, **to guarantee in the future, in this century and in those that follow, our independence and our development, there will be many things that are missing, but there is one that is fundamental: unity, unity. Only united will we be truly independent only united will we be truly free.** United we can make miracles, even make real what seems impossible (Translation, bold adapted).

Constructing equivalences may be done through the creation of an equivalence between A and B, but, in turn, that operation may be done first with the disjoining of a pre-existing equivalence for its subsequent articulation in a different way (Balsa, 2011). The first is relevant to the degree that in Chávez's speeches on region building, the signifier "integration" is generally not present. Nonetheless, in the majority of the occasions that he does mention it, he first seeks to disjoin an equivalence that he considers has been made to later articulate it in a different way.

That signifier is used in two different ways in his speech after the signing summit for the UNASUR Charter (Chávez, 2008a):

- a) Chávez cites the Brazilian academic and politician Darcy Ribeiro, indicating that this author talks about operational integration and operational union, assimilating it to having and completing an operational work plan. Another idea that he attributes to this writer is that it is not enough to talk about integration in the abstract, but that the type of integration one wishes to achieve must be defined clearly.
- b) Chávez indicates that Bolívar never talked about integration but union, and makes it clear that he also prefers this connotation. From that declaration, it can be interpreted that here he carries out two operations. First, he disjoins an equivalence between region building and the signifier "integration". Second, he creates an equivalence between the terms of union and region building. In addition to the first point, Chávez states that while the word integration was very much peddled by neoliberalism, integration is more about a process or dynamic, while union is an "objective" (an affirmation that is not explained in more detail).



Speaking of union, in his speech given at Petrocaribe in 2007 Chávez implies that Bolívar talked about the nation of republics. Doing so he indicates that the meeting is not international but uni-national as it considers all those present to be part of a single nation. To exemplify this, he notes that people who come to Venezuela from different countries should not feel like foreigners because they are part of a Great Homeland or a Great Nation.

In this discursive context, he associates the union with two other terms: BLOC and FIST. Chávez utilizes the concept of a bloc on different occasions in his speeches to talk about the regional institutions, thus, it is considered relevant to analyze some of the equivalences associated with this word in international relations. The BLOC or blocs tend to be metaphors evocative of the Cold War. The Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc, the capitalist bloc and the socialist bloc are constructions that are used frequently in political speeches from that era. The metaphor of blocs in the Cold War is also tied to the idea of a confrontation, a conflict, a collision, and a clash between these blocs. In that sense, the image of a fist is also generally associated with a confrontation or fight, and/or may be considered reminiscent of the Soviet Union's political propaganda. The upheld fist is also a gesture that Chávez used repetitively in his addresses and public appearances.

Specifically, in his speeches given in various multilateral settings (including the UN), one can find the idea that the creation of regional institutions like ALBA is directly opposed (like in a clash of BLOCs) to the values, actions, and economic model proposed by the countries of the North in general and the United States in particular. Additionally, Chávez notes that this project opposes institutions seen to be manipulated by the United States, especially the IMF. Taking the above into account, one understands that the first A in ALBA used to stand for "Alternative" (an alternative to the FTAA), and was later changed to "Alliance".

Furthermore, the former Venezuelan leader builds a historical narrative on the emergence of ALBA. This narrative is based predominantly on the speech he gave in 2005 in Mar del Plata. Here, two metaphors are closely linked: the metaphor of BURIAL and the metaphor of BIRTH. This includes the BURIAL of the FTAA, in which all the countries of the Americas were expected to participate, carrying and using a burial shovel. In addition, he indicates that the burial of the capitalist, neoliberal, and imperialist economic model must take place, associating it with the buried proposal of the FTAA and George H.W.



Bush's Initiative for the Americas, which he in turn connects to the Washington Consensus. These connections finally trace a temporal bridge that Chávez calls "the resistance against the Washington consensus," that - he states - began in Venezuela on February 27, 1989 when the Caracazo started (Chávez, 2005).

In the same way that the peoples of the Americas BURIED the FTAA, the former Venezuelan president thinks that they give BIRTH or are the midwives of a BABY: With ALBA, and with it the womb of the Americas, birth is given to the socialism of the 21st century. Likewise, this metaphor of birth is very present in the speech he gave at his arrival to Cochabamba for the VII ALBA Summit in 2009. In that address, he connects the Panama Congress convened by Bolívar (and the struggles of other independence leaders in the Americas) with the creation and consolidation of ALBA. Doing so, he implies that the Union of the South or the League of Republics that Bolívar wanted to promote in 1826 DIED AT BIRTH. That BABY was then REBORN with the BIRTH of ALBA. With regard to this, Chávez declares:

120 years ago, we were in search of a new world, I believe it was already born but is **still a BABY**. The conspiracies against Correa, against Cuba, Bolivia, **are attacks against the BABY** [...]. And Havana we, José Ramón, could bring him that request, not even Fidel could miss it because **Fidel is the father of ALBA**. Yesterday in the book that was presented, I told myself that a photo of Fidel was missing. The name ALBA occurred to me like mischief. On Isla Margarita we were discussing and Fidel came in dying of laughter and told me: I envy you; a lockout of the employers is a pride for a revolutionary. I told him that **ALBA is BEING BORN against the FTAA**. A few days later, a letter rigorously formalized with a seal and everything arrived from Cuba, including four or five lines where the programmatic base of ALBA was reported. That was how ALBA was born (Chávez, 2009) (Translation, caps and bold adapted).

The fact that Fidel Castro is considered the FATHER of ALBA represents certain points that may be highlighted. On the one hand, of course, is the consideration that takes place in the side sentence made on his role in preparation of the programmatic basis and the fact that Cuba is the cofounder of ALBA. On the other hand, in his speeches Chávez places Cuba as a FATHER in the sense of an example to follow with regard to a) the socialist economic model, while he clarifies that each country must build it in its own way; and b) the anti-imperialist resistance to the United States.



Later, he also traces a temporal bridge back to the 19th century, between the anti-imperialist resistances of the independence leaders and the creation of a new project of the “South” in the 21st century that is opposed to the imperialist project of the North embodied by the United States and passing it from Jefferson along to Madison and Monroe up to the present.

For Chávez, one of the fundamental objectives of uniting the South is the ability to negotiate conditions of equality and dignity with the North and the rest of the world. Here, the question of who makes up the South that Chávez speaks of arises. Why does the former president use this synecdoche and what does he hope to achieve with it? It is not simple to pose who is included in his delimitation of the region (the part that is presented as the whole), as it appears to vary from speech to speech. Nevertheless, it becomes clear if we derive membership from exclusion, i.e. taking into account that those never included in the regional union in his addresses are the United States and Canada. This shows that Chávez builds South America in opposition to North America when talking about regional union. For him, South America is not limited to the twelve UNASUR countries, but also includes Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. While the inclusion of the latter is only found in one speech, right there he explicitly indicates that it is incorporated into his idea of the South.⁸ On this topic, he implies after signing the UNASUR Charter in 2008:

South America is a continent that is the way I have always seen it. **Here, in what we call the Americas, there are two continents: South America and North America; and in South America one has to include, of course, the Caribbean and Central America.** South America, because in some places they call us, or prefer to call us, and we accept and also call ourselves “Latin Americans”; in other places they call us Ibero Americans, but I feel much more Indo American than Ibero American. I feel much more Afro American than Latin American. Look at all the confusions about our identity; and I believe that **the most powerful defining** line of our identity is South American, it is a day for history (Chávez, 2008a) (Translation, bold adapted).

⁸The reference to the inclusion of Mexico is found in his speech given at the Mar del Plata Summit in 2005.



In addition, one also finds in some of his declarations the concept of the Great Homeland (*La Patria Grande*) coined in the 19th century, an idea that was connected to the independence struggles and brought together the Hispanic American nations. As such, Brazil was not included. That exclusion is not present in Chávez's speech, as was indicated above, since the only countries from the American continent that are subtracted are Canada and the United States.

Furthermore, one repeatedly finds the following equivalences that Chávez's builds with respect to ALBA, to regional integration or union:

- a) ALBA and the social element: In his speeches, Chávez makes multiple references to the fact that it is indispensable for the regional union to function in favor of improving the quality of life of the peoples who are part of it. Thus, the term that tends to be used in these cases is that of a fight. The most recurring fights are the ones against hunger and illiteracy and achievements that took place in this regard with the help of Cuba are extolled. There are also numerous allusions to the strengthening of the delivery of health services for people who cannot afford them, and the provision of housing for people in need.
- b) ALBA, Petrocaribe, and the economic-financial aspect: One idea that is constantly criticized in the speeches of the former Venezuelan president is the idea of free trade, which he associates with capitalism and neoliberalism, and which he deems to not have allowed the development of countries in the region. Opposed to this postulate are trade exchanges Venezuela has with other member states, principally on oil, which is sold below market price and exchanged for "pregnant cows" and technology, among other products. In addition, he mentions different opportunities for carrying out *joint ventures* between the companies of the countries that make up ALBA and Petrocaribe.

Chávez also constructs an equivalence of a financial union. Here, not only the economic-financial strengthening of the countries of the union is considered being at play, but rather he interprets it as a political element within the questioning of U.S. hegemony. That is why he highlights the accumulation of reserves in currencies other than the U.S. dollar and the exchange via SUCRE between the ALBA members as fundamental⁹.

⁹In this order of ideas, the creation of the "Bank of the South" had strong support from Venezuela.



Regarding the economic model, Chavez constantly emphasizes that there is not a middle ground between socialism and capitalism, and specifically that ALBA must decisively contribute to advancing the socialism of the 21st century. In promoting this social model, Chávez's speeches also include a constant religious component, namely the association built between Christ and socialism (kingdom of equality and justice), as well as between Christ and anti-imperialism. In that sense, the former Venezuelan leader declares himself Christian. Through a symbolic contrast, in a strong allusion, Chávez declares Judas Iscariote to be the first capitalist, given that he sold Christ for a few coins.

In a different context, after the signing summit of the UNASUR Charter, Chávez's speech (2008) recognizes much more the importance of respect for ideological plurality and plurality of economic models. He indicates that it is not possible for all governments to think the same, and that even among the numerous left-wing South American governments there are different focuses and speeds, but that unitary will is what matters.

- c) ALBA and the political element: Regarding the political aspects, as mentioned before, the construction of a BLOC through ALBA is highlighted, one that may contribute to the consolidation of a multipolar world. This BLOC must be opposed to the United States' hegemony and, principally, to what Chávez views as the U.S.'s imperialist aspirations, not only for the region but with respect to countries worldwide. In the same way, he states that ALBA must allow the elaboration of joint positions with respect to the topics of the hemispheric and global agenda. Thus, the former president considers that it is of paramount importance to create a political actor that acts unified on multilateral stages.
- d) ALBA and the military element: As referenced at the beginning, Chávez's version of history focuses on the independence era in which the role of men of arms is emphasized (Márquez, 2014, p. 530). In his speeches on region building, one can also find this element. A case to highlight is the Mar del Plata speech (Chávez, 2005) at the ALBA summit, in which he underlines the role of Generals San Martín and Bolívar in the independence struggles. That mention is used to highlight the role that the military forces played in the region's defense. The former Venezuelan leader states that in the 20th century they were infiltrated by the United



States and became “occupation” armies in their own countries, but that now they must actively contribute to achieving the “second and definitive independence”.

Landing this point on the regional map and given the existence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), he proposes the creation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO), which would unify the military forces of the region and would not allow new occurrences similar to the dispute over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas¹⁰). According to Chávez, regional armed forces would allow to defend the sovereignty of the countries in the region, the respectful protection against possible foreign infiltrations, and the construction of concepts of safety and self-defense not dictated by the United States Southern Command. All of the above are elements that he considers fundamental for region building and the achievement of the “second and definitive independence.”

- e) ALBA and its actors: The subject and object that Chávez considers as central in his speeches on regional building are the *peoples* of the Americas. In his addresses, there are repeated mentions of the fact that the objective of regional union is the peoples’ liberation, independence, and well-being. At the same time, he indicates that the peoples were the ones who buried the FTAA, who gave birth to ALBA, and with popular participation must build that project. The relevance of the peoples as actors tends to be opposed to the role of elites or transnational corporations, which the former president considers, aside from the United States, as the great promoters of the FTAA.

In sum, this chapter found that Chávez uses three metaphors about the ALBA and the construction of regional union. The first two were closely tied: the BURIAL (FTAA) and the BIRTH (ALBA). The third metaphor found in Chávez’s speech was that of building a BLOC (socialist). Moreover, it was highlighted that Chávez builds a historical narrative that establishes a process and temporal continuity between the processes of independence in the 19th century, the attempts to achieve regional union in the 19th century, and the search for a second and definitive regional union and independence in the 21st century; a process that he considers to contribute to the creation and consolidation of ALBA. A last point is the disjoining and rejoining that Chávez conducts around the integration nodal point, which does not appear as frequently in his speeches on the region.

¹⁰The Argentine term for The Falkland Islands, reflecting the British-Argentine struggle for this territory.

CHAPTER 6

Leaving the Backyard

This chapter makes a comparison between the synecdoche, the historical narrative on integration, and the metaphors and equivalences used in the speeches on regional integration by Lula da Silva in the UNASUR and by Hugo Chávez in the ALBA.

6.1 Synecdoche

One of the fundamental differences in the speeches on regional integration by Lula and Chávez is the use that each makes of synecdoche to geopolitically define the region. For the former, the geographic priority of regional integration must be South America. For the latter, even on occasions in which he also uses the term South America, the geographic expression of the region is Latin America and the Caribbean. It is worth highlighting that for Chávez region building is based on a logic of the South America/North America or South/North opposition that will be explored more profoundly later in this chapter

6.2 Historical Narrative of Integration

The historical narratives on regional integration established by Lula and Chávez have several aspects in common: the reference to heroes and liberators from the independence processes of the 19th century and their vision on the importance of regional integration. Nonetheless, the stories vary on several points.



First, the former Venezuelan president establishes a temporal bridge between certain historical events, especially between the Panama Congress and the creation and consolidation of ALBA. Additionally, achieving regional integration is also conceived as one of the ways to achieve the “second and definitive independence”. For Lula, it is the fulfillment of the liberators’ dream, which had been completely cut short for over 200 years, rather than a continuation. For that reason, he does not explicitly establish a temporal bridge with sporadic historical events around the integration attempts of the 19th century.

Second, Lula brings forth that in the 20th century the South American elites did not like each other, thus they preferred relationships with Europe and with the United States. Based on that idea, the former Brazilian president assumes that this situation has changed in the 21st century. On the other hand, the historical narrative in Chávez’s speeches on integration is much more concrete and usually tied to the history of resistance to the introduction of neoliberalism in Latin America. The fight and victory against the creation of the FTAA is taken as a decisive episode of that history, from which the most recurring metaphors in his discourse emerge: the BURIAL of the FTAA and the BIRTH of ALBA.

Third, for Chávez, the historical narrative determines the signifier used to talk about regional integration, as it privileges union over integration. In fact, Bolívar did not refer to integration but union, and the term of integration is considered to be tied to neoliberalism. Lula, in turn, uses “integration” as the principal signifier in his speeches.

6.3 Equivalences of Integration

In the equivalences created around the regional institutions they promote, we can find multiple commonalities. Both former presidents assume that regional institutions should cover economic commerce, as well as financial, political, social, energy, security, and infrastructure issues. Despite the above, they establish priorities concerning different topics of integration, while at the same time having divergent visions on the way that certain agendas should be developed.

According to Lula, the three priority issues for UNASUR should be energy, trade, and infrastructure integration. Instead, Chávez believes that within



ALBA, preference should be given to cooperation agendas in social and political coordination, and the defense (militarily) of sovereignty issues.

In their speeches both leaders agree on the need to prioritize the relationship with countries of the region. Nonetheless, there are differences when providing motives that justify this focus, as well as its implications.

For Lula, it is a matter of maintaining cordial although not preferential relationships with the developed countries, such that a conflicted relationship is not posed. Preference is simply given to cooperation and integration with countries of the region and, after them, with those that can engage in South-South cooperation. In accordance with that “cordial” vision, the metaphor that Lula uses to refer to extra-regional actors, including the most developed countries, is that of NEIGHBORS. This allusion neither evokes a confrontation, nor does it represent a relationship as close as a FAMILY HOUSE, which he uses for members of the South American region. Hand-in-hand with the above, the concept that tends to be present in those speeches is that of regional autonomy.

In contrast, Chávez expresses a collision in terms of a metaphor of BLOCS that clash. These blocs are the SOCIALIST BLOC that ALBA is part of and the CAPITALIST BLOC led by the United States and followed by the countries of the North. The objective is not only to establish autonomy, but also to avoid those countries’ hegemony – or their imperialism, as Chávez puts it.

At the same time, regarding the vision that the region has common security and defense issues, both consider it necessary to build concepts that attend to regional needs and not external agendas. In addition, cooperation on these issues must be promoted between the member states of the respective organizations. Nevertheless, for the former Brazilian president, carrying out that objective may take place by means of coordination strategies on agendas through the South American Defense Council. In contrast, the Venezuelan leader goes beyond this point and posits the creation of a SATO as necessary, allowing the joining of the region’s armed forces for the defense of sovereignty. That idea goes hand in hand with the vision of a CLASH of BLOCS that Chávez posits, with SATO and NATO opposing each other.

As highlighted, there is a divergence in the focus that both propose for the relationship that ALBA or UNASUR should have with the developed countries (confrontation for Chávez versus cordial autonomy for Lula). Despite that discrepancy, it should be highlighted that in the declarations that both make about UNASUR, they build the same equivalence with



respect to the fact that regional coordination and cooperation can take place even though there are deep ideological differences between the member states.

Additionally, there are commonalities in the idea of integration as a mechanism to strengthen the position of the members of those regional institutions in the chess game of global power, as well as in global institutions and negotiations. They believe that the region cannot allow itself to continue being conceived as the United States' backyard. In accordance with that, the two ex-presidents believe that those institutions should serve as spaces of political coordination to manage intraregional issues without the intervention of extra-regional powers, and to agree on joint positions in order to defend and propose them on other multilateral stages.

Finally, there is a difference between those who are considered the principal actors for integration: In Chávez's speeches, those who are placed as the subjects and objects of integration are the peoples of the Americas, who are opposed to the role of elites and transnational corporations in that process. Further, as indicated in the historical narrative, Lula also identifies the existence of a negative role of the elites and integration, although he locates it principally in the 20th century. Additionally, he posits the participation of a great number of actors who are not distinguished in Chávez's discourse: the Heads of State and Government in each country, the national business people (who are constantly highlighted), the citizens (to whom he dedicates the concept of human integration), social movements, ethnic groups, and indigenous communities.

In sum, the way both use synecdoche in their discourses depicts that the region is diverse (South America vs. Latin America and the Caribbean), just as the metaphors that are used to refer to regional integration (HOUSE vs. BLOC). In the historical narrative, there are multiple commonalities. However, Chávez establishes the temporal bridges between ALBA and the struggles for independence much more explicitly, just as the first ideas and efforts to achieve integration. Regarding the equivalences, different emphases were found with regard to priority issues for regional integration. Convergences and divergences were identified in the equivalences and in the visions they have for certain issues on the regional agenda. Those visions are particularly different with respect to security and regional defense. Nevertheless, they share the idea of building a more autonomous region that manages its own issues and builds joint positions to be presented on multilateral stages. Finally, the actors that each one places as participants in the process of regional integration (peoples vs. multiple actors) differ from each other.



Table 1: Comparison of Articulations in Speeches on Integration by Chávez and Lula¹¹

Articulation	Lula	Chávez
Synecdoche	South America	Latin America and the Caribbean
Equivalence relationship with developed countries	Autonomy	Confrontation
Metaphor	Family House	Clash of Blocs
Historical narrative of integration	Dream cut short in the 19 th century, scorned in the 20 th , and realized in the 21 st	ALBA is a historical continuation of the 19 th century integration efforts, esp. the Panama Congress
Nodal points (master signifiers)	Integration-UNASUR	Union-ALBA
Equivalences priority issues integration agendas	Energy, trade, and infrastructure integration	Social agenda, political coordination, and defense of sovereignty
Security vision and regional defense	Coordination and cooperation in the South American Defense Council	Creation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO)
Equivalence ideological diversity UNASUR	Coordination in the midst of ideological diversity	Coordination in the midst of ideological diversity
Equivalence political coordination	Intraregional management + construction of joint positions on multilateral stages	Intraregional management + construction of joint positions multilateral stages
Integration actors	Multiple actors	Peoples

¹¹ Table elaborated by the author.

CHAPTER 7

Hegemony of Discourse, Union, and Division

This chapter interprets the reception of former presidents Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez's speeches on regional integration by other presidents from member states of UNASUR and ALBA, respectively. Similarly to the previous analysis, this analysis incorporates metaphors, synecdoches, the construction of equivalences, and the historical narratives that those leaders use around the nodal point "regional integration" when interpreting the reception of Chávez and Lula's discourses. To clarify, this chapter does not interpret reception as an explicit mention by one of the presidents, recognizing that the equivalence is taken from Chávez or Lula. Instead, reception is interpreted based on the commonalities and divergences between the speeches given by Santos, Uribe and Morales and those given by Lula and Chávez. The question arises of whether the Brazilian or the Venezuelan are the ones who created the discourse received or whether, conversely, they are the ones who receive the discourse from others. While it could be considered that in this case Lula and Chávez are the ones who predominantly created the discourse, as they are the ones who led the creation of the regional institutions subject to study, it is not possible to demonstrate this empirically. Thus, conceptually and methodologically it is considered more appropriate for this research to try to establish whether those discourses achieve hegemony than whether they are received.

The importance of interpreting how other presidents from these regional organizations build the same equivalences, metaphors, etc., in their speeches lies in the postulates that make up the theory of political discourse on which this analysis is based. Taking into account that the concept of hegemony is defined as the success of a partial fixation between signifier and signified (Laclau, 1993), it must be established whether the political discourses of these former leaders achieve such success. In this case, the



signifier is regional integration and the signified is what Lula da Silva and Chávez say about it. The following chapter interprets the convergence and divergence of the articulations constructed by Chávez and Lula with respect to the speeches of other presidents from the regional institution that they sought to lead (ALBA and UNASUR, respectively).

7.1 The Reception of Hugo Chávez's Speeches on ALBA

7.1.1. *Speeches by Evo Morales*

With respect to the metaphors found in Chávez's discourse, the Bolivian president Evo Morales also uses the metaphor of Fidel Castro (as a representative of Cuba) as the **FATHER** of ALBA. He does so to the degree that he mentions Castro literally, and places the island as the example to follow in terms of its socialist model and the struggle against imperialism. In the same way, the creation of ALBA and the joint work among its members is opposed to the presence of institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in their countries.

In the closing ceremony of the VII Summit of ALBA Heads of State and Government, he declared:

For me, Fidel and his people are the **FATHER** of the revolution; the revolution as a synonym of integration, the revolution as a synonym of our peoples' liberation (Morales, 2009) (Translation, bold and caps adapted).

However, the Bolivian leader was not found to allude explicitly to the BLOC metaphor in his speeches. Nonetheless, he develops the same idea that this metaphor implies, that is the socialism/capitalism contrast that is present in Chávez's speeches. Similarly to this, Morales refers to the existence of a constant confrontation with the United States, which he considers the greatest threat to the Latin American peoples.

In Morales's speeches, one can find a historical narrative similar to Chávez's speeches, with regard to the work done in each country and ALBA representing the continuation of Simón Bolívar's and other independence leaders' projects. As a complement to that story of great battles and of



exalting men of arms, the Bolivian leader gives a great place to social movements, especially to indigenous movements, in the fight for liberation and independence.

In both historical narratives, one finds the idea that there is continuity in the U.S. imperialism of the 19th century, and of the 20th and 21st centuries, although Morales dates its beginning with the Monroe Doctrine and not with Jefferson as Chávez does.

Morales also conceives the people and their search for well-being as the objective of ALBA's establishment. For example, the fight against inequality and poverty is directed toward improving the people's conditions. One difference that could be observed, nonetheless, is that in the case of the Bolivian president's discourse social movements, rather than the people in abstract, are appealed to as the subject in building regional integration.

In a way similar to Chávez, the Bolivian leader also raises the question whether, on other occasions, the actors in the politics of Latin American countries have been oligarchs, bankers, business people, and transnational corporations, who are seen as having acted in their own interests, creating conflict rather than cooperation between the states. For example, in his speech at the Summit of the Americas, Morales denounced that transnational corporations were the ones who caused the problems that led to the current territorial disputes between Bolivia and Chile.

Just like in Chávez's speeches, the signifier "integration" does not appear frequently in the references Morales makes to ALBA. An appeal was found to the term of unity, in the sense that it is used by the former Venezuelan president, and may be associated with the term of union, which the latter uses more regularly.

With respect to the definition of the region in geopolitical terms, which in this analysis has been interpreted as a use of synecdoche, the concept used by Morales is that of Latin America and the Caribbean. Chávez does not use this connotation that frequently in the speeches analyzed. Nonetheless, the concept Chávez uses for South America, including Mexico, Central America, and the countries of the Caribbean, implies the membership of the same group of states to the region that is put forth in Morales's speeches. In support of this affirmation, it can be pointed out that one can also find



references to the Great Homeland (*La Patria Grande*) in some of the speeches by the Bolivian leader in the sense that Chávez refers to it, without excluding Brazil.

Regarding the equivalences between ALBA and the regional agenda, Morales's discourse emphasizes:

- a) The importance of social policies as a fundamental axis of integration;
- b) The relevance of "economic liberation" that is associated both with the development of resource nationalization policies and with economic-financial autonomy initiatives, like in the case of using the Unified System for Regional Compensation (SUCRE);
- c) Enhancing the coordination of joint political positions for multilateral stages;
- d) The greatly valued defense of sovereignty through each country's armed forces, although it was not identified that Morales decisively supported the idea of creating regional military forces, a Security Council, or a SATO, as Chávez proposed.

7.1.2 Speeches by Rafael Correa

In the speeches given by the former Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa that are subject of interpretation, the concept of ALBA is also found as an element of struggle (BLOC) against imperialism, embodied principally by the United States and the most developed countries. Additionally, it is considered that ALBA may be part of creating a much more multipolar world order that may contribute to a democratization of international relations. Like Hugo Chávez, the Ecuadorian leader argues that ALBA should serve as an opposing institution by building a model different from institutions like the IMF and the OAS, which are both co-opted by the United States and the developed countries.

However, in Correa's speeches that were subject to analysis, there were no allusions linked to the metaphors of ALBA's BURIAL or the related BIRTH



of ALBA as foundational elements of regional integration. Nor were there significant dimensions of Cuba's role as the FATHER of the process and as a model to follow in terms of the deepening of the 21st century or the anti-imperialist struggle.

In accordance with Chávez's speech on region building, Correa claims that ALBA should contribute to strengthening the socialism of the 21st century in opposition to neoliberalism - a model that he believes was imposed on Latin America and the Caribbean through the Washington consensus and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Regarding the use of synecdoches, Correa uses the term of Latin America, in which he, like Morales, includes the same countries in the region as Chávez does. In addition, Correa also mentions the idea of the Great Homeland (*Patria Grande*), which at the same time is in accordance with that geographic delimitation. Furthermore, there are extensive allusions to the "South" in his addresses. However, these do not make reference to the South of the continent, as in the former Venezuelan president's speeches, but to a global South also containing Africa and Asia.

In establishing the historical narrative of integration, the heroes of independence like Bolívar, Alfaro, and Sucre are also reclaimed, as Correa argues that they initiated the process of creating mechanisms for Latin American integration.

Regarding the signifier "union", there are certain references to the importance of not being disunited in order to not continue as the United States' backyard. Nonetheless, in Correa's speeches the concept of integration is essential when talking about the process that regional institutions promote.

Regarding the equivalences constructed through syntagmatic contiguity, the signifier of "integration" in ALBA is related to:

- a) Financial integration, which may be built through the consolidation of the Bank of the South and the autonomy facilitated by the development of the SUCRE.
- b) Economic integration, which is expected to be achieved based on the complementarity of economies and not on competition between them.



Additionally, Correa coincides with Chávez, though deepening even further the idea that a creation of regional productive chains is needed to add value to Latin American exports.

- c) Coordination (integration) in political matters: Correa conceives ALBA as a stage for political decisions that should be directed toward transforming regional realities and having an impact on multilateral stages.
- d) Elements of solidarity (social) that are also highlighted, although to a lesser degree in comparison with Chávez's speeches, as a constituent point of ALBA's agenda.
- e) Regarding the actors of integration, Correa also highlights to a great degree the idea of multiple actors in civil society (indigenous people, peasants, artisans, etc.).
- f) No allusion was found to the possibility of forming regional armed forces or a SATO for the joint defense of the sovereignty of countries in the region.

7.1.3 Comparing the Reception of Chávez's Speeches by Evo Morales and Rafael Correa

Contrasting the reception of Chávez's speeches on region building in Morales and Correa's speeches, the following was found:

- a) The equivalences constructed between ALBA and the economic, political, social, and financial aspects were received by both presidents.
- b) The metaphors around BURIAL and BIRTH, as well as the role of Cuba as a FATHER and model in the anti-imperialist struggle and the development of socialism were only received in the Bolivian president's discourse.
- c) The metaphor of a BLOC as part of the confrontation against the United States, neoliberalism (capitalism) and the developed countries was received by both presidents. In that sense, they also considered ALBA



to be the stage for political decisions with regional locations and for coordination of joint positions to be upheld on multilateral stages.

- d) Neither Correa nor Morales incorporated the idea of establishing regional armed forces or a SATO for the defense of the member states into their speeches. Nevertheless, both made references to the importance of working jointly to protect the sovereignty of the ALBA states.
- e) The historical narrative that establishes bridges between the search for integration in the 19th century, Latin American independence struggles, and establishing ALBA in the 21st century was received by both Correa and Morales.
- f) Regarding the use of synecdoches, each used a different term: Morales employed the notion of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Correa turned to the notion of Latin America. Nonetheless, regarding the composition of these connotations, they coincide with the definition of the region that Chávez poses.
- g) In both, references were also found to the idea of the Great Homeland (*La Patria Grande*) in the sense used by Chávez (without excluding Brazil), which reinforces the above affirmation.



Table 2: Hegemony of Chávez’s Discourse on Regional Integration¹²

Articulation	Chávez	Morales	Correa
Synecdoche	Latin America and the Caribbean	(+)	(+)
Equivalence relationship with developed countries	Confrontation	(+)	(+)
Metaphor	Clash of Blocs/Cuba = Father	(+)(-)	(+)
Historical narrative of integration	The ALBA as a historical continuation of integration efforts 19 th century, esp. Panama Congress	(+) Social movements are added to the narrative	(+)(-)
Nodal points (master signifiers)	Union-ALBA	(+)	(-)
Equivalences priority issues agendas integration	Social agenda, political coordination, and the defense of sovereignty	(+)	(+)(-)
Security vision and regional defense	Creation of a SATO	Support for a SATO is not explicitly mentioned	Support for a SATO is not explicitly mentioned
Equivalence ideological diversity UNASUR	Coordination in the midst of ideological diversity	N/M	(+)
Equivalence political coordination	Intraregional management + building positions on joint multilateral stages	(+)	(+)
Integration actors	Peoples	(+)(-) Social movements	(+)(-) Diversity of actors

¹²Table elaborated by the author. To synthesize what was developed in the text, the following conventions are used: (+) correspondence, (-) divergence, (+) (-) more or less corresponds, and N/M no mention was found in the speeches analyzed.



7.2 The Reception of Lula da Silva's Speeches on UNASUR

7.2.1 Speeches by Rafael Correa

Rafael Correa's discourse on regional integration includes a historical narrative that also makes reference to fulfilling the dream of the independence heroes by promoting processes of regional integration. Additionally, Correa, like Lula, refers to the concept of integration to talk about region building in the UNASUR.

With respect to the rhetorical move of synecdoche, the analysis shows that Correa, like Lula, uses the concept of South America in his speeches on UNASUR. Nonetheless, in his speeches, he makes more frequent use of the terms of Latin America, Our America, and the Great Homeland (*La Patria Grande*), which geographically are more extensive than the region defined by Lula.

With respect to the equivalences created similarly to Lula's speeches, the following was found:

- a) Financial integration should be promoted, principally through the creation of a Bank of the South to promote the region's projects and reduce the dependence on the U.S. dollar. Here, Correa uses the metaphor of a NEIGHBORHOOD in which the families want to insure their HOUSES, and can only do so in a more economical and solid way if they buy the insurance jointly. Insuring the NEIGHBORHOOD'S HOUSES, which in the Ecuadorian president's speeches represents the creation of a common Reserves Fund for South America, was proposed in the context of the 2008 financial crisis. Here, the metaphor of a NEIGHBORHOOD is used in a manner similar to a FAMILY HOUSE, whereas other NEIGHBORHOODS represent the other countries - NEIGHBORS for Lula - especially those of the North, which one should not depend on financially or politically. The above is reiterated in Correa's speeches, among other arguments, proclaiming the countries of the North as the cause of the crisis, wherefore the solution cannot be put in their hands.
- b) Trade integration should be promoted through the complementarity of regional economies and with special emphasis on building regional value chains. At the same time, there is a commonality in the idea



that MERCOSUR, CAN, Chile, Guyana, and Suriname should converge through the management of UNASUR.

- c) Political integration and coordination, including the construction of joint positions to be upheld on multilateral stages, is fundamental. Correa uses the example of drug trafficking to refer to the need to establish a joint position for South Americans. In addition to the above, the emphasis on political coordination is aligned with the idea of a South American autonomy that is conceived by both Correa and Lula as a need to manage the region's issues in an autonomous manner. In his speeches, the former Ecuadorian president relates, in that sense, to the idea that bilateral problems with a regional impact should be resolved through the UNASUR.

Here again, there is an important commonality in terms of both of their beliefs that the ideological divergences between the presidents should not be an obstacle for the advancement of integration. Furthermore, both speeches contain the idea that a decolonization of knowledge is necessary, particularly of the minds of elites, in order to deepen integration between the South American countries.

- d) Integration and defense: The creation of the South American Defense Council is emphasized as one of UNASUR's key achievements.
- e) Integration and the social element: the particular emphasis on the fight against poverty and suffering in South American countries.
- f) Integration and education: Strengthening research, science, and technology, as well as academic exchanges are considered to be of paramount importance.
- g) Integration and South American citizenship: Correa also agrees with the establishment of a South American citizenship and a South American identity. However, through syntagmatic contiguity, only two of the elements highlighted by Lula to achieve this objective were identified, namely social policies and the free movement of citizens from the UNASUR member states. For example, no mention is made of the cultural integration highlighted by the former Brazilian president.



- h) Integration and infrastructure: Despite not being found of similar empathetic importance as in Lula's speeches, the equivalence between integration and an increase in energetic and infrastructure continuity was found to be constructed by Correa in his speeches on regional integration.

7.2.2 Speeches by Álvaro Uribe Vélez and Juan Manuel Santos

For this section, the speeches of Colombia's former president Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) and current president Juan Manuel Santos (2010-present) were selected, taking into account that there are multiple commonalities they created with respect to integration within UNASUR.¹³ Furthermore, only few speeches by former president Uribe in that organization can be accessed. This difficulty is partly due to his absence from several of the summits, which was tied in great measure to the regional tension caused by the agreement with the United States on the use of Colombian military bases and the illegal bombing of a FARC encampment on Ecuadorian territory.

The equivalence that Uribe and Santos highlight most in their speeches in UNASUR is related to integration and coordination on security between the South American countries. That idea coincides with Brazil's proposal to create and consolidate a South American Defense Council in order to coordinate this type of issues in the region. Nonetheless, in Uribe's speeches, one finds an important conflict with Lula's discourse around the idea of managing security in the region autonomously with respect to extra-regional powers. Namely, the former Colombian president finds that the fight against transnational crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism must not be disconnected from the cooperation, accompaniment and support of the United States.

On this point, their visions on South American political coordination differ concerning the issue of the fight against drugs. Uribe determines that it is necessary for South American countries to confront drug trafficking more decisively, for which they should join the war on drugs led by the United States. Lula, however, affirms that an autonomous perspective that mainly

¹³ Nonetheless, it is important to clarify that there were transformations in foreign policy after the change in government from Uribe to Santos, regarding the relationship with neighbors and participation in the UNASUR. The latter sought more diplomatic and less confrontational relationships, which in turn allowed him to obtain greater international support and legitimacy for the peace process that he was about to initiate.



takes into account the problems that specifically afflict South American countries should be constructed.

Accordingly, Uribe establishes a different synecdoche, which includes the United States in the region, countering the South American synecdoche that is made in Lula's discourse on regional integration.

Another topic on which they differ is tied to the use of Colombian military bases by the United States. On this topic Lula indicates that he respects Colombia's sovereignty, but that he worries about the situation. He underlines that the issue should be debated in UNASUR (BBC, 2009). Uribe (2009), in exchange, is adamant in affirming that the issue is a sovereign decision in which no country or body from the region may intervene, as he explained in his speech in the UNASUR Summit in Bariloche.

In Juan Manuel Santos's speeches that refer to security issues, the construction of an equivalence is found to be closer to Lula's equivalency, which includes a strengthening of security cooperation between South American countries, especially among their police forces, and without the United States necessarily being involved. Regarding the issue of the fight against drugs, he also defends a more autonomous position, suggesting a rethinking of the strategy led by the United States (ElTiempo, 2016).

Regarding the synecdoche found in Santos's speeches, this analysis shows that when referring to the region, he more frequently employs an equivalence with Latin America than with South America. On that point, he also moves away from the regional delimitation made by Lula. Another sign in that sense is the proposal that Santos brought to the UNASUR Special Summit held in 2011, in which he presented the idea of including Mexico in the deliberations and decisions that were made in face of the region's economic-financial crisis.

With regard to this, two equivalences with respect to regional integration that are also made by Lula can be identified in Santos's speeches. First, there is the importance of making joint decisions for the region, which can be observed in the support he presents in his speech for a regional approach to the economic-financial crisis. Second, Santos is found to give great value to South American integration on financial and economic issues - equivalences that are also present in Lula's speeches.



Another aspect in which Santos converges with Lula is the possibility of managing domestic crises (for example alterations to the constitutional order) in the region through UNASUR. One example is the proposal that Santos coordinated in 2010 with the former president of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, to convene a special summit of the UNASUR in order to address the situation of alteration of the democratic order in Ecuador. It is important to clarify that with this affirmation the possibility of domestic or inter-state crises being handled within other multilateral bodies is not excluded. A case that upholds this point involves Colombia that preferred to propose dealing with the crisis on the Colombia-Venezuela border within the OAS.

Furthermore, Santos believes that integration and political coordination advanced despite the ideological diversity in the South American region. In his speeches, Lula constructs this postulate by underlining the importance of the fact that international relations between states are not established from the personal affinities of each president but from the fulfillment of the role they play as Heads of State and Government of their respective countries.

Finally, the analysis shows that Santos also constructs an equivalence between regional integration through UNASUR and the achievement of the South American citizens' social well-being. Nonetheless, this was only found on one occasion and even there it was conditional, gauging that it is very difficult to achieve well-being without first having attained citizen security, which the Colombian leader considers the greatest priority for any state. For example, after the UNASUR Summit of Ministers held in Cartagena in 2012, in which the creation of a council to combat organized transnational crime was proposed, President Santos declared:

I am absolutely sure that this step that is being taken today is going to be of enormous benefit to the citizens of South America, because as the Romans said well - the Romans when they created the concept of the republic, when they designed the republic, said the following - and with that I finish: **the first law of the republic must be security**, citizen security, without that law the other laws are innocuous. I was telling you that we have many challenges in matters of employment, in matters of social development, but it is much more difficult for the countries without security to achieve the other objectives, I believe that this also adds much importance to that step that you have taken today (Santos, 2012a) (Translation, bold adapted).



7.2.3 Comparing the Reception of Lula da Silva's Speeches by Rafael Correa, Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos

By contrasting Lula da Silva's speeches on regional integration with the speeches given by Correa, Uribe, and Santos, the following points were identified:

- a) Although the synecdoche presenting South America as the region subjected to integration is used, both Correa and Santos alternate this term with the term of Latin America. Thus, we can assume that there is no consensus on the region's definition.
- b) In the speeches of the three receiving leaders, an equivalence between regional integration and a joint approach to regional security problems is constructed. Nonetheless, Uribe's speeches suggest that the possibility of an autonomous approach should rather be combined with cooperation with the United States, even more so if the matter relates to the fight against drugs.
- c) The speeches of Correa and Santos coincide with Lula in the equivalence between regional integration and coordination on economic and financial issues, especially when facing a joint handling of the economic-financial crisis that the region experiences.
- d) For Santos and Correa, as well as for Lula, UNASUR can be the management body for domestic crises in the region.
- e) In their speeches, both the former Ecuadorian leader and the current president of Colombia build an equivalence between political coordination to confront intraregional problems and integration.

In sum, the analysis in the previous sections shows that the metaphors, synecdoches, and equivalences that Chávez constructs in his discourse on regional integration reached greater reception in the ALBA than those formulated by Lula within UNASUR. Consequently, it can be inferred that in the cases analyzed Chavez's discourse is closer to achieving hegemony, insofar that the signified he associates to the signifier (nodal point) *regional integration* are more accepted. Put in terms of the discursive and dialogic



construction of the region, the process of regionification (Van Langenhove, 2011) was more advanced in the ALBA, as more actors talk about the *same* region in the *same* terms.

Table 3: Hegemony of Lula’s Discourse on Regional Integration¹⁴

Articulation	Lula	Correa	Uribe/Santos
Synecdoche	South America	(-)	(-)
Equivalence relationship with developed countries	Autonomy	(+)	(-)
Metaphor	Family house	(+)(-)	(-)
Historical narrative of integration	Dream cut short in the 19 th century, scorned in the 20 th , and realized in the 21 st	(+)	(-)
Nodal points (master signifiers)	Integration-UNASUR	(+)	(+)(-)
Equivalences priority issues agendas integration	Energy, trade, and infrastructure integration	(+)	(+) With Santos
Security vision and regional defense	Coordination and cooperation in the South American Defense Council	(+)	(-)
Equivalence ideological diversity UNASUR	Coordination in the midst of ideological diversity	(+)	(+) With Santos
Equivalence political coordination	Intraregional management + construction of joint positions on multilateral stages	(+)	(+)(-) With Santos and on specific issues, esp. trade and financial matters
Integration actors	Multiple actors	(+)	N/M

¹⁴ Table elaborated by the author. In order to synthesize what was developed in the text, the following conventions are used: (+) correspondence, (-) divergence, (+) (-) more or less corresponds, and N/M no mention was found in the speeches analyzed.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

This thesis combined various elements of a constructivist focus from International Relations theories, especially from the strand developed by Nicholas Onuf, Laclau and Mouffe's theory of political discourse, as well as the social constructionism focus proposed by Van Langenhove to analyze regionalism.

First, Onuf's version of constructivism was emphasized, taking into account that this author highlights the role of language and discourse in the social construction of the international. Second, Van Langenhove's proposal, especially his concept of regionification, was employed. Thus, the importance of discursive aspects in the process of region building is highlighted. The contributions of Laclau and Mouffe were also taken into account regarding the conception of the political arena as a stage of discursive struggles surrounding empty signifiers, which each political group seeks to give meaning to. This is a process that, if successful, these authors call hegemony.

In that sense, this analysis proposes interpreting the construction and reception of speeches by the former presidents of Brazil and Venezuela, Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez, in the UNASUR and ALBA, respectively. For this task, two cases for each institution were selected. For the UNASUR, the speeches by former presidents Rafael Correa and Álvaro Uribe, as well as President Juan Manuel Santos were analyzed, considering that the ideological differences between the leaders chosen could lead to a different reception of Lula's discourse on integration. For ALBA, the speeches of former presidents Evo Morales and Rafael Correa were interpreted, taking into account the significant political will both have contributed to that organization.



The interpretation of Lula da Silva's speeches on regional integration resulted in the identification of the metaphor of a FAMILY HOUSE representing UNASUR. This metaphor was found to have multiple connotations: the management of issues without the intervention of foreign powers, the financial integration necessary to deepen infrastructure and energy connectedness, and respectful cooperation to manage regional agendas between countries with different ideologies. First, it is a HOUSE to which the neighbors (extra-regional actors) do not need to be invited to solve the family's (UNASUR member states) problems. Second, the house is under construction, thus it needs financial contributions from all member states. Third, within the house there are different personalities and tastes, however, respect and cooperation must prevail. Subsequently, the historical narrative and the equivalences that are constructed in the former president's discourse around the signifier "integration" are presented, highlighting those that were considered to be more relevant, namely trade, physical, and infrastructure integration. In addition, it was found that Lula uses synecdoche to geopolitically define South America as *the* region on which regional integration should focus.

In the fifth chapter, the research finds that in Chávez's discourse on regional integration, the metaphors BLOC, BURIAL, and BIRTH of a BABY were used to represent the ALBA. The first evokes the Cold War, a CLASH of BLOCS between a socialist bloc and a capitalist bloc, locating ALBA in the first and, as such, in confrontation with the capitalist bloc led by the United States and the countries of the North. The other two metaphors are interconnected, as the former Venezuelan president poses that the other side of the FTAA's BURIAL is the BIRTH of a BABY representing ALBA that is in need of being nourished and protected from external threats. It was found that in Chávez's historical narrative, a factual and temporal bridge is presented between the independence struggles and the efforts to achieve regional integration in the 19th century on the one hand, and the creation of ALBA in the 21st century for a second and definitive union and independence on the other hand. Additionally, the equivalences constructed in Chávez's discourse on regional integration were explained, highlighting principally the links to social issues, political coordination, and the defense of regional sovereignty. Furthermore, the research showed that the synecdoche used by Chávez is that of a Great Homeland/South America/Our America, which geographically covers all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.



Subsequently, a comparison was made between Lula da Silva and Hugo Chávez's speeches on regional integration. On that point, the synecdoches, historical narratives on integration, and equivalences they constructed around the signifier "integration" as well as the metaphors they used in their speeches were contrasted. Both establish a different synecdoche (South America versus Latin America and the Caribbean) and different metaphors when talking about regional integration (HOUSE versus BLOC). Furthermore, the equivalences made in their speeches with respect to the signifier "integration" were compared. The comparison shows that they establish different topics as priorities for regional integration (physical-infrastructure-energy integration versus integration on social-political-defense issues). Nonetheless, multiple commonalities were found, among which the idea of portraying the region as autonomous stood out, leaving behind the concept of being the United States' backyard.

In the final chapter, Chávez's discourse on integration was contrasted with those of Correa and Morales within ALBA, while Lula's discourse was contrasted with those of Correa, Uribe, and Santos within UNASUR. This chapter showed that Chávez's discourse achieved greater hegemony with regard to building equivalences, a historical narrative, metaphors, and synecdoches compared to Lula's discourse. Consequently, we can infer that ideological proximity between the presidents from ALBA, among other factors, allowed them to more easily build consensus around a number of topics than did the presidents from UNASUR. In terms of Laclau and Mouffe, the fixation between the meanings proposed by Chávez with respect to the signifier "integration" (union) was received more effectively than was Lula's, and as such is interpreted as being closer to hegemony. Or, in Van Langenhove's terms, the process of regionification was more advanced in the sense that an actor talks about a certain region in particular terms and other actors also talk about that region in many of those same terms. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that the members of the UNASUR who were selected for reception analysis are found further apart from each other in the ideological spectrum. Correa is even part of another organization that has some functions overlapping with the UNASUR - ALBA- , which he proves to privilege in his discourse. Taking the above into account, it is possible to posit that, if presidential speeches from other countries like Argentina and Chile were analyzed, the results may be different from those presented. Thus, in order to establish the scope of discursive hegemony or a lack thereof, the entirety of the members of both organizations need to be included in the analysis.



Regarding the methodological and conceptual approach of this analysis, it was not possible to find a plausible way to show that Lula's and Chávez's speeches had been merely received by the other presidents, as indicated with the central research question. In that sense, it was preferable to identify whether the former leaders' discourse on the region had or had not achieved hegemony in Laclau and Mouffe's terms, after contrasting it with the other members' discourse.

One of the findings considered the most relevant in this research is the paramount importance that the analysis of speeches, in which the presidents talk about regional integration, may have for interpreting the construction of a certain region. This research may help to provide understanding of the thematic priorities of different leaders, the geopolitical delimitation they use for the region, and the points of dispute or consensus that may hinder or contribute to consolidating integration. This contributes to a better understanding of the construction of regions, rather so than the mere analysis of the balances of power and cost-benefit calculations used by theories with a rationalist base.

Returning to one of the initial postulates of the speech acts, saying something is also doing something - in this case, region building.

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