

Re-mapping the Americas: Globalization, Regionalisation and the FTAA

CONFERENCE PAPER ABSTRACT

Alo! Prime Minister: Chavismo as a Model for Development in a Disenchanted Caribbean

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Objective

This paper analyzes the decline of Venezuela's democracy as it relates to political development in Anglo-Caribbean states. The overall research question in the paper is: How has *Chavismo* arisen to represent a new model of development for the Anglo-Caribbean through disenchantment in a globalized world?

Results

Those elements that made for Venezuela's "exceptionalism" are not exceptional; these structural conditions exist in many democratic states, particularly in the present-day Anglo-Caribbean. In states with strong support for democracy, the legitimacy of the political system rests on its effectiveness to meet the demands of its electorate.

Conclusions

Capitalizing on the failures of a clientelistic system structured on export-led growth in the wake of economic decline, Chavismo has arisen as the opposition to the neo-classical paradigm, and one that is particularly attractive to other states who share a common disenchantment with their position in the global capital system. In the era of neo-liberal globalization, the dismantling of the state's ability to provide for employment, goods and services, leads to a loss of effectiveness. Lacking the ability to respond to the demands of the electorate, political instability arises as a consequent loss of legitimacy. It is in this context that alternatives to the political structure arise. Chavismo, as a model, is even more viable in the Anglo-Caribbean, whereby acquisition of power through democratic means is highly esteemed.