

## Rethinking the Venezuelan Media Presidency: Populism/Authoritarianism and “Spectacular Modernity”

NOAH ZWEIG

Universidad de Las Américas, Ecuador

This article analyzes the long tradition of Venezuelan populist and authoritarian presidents who use media to advance their agendas and promote their cults of personality. In Latin America, there is a tradition of left and right populists using “old” and “new” media to legitimate ideology. But I demonstrate how this phenomenon of the *caudillismo mediático* takes a sui generis character in Venezuela insofar as it is the region’s only petrostate. My twofold argument is as follows. First, although Hugo Chávez, who presided over Venezuela’s most prominent media populism, is often depicted as an outlier, he has to be understood by way of his populist democratic and autocratic predecessors, themselves beneficiaries of “spectacular modernity.” Second, because this spectacular modern media populism’s roots are in Venezuelan totalitarianism, and its realization occurred during Venezuela’s “classical” populism era, the Venezuelan media presidency is imbricated in a complex populism-authoritarian dialectic.

Keywords: *populism, petroleum, Latin America, Hugo Chávez, Rafael Caldera, Carlos Andrés Pérez, Venezuela*

### Introduction and Intellectual Argument

Late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez Frías (1954–2013) was well known for his inveterate use of mass media, which he routinely deployed to antagonize his enemies—among them the homogeneously articulated “corporate media,” the opposition, non-Chavistas, center and right regimes in the region and the U.S. government—and, in doing so, consolidate power. Chavismo was very much a visual phenomenon, one of spectacle and affect (Uzcátegui, 2010), just as Chávez’s mentor Fidel Castro (1926–2016) masterfully used cinema and broadcasting to legitimize his rule with oratory and narrative. Whether through his weekly talk show *Aló, Presidente!* (Hello, President!), his routine *cadena nacionales* (the process of state authorities interrupting regularly scheduled broadcasts to address the nation<sup>1</sup>), the closure of media outlets critical of his policies that were often later absorbed into the Chavista state apparatus (Cañizález, Tamayo, & Viloria, 2015), the invention of the Caracas-based, multistate, Pan-American satellite television network TeleSUR (Television

---

Noah Zweig: noahz747@gmail.com

Date submitted: 2016–08–19

<sup>1</sup> These are similar to the Emergency Broadcast System in the United States, but often used for political messaging.

of the South),<sup>2</sup> the construction of parastate and community television and radio stations (Ramírez, 2014), or the use of social media (Waisbord & Amado, 2017), Chávez was the media president *por excelencia* (Cañizález, 2016). For communication scholar Andrés Cañizález (2016), the “media presidency” refers to the indispensable role 21st-century communication has played in the consolidation of militarist, authoritarian, and personalist politics, epitomized by Chavismo. Former Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa (Alianza País, 2007–17), who also governed through his TV show *Enlace Ciudadano* and Twitter (De la Torre, 2013), imitated this style of rule. Likewise, Venezuela’s paternalist media policies have inspired nominally leftist populist regimes in Argentina, Bolivia, and Nicaragua to attack opposition media outlets (Ponce & Rincón, 2017). Media sociologist Silvio Waisbord (2013b) observes that as a consensus-building strategy, these “tele-presidencies” comprise distinct phenomena in contemporary political communication inasmuch as they are precisely a byproduct of the return of populism in early 21st-century Latin America, whose charismatic leaders have been consistently obsessed with “media” and “media wars.” Likewise, populism has always maintained that, for its success, media are to be considered appendages of the state, thus denying the idea of autonomous media (Waisbord, 2013b, p. 17).

In the pages ahead, I focus my gaze on a cross-historical case study of Venezuelan media populism to mount the following twofold argument. First, there is a particularity to the Venezuelan media ecology insofar as it is informed by “spectacular modernity,” a term coined by cultural studies scholar Lisa Blackmore (2017) that refers to petroleum’s ideology of progress and consumerism, and I maintain that this form of “capital” has increasingly presidentialized Venezuelan media. Second, this oil-based, mediatized, presidentialist politics has generated a sociocultural landscape imbricated in an intractable dialectical tension between populism and authoritarianism. Thus, though not a “media president,” dictatorial head of state Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1950–1958), whose regime presided over the inception of spectacular modernity, often appeared in photographs and in newsreels to maintain his personality cult. For their part, populist media presidents Rafael Caldera (COPEI; 1969–74 and 1994–99) and Carlos Andrés Pérez (Acción Democrática, 1974–79 and 1989–93), who ruled following the return to democracy in 1959, dabbled in spectacular modernity with their construction of infrastructure and media reform. Likewise, the increasingly autocratic Chavezmadurista regimes (1999–), which ironically proclaim themselves as the revivals of anticolonial 19th-century revolutionaries such as Simón Bolívar, also bask in spectacular modernity.

### **Theoretical Framework: Mediatized Authoritarian Populism and “Spectacular Modernity”**

This article argues that the Venezuelan media presidency is anchored in spectacular modern ideology whose origins are in a mid-20th-century authoritarian/populist nexus specific to the Caribbean nation. To clarify my theoretical frame and epistemological perspective, I want to expound on the literature on Latin American populism—both the theorizations of its populisms and its media populisms—that inform my point of view to clarify the specificity of this Venezuelan authoritarianism-populism dialectic.

The broad corpus of literature on Latin American populism is too vast to enumerate here, but briefly in his typology of populisms in the region, sociologist Torcuato Di Tella (1965) defines this variegated

---

<sup>2</sup> Chávez’s successor Nicolás Maduro announced the launch of the Quito-based TeleSUR English website in 2014.

ideology as "a political movement which enjoys the support of the mass of the working class/and or the peasantry, but which does not result from the autonomous organizational power of either of those two sectors. It is also supported by non-working-class sectors upholding an anti-status quo ideology" (p. 47). Populist leaders, broadly defined, then, who can be "right wing" or "left wing," present themselves as outsiders and proclaim to speak for "the people" using various antielitist discourses.

In his cross-national comparative study, political scientist Robert Dix (1985) uses the term "authoritarian populism" to describe three heads of state that spawned populisms: Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón (Justicialist Party, Labor Party, 1946–55, 1973–74), Chile's Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (Independent 1927–31 and 1952–58), and Colombia's Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (National Popular Alliance, 1953–57). All three caudillos presented their parties as "military reform," as they railed against "the oligarchy" and "politics." Dix contrasts these with the following "democratic populist" presidents: Venezuela's Rómulo Betancourt (Venezuela, Acción Democrática, 1945–48 and 1959–64), Peru's Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (President of the Peruvian National Assembly, 1978–79), and Bolivia's Víctor Paz Estenssoro (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, 1952–56, 1960–64 and 1985–89). Although these charismatic leaders used antielitist discourse similar to their authoritarian populist counterparts, the difference is that none of them had military backgrounds, and they all worked within the existing institutions. Dix's case study was published in 1985, but in the post-Cold War, multipolar landscape, the distinctions between "populism" and "authoritarianism" become increasingly blurred, as illustrated by the Chavezmadurista era. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of 21st-century geopolitics is the collapse of military regimes and the rise of what political scientists call "competitive authoritarian" regimes, such as those of Peru's Alberto Fujimori (Cambio 90, Nuevo Partido del Pueblo, 1990–2000), Ecuador's Lucio Gutiérrez (Sociedad Patriótica, 2003–05) and Chavezmadurismo. To the extent that such leaders operate in existing democratic institutions, but with growingly authoritarian comportment, they are referred to as "hybrid regimes:" Their rule hybridizes authoritarianism and democratic populism, and thus their governance exists on a blurry spectrum.

In addition to Latin American populism studies, and their specificity to Venezuela, it is important to acknowledge the scholarship on how caudillos use media and how my Venezuela case is different from this preceding work. There has been plenty of important research done on Venezuelan media populism, both its social-democratic populist and Chavezmadurista iterations. In their discourse analysis of *Aló Presidente* and anti-Chavista media, communication scholars Zandra Fernández Soto and Adriana García Cunto (2004) look back, noting that Rafael Caldera was the pioneer in Venezuela media statecraft, without whom the *presidencia mediática chavista* would have been impossible; sociologist Oswaldo Capriles (1996) maintains that although ostensibly the goal of the Venezuelan Radio and Television Project (RATELVE; 1975) of the Carlos Andrés Pérez administration was to create a nonstatist, noncommercial media culture, it was in part a statecraft tool, designed to influence national and international opinion amid the petroleum crisis of 1973; journalism scholars Andrés Cañizález and Jairo Lugo-Ocando (2008) argue that the TeleSUR channel has become an indispensable tool for and inseparable from the Chavista state; writing about the parastate media outlet TVES, anthropologist Naomi Schiller (2011) argues that such barrio media collectives comprise an example of "everyday state formation" where complex state-society negotiations take place; and Venezuelan author Boris Muñoz (2008) argues that Chávez has created a media strategy in which he himself is both the message and the medium.

In addition to theories of populism generally and Venezuelan media populism specifically, my case study, as mentioned in the introduction, draws on cultural studies, namely, Blackmore's (2017) notion of spectacular modernity to twin theoretical thinking on the concepts of "capital," and how it is mediatized, with populism theory, and in doing so puts forward a cross-historical mapping of the Venezuelan media presidency. This oil-driven modern spectacular aesthetic is specific geopolitically to Venezuela and manifests itself in distinct ways in the media presidency, existing in a dialectical tension between authoritarianism and populism.

Blackmore's (2017) study explores the profound ways in which the junta government of Marcos Pérez Jiménez transformed space by revolutionizing Venezuela from a relatively poor country into an urban consumerist society following the country's consolidation as a petrostate in the late 1940s. Venezuela began to "sew the oil," which endowed the state with a fertile, ideologizable nationscape through which the government molded an image-based, mediated narrative of progress that was rooted in the discourse of "modernity." Blackmore refers to this advent of Venezuelan consumerism as "spectacular modernity": The process by which, paradoxically, the Perezjimenista government deployed, on the one hand, spatialized and visualized aesthetics and consumer goods in the name of "freedom"; on the other hand, this was done under an authoritarian regime using the rubric of progress and "modernity."

Spectacular modernity's dialectically situated web of autocracy and populism becomes apparent in the media presidency when the Caldera, Pérez, and Chávez regimes all proclaim to speak for the people. Inasmuch as spectacular modernity is relational, top-down, and inextricably rooted in Venezuela's status as a petrostate, I maintain that the Venezuelan media presidency is to be conceived as such: It is spectacularly modern irrespective of political ideology, insofar as it hierarchizes vision, putting the executive in the spotlight as the steward of spectacular modern nation formation. As I discuss in the pages ahead, Venezuelan media presidents as diverse as Caldera and Pérez and anti-imperialism grandstander Chávez and his less charismatic successor Maduro have all evoked this narrative of progress, using different framing devices, but ultimately working from the same modern spectacular playbook with themselves as saviors.

Finally, Venezuela's geopolitical importance in natural resources, and how it became the only spectacular modern state in the region, is worth mentioning. Although Mexico and Brazil have sizeable energy industries,<sup>3</sup> and both countries have had histories of populism, these are dwarfed by Venezuela, which at present has the world's largest oil reserves and the eighth largest gas reserves. In short, Venezuela is the region's only real petrostate. And unlike these other nations, the Caribbean country does not have a diversified economy, as oil and gas are its principal exports. Since the introduction of its oil industry in the 1920s, this Caribbean power has always already been practicing "modernity," overseen by whichever head of state, or what sociologist Fernando Coronil (1997) calls "magician," is in power. This all started under the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez, who, according to Coronil, laid the groundwork for subsequent leaders to "fashion political life into a dazzling spectacle of progress" (p. 2). Indeed, given the boom-and-bust nature of this commodity, oil-producing states must constantly generate the illusion of prosperity to avoid a restive population, and this often takes on the figure of a showman as president.

---

<sup>3</sup> According to the World Bank's (n.d.) website, oil rents comprised 0.9% and 1.3% of the GDPs of Brazil and Mexico, respectively.

The very notion of a petrostate, and how that definition fits into Venezuela, sheds light on the spectacular modern media presidency. In her landmark study, political scientist Terry Lynn Karl (1997) defines "petrostates" as those political entities whose overreliance on petrodollars has resulted in excesses of misguided government expenditure, inefficiency, and clientelism. Commenting on Venezuela, she observes, "oil exacerbated the already high degree of centralization of authority in the executive [and] aggravated the form of presidentialism that could be found elsewhere in Latin America" (p. 90). Indeed, when petrostates experience oil booms, such prosperity tends to have debilitating effects on heads of state that have a track record of overspending on infrastructure projects, often disregarding fiscal responsibility, and this has especially been the case in Venezuela (Corrales & Penfold, 2016). If oil booms produce the illusion of prosperity, said governments often overlook that such abundance is short term. Such recklessness in state planning has given Latin America's only petrostate a legacy of spectacular modern media populism. Insofar as administrations have to respond to enormous pressure presiding over Venezuela's mammoth oil deposits, it is not surprising that they resort to image and spectacle for statecraft.

### Section Breakdown

This case study of the Venezuelan media presidency as spectacular modern ideology, embedded in an authoritarianism-populism nexus, is divided into three parts. In the first section, I present a brief history of the pre-Chavismo broadcast media landscape in Venezuela to foreground the ways in which its ecology was presidentialized and imbricated in spectacular modernity. I historicize the populism-authoritarianism dialectic that ultimately begot spectacular modern ideology and the resultant media presidency. The section begins with the history of the "classical" populism era of the Acción Democrática party's rule (1945–48), during which time Rómulo Betancourt and Rómulo Gallegos were presidents before Pérez Jiménez overthrew the latter. The Perezjimenista dictatorship introduced the country to spectacular modernity with boomtime ideological imagery. Populist president Rafael Caldera presented the country with the *presidencia mediática* with his talk show *Habla el Presidente* (1969–74). This broadcast supposedly opened up the presidency to the people, but in many ways it worked to favor the political elites and promote Caldera himself. Subsequently, fellow populist President Carlos Andrés Pérez often spoke of his media-reform initiative, RATELVE, and his nationalization of the channel Venezolana de Television (1974), both of which ultimately served his "Gran Venezuela" (The Great Venezuela) development program.

In the second section, I analyze Chávez's media politics and policies to underline the Chavista media presidency's continuities with this dialectical dynamic of populist and authoritarian proclivities. I return to my claim that Chávez's telegenic showboating was more of a continuation rather than a departure from these predecessors, all of them beneficiaries of spectacular modernity. In particular, I discuss the Chavezmadurista media presidency as a result of "competitive authoritarianism," a political science term for hybrid regimes. Chávez used the language of RATELVE to legitimize his own media initiatives. And his increasing concentration of presidential media power has antecedents in the era of Caldera and Pérez. But one distinction has differentiated Chavismo in this authoritarianism-populism dialectical continuum, namely, social media, particularly Twitter, which has given the Chavista state a wider platform and the availability of more eyeballs than had previously been realized. But at present, this is all in crisis insofar as declining oil prices have crippled Maduro's presidency, which I address toward the end of this section. Although, theoretically, social media level the playing field and offer a bottom-up counterweight to populism's

traditional top-down use of public communication, as media scholars Silvio Waisbord and Adriana Amado (2017) argue, little has changed in the 21st century, as critics of these left-wing Latin American regimes routinely face punitive measures, and these presidents tend to use these “new” media as a soapbox and a cudgel rather than as a dialogical vehicle toward a truly transformative state–society reconfiguration.

In the third section, I briefly reflect on how “spectacular modernity” might look outside of the Caribbean by considering the cases of three petrostates that have experienced populist-authoritarian rule in recent years: the Philippines, Iran, and Russia. I conclude that although these natural resources-rich states have experienced populist media presidencies that resemble the Venezuela case, ultimately the Caribbean nation remains singular given its status as the sole petrostate in South America.

**Pre-Chavista Venezuelan Media Ecology:  
From Perezjimenista Authoritarianism to Puntofijista Populism**

This analysis conceives the Venezuelan media presidency as a specific set of state–society relations that are rooted in the optics of spectacular modernity, dialectically situated in a populism-authoritarianism nexus, to make the case that the seemingly hyperbolic, larger-than-life Chavista media presidency actually comprises a continuation rather than a break from the preceding Venezuelan media populisms and their dialectical counterpart, the Perezjimenista dictatorship, that embraced oil-driven aesthetics. Venezuela’s foundation as a petrostate occurred in the 1920s under a previous dictatorship, that of Juan Vicente Gómez (1908–35), and this laid the groundwork for the media presidency as spectacular modernity; the resultant antiauthoritarian populism emerged as a response to this incipient petro-inspired “modernity,” resulting in a populism-authoritarianism dynamic hovering over this emergent oil producer. Venezuela’s initiation, then, into petrostate status occurred over the course of two authoritarian regimes (if the Gómez dictatorship “invented” Venezuelan “modernity,” two decades later the Pérez Jiménez regime would couple that with “spectacle”).

Venezuela’s first wave of populism, itself a response to Gómez, emerged between 1945 and 1948. This embryonic oil-inspired populism interfaced with and responded to the dictatorship. The Acción Democrática party, led by Rómulo Betancourt and Rómulo Gallegos (1945–48), ran the country before the Perezjimenista coup. During his short tenure, Betancourt would use the language of populist presidents such as Mexico’s Lázaro Cárdenas (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, 1934–40), Brazil’s Getúlio Vargas (Río Republicano, 1930–45, 1951–54), and Argentina’s Juan Perón (Arenas, 2012; Langue, 2009). Betancourt promoted the formation of labor unions (Ellner, 2000) and would explain his views of economics in ways that were understandable to illiterate peasants. To the masses, Betancourt would blast the *élite caraqueña* (residents of Caracas) (Savage, 2018).<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Gallegos, also a novelist, was known for articulating as president some of the populist ideals put forward in his books (Yarrington, 1999). Though not media presidents, Betancourt and Gallegos set a spectacular modern ideological and discursive standard that would be used by the Caldera, Pérez, and the Chavista regimes in this evolving dialectical populism-authoritarianism continuum.

---

<sup>4</sup> Chávez’s “from above” and “by decree” brand of populism, such as his control of the labor movement, indeed followed the footsteps of that of Acción Democrática. See Uzcátegui (2010).

The Perezjimenista regime had a firm understanding of the petropolitics through which it constructed ideologizing imagery. As indicated in this article's introduction, the first images of Venezuelan spectacular modernity emerged from this dictatorship of the 1950s, but this phenomenon would become increasingly adaptive to both social democratic/ populist (Caldera and Pérez Jiménez) and anti-imperialist, postneoliberal populist regimes (Chávez and Maduro), and this is the essence of the populism-authoritarianism dialectic that underpins the Venezuelan media presidency. These governments are united by the extent to which they promise a better tomorrow delivered by a cult of personality. I have defined in this article the media presidency as an executive's use of messianic language by way of broadcasting to seemingly reach "the people" but also to enhance his or her image. Thus, the undemocratic Pérez Jiménez, not known for his use of radio, does not fit the bill. However, like many dictators, his love of optics—his propensity for appearing on magazine covers and in film newsreels, where he maintained his image as the country's modernizer in chief—makes him a proto-media president (Blackmore, 2017, p. 142). Although not done through broadcast media, but rather via cinema, magazines, posters, and public works, Pérez Jiménez constructed a formidable spectacular visuality, endowing many Venezuelans with the false sense that as a petrostate they could have infinite access to consumer goods and luxury. The Venezuelan media presidency that would come to life in subsequent decades during civilian rule would maintain this principal of media-state relations where a telegenic head of state would preside over Venezuela's magnificent oil rents to publicly announce its "magic."

Spectacular modernity proved itself malleable, as its media populism adapted to different ideological formations in the postdictatorship era, as I discuss below. Historians (Ellner & Tinker Salas, 2003) refer to the post-Pérez Jiménez period up to the rise of Chávez in 1998 as the "democratic era," during which time a clique of financial and political elites ruled the country. Much of the political discourse during these four decades reflected the agenda of the ruling class. Political and media elites concurred that if Venezuela were to remain an "exceptional" democracy, the citizenry should not be exposed to Cuban-Revolution-inspired ideas in the public sphere. They were faithful to the Punto Fijo pact (1958), an accord in which all major political parties agreed to respect democracy to avoid the Cold War instability that was common in the region.

Thus, the spectacular modern presidency adapted itself to Puntofijismo and appropriately avoided confrontation. Puntofijista media downplayed conflict to such a large extent that they even limited coverage of two 1962 coups d'état attempts against Betancourt, known respectively as the Porteñazo and the Carupanazo (Cañizález & Lugo Ocando, 2008), during his second administration (1959–1964). As Cañizález and Lugo-Ocando (2008) note, throughout the 1960s, the media barely covered Venezuela's internal conflict between the state and Cuba-inspired communist guerrillas (1961–73).

Rafael Caldera (1969–74) occupies an important space in Venezuelan history as the country's first media president. Similar to Chávez three decades later, he was an upstart and outsider. As a Copeista (member of the Christian Democratic Party), he was the first non-Adeco (member of the Democratic Action Party) president. Also like Chávez, he arrived in Caracas with a propensity for nationalizing industry, including all of its natural gas reserves in 1971 (Dávila, 2000). A dedicated spectacular modern president, he presided over the construction of infrastructure, including airports, ports, and freeway extensions.

Arriving at a time when the incipient Venezuelan television industry had been consolidated, Caldera occupied a position in which he could exploit spectacular modernity. Indeed, he took advantage of the oil wealth, raising taxes on its production, putting in the first steps for its eventual nationalization in 1976, and implementing regulations for U.S. petroleum firms based in Venezuela. The upshot of all of these populist reforms, coupled with the country's new political stability following the Caldera administration's peace accords with communist guerrillas in 1969, was a marked improvement in the livelihood of many Venezuelans (Ng'ambi, 2015). In his populist style, Caldera emphasized these feats on his talk show *Habla el Presidente* (1969–74). He was especially able to do so toward the end of his presidency, insofar as he reaped the benefits of another oil boom that started in 1973 and would last until 1984.

With *Habla el Presidente*, Caldera made the bold move of televising his weekly press conferences. The broadcasts would begin with Caldera remarking on the week's news, followed by questions from Venezuelan and foreign journalists. In the broadcast's final part, which also aired on the radio, Caldera opened the floor to reporters, who were free to ask the president anything, as long as it was not an insult or a threat. Likewise, Caldera was permitted to respond freely as long as he did not ask anything that would question media–state relations, such as, "How much did they pay you to ask that question." Spectacular modernity had to circumscribe its spokespersons. But Caldera was a dutiful civil servant. After each show he would cordially greet the reporters and say kind words, especially to Nicolás Rondón Nucete (1943–91), an Adeco. But this was the Punto Fijo era, and thus the COPEI had to faithfully maintain the illusion of harmony with its opponents. Rondón and his team, for example, had direct access to Miraflores. Like Chávez decades later, Caldera used his show as a bully pulpit. For example, as a Christian Democratic ideologue, he was never shy about discussing faith, as he once said on the show ([www.rafaelcaldera.com](http://www.rafaelcaldera.com)).

Caldera's successor, Carlos Andrés Pérez (1926–2010), another beneficiary of the 1973 boom, maintained this policy of spectacular modern media populism in his first media presidency (1974–79), before Acción Democrática and COPEI governments (including Pérez himself during his second presidency), would implement austerity policies in the 1980s (Kaufman & Stallings, 1991). But in the 1970s, Pérez, as a populist media president, found himself at a more fortunate vantage point than Caldera for driving the Venezuelan media presidency, as he presided over the nationalization of Venezuela's oil company PDVSA in 1976. Whereas the dictator Pérez Jiménez won popularity by building infrastructure with the country's oil wealth, Pérez gained over the masses by constructing subway lines and introducing new social programs. His version of spectacular modernity was discursively constructed around that of La Gran Venezuela, his administration's economic policy, though he and his cabinet members used that term to broadly characterize the objectives of all of their undertakings made possible by the country's boomtime revenue (Urquijo, 2000, p. 35).

One of the issues with which Pérez confronted spectacular modernity was media reform. He had to negotiate a contentious space between Adeco politics and what was then a popular issue of realizing a nonstatist, public media sphere. Venezuelan commercial television had developed in the 1970s mainly because of the high concentration of capital due to booming oil prices (Novoa Monreal, 1979).

Indeed, spectacular modernity had led to a highly consumerist commercial broadcast panorama in Venezuela, of which Frankfurt-School-inspired intellectuals such as sociologist Antonio Pasquali (1967) were

highly critical. At the start of the decade, there was one official state-run station, Televisora Nacional, and three private outlets, Radio Caracas Televisión (RCTV), Venevisión, and Venezolana de Televisión (VTV; Bisbal, 2002).

This decade was the first time that the Venezuelan state, due to popular pressure, attempted to transform the national communication structure from one composed solely of commercial networks to one that would be conducive to the creation of a truly public media sector. The economic prosperity generated from the oil boom following the decline of petroleum production in the Middle East, due to the 1970s energy crisis, engendered hope for many intellectuals that the commercial media system could be reformed (Tello, 1989).

This upsurge in media reform activism eventually gave rise to RATELVE, which is symptomatic of this spectacular-modern era Venezuela when Pérez encouraged Venezuelans to aspire for greatness. RATELVE, which had public intellectuals such as Pasquali as advisors, proposed combining the strongest assets of corporate and noncommercial media to create a mixed regime that would combat the "inefficacy" of both state and corporate media (Di Marcantonio, 2016). The initiative was explicit in its call for the "degovernmentalization" of "public service" broadcasting (Aguirre, 1977). The state's only role would be to establish regulatory safeguards to strengthen audiovisual media and human values on the one hand and to promote freedom of expression and information on the other (Hernández Díaz, 2007, p. 29).

Immediately, commercial media felt threatened by RATELVE. Even though its existence was still theoretical, as historian Elizabeth Fox (1988) notes, the corporations gave the project an almost mythic quality (p. 86). In their harsh criticisms, the corporate press and broadcasters sought to diminish the public's trust of the initiative. In the end, RATELVE became a document of study for media scholars, but would later be resurrected by the Chávez government to serve as a model for the ideation of TeleSUR (Hernández Díaz, 2007). As condemnations of RATELVE mounted, the Pérez administration eventually dropped its support for the program. The failure of RATELVE was the result of the false illusion given by spectacular modernity that, in the words of Fernando Coronil (1997), "torrents of oil money would change the flow of history and launch the country into the future" (p. 10).

In addition to the failed RATELVE project, another important broadcast issue of the mid-1970s confronting Pérez was that of the private broadcaster VTV, which at that time had been unable to pay back its creditors after investing heavily to upgrade to color broadcasting (Bisbal, 2002). In 1974, and to the surprise of many Venezuelans, the Pérez administration announced its plans to purchase the beleaguered VTV channel.

But as with the failed RATELVE project, this other attempt at media utopianism also was in vain, and resulted in a highly statist transformation, typical of spectacle modern media populism and its dialectically situated authoritarian precursors. As a nationalized broadcaster, VTV was placed under the direct control of the executive, which appointed its directors. Thus, unlike, say, the BBC, famous for its "arms-length" relationship between itself and the state, VTV became largely a presidential entity. Unfortunately, following the nationalization, media critics who had been hoping for something amounting to a public-interest broadcaster were disappointed (Capriles, 1996).

In this section, I have built on my argument that the capital that is spectacular modernity shapes the media presidency specific to Venezuela by focusing on the populist iterations that comprise this

dialectical entanglement of populism-authoritarianism that characterizes Venezuela's media ecology. In the next section, I discuss how Chavista regimes have marshaled media statecraft drawing from both Caldera and Pérez and Pérez Jiménez.

### **Chavezmadurismo and Comparative Authoritarian Media**

This section discusses the media populism/competitive authoritarianism of Hugo Chávez at the turn of the 21st century, whose politics and policies resorted to these preceding Venezuelan media populisms, but also take some cues from the autocratic aspects of Perezjimenista visual modernity. Chavismo, or "21st-century socialism," then, is to be understood as another articulation of this visual modernity. As I have maintained throughout this article, whether under the stewardship of Caldera or Pérez, there is a long tradition of both populist elites and dictatorships in Venezuela exploiting spectacular modernity by way of broadcasting to sell their respective agendas by way of cults of personalities. In the 21st century, the Chavista media presidency would dialectically oscillate between autocracy and populism, the two poles of this spectacular modern continuum. Thus, while speaking like a populist with his discourse of "participatory democracy," at the same time Chávez had decree power to censure and prosecute any journalist that criticized his agenda.

Indeed, the Chavista regime changed the spectacular modern narrative to the Bolivarian Revolution, but offered similar messages of a society built around images of grandeur that the state would deliver, based on the same undiversified political economy and delivered by another messianic figure. With his talk show *Aló Presidente!*, Chávez, for many analysts (Cañizález, 2016; Nolan, 2012), governed from a reality show with himself as protagonist. Like his predecessors, Chávez took to the airwaves to boast of spectacular modernity, but would also take presidential actions there, such as the nationalization of industry.

Ultimately, the Chávez administration, which from the beginning got the blessing of soaring oil prices to enhance its spectacular modern image, was able to govern from reality TV because it inherited a consumerist, commercial, spectacular modern media ecosystem through which it branded Chavismo/Bolivarianismo (Uzcátegui, 2010). Cañizález and Lugo-Ocando (2008) have historicized this phenomenon, arguing that in Venezuela the broadcasting's "mercantile and commercial logic" is basically "the result of the impact of television on the electoral process, where personal leadership has become a commercial commodity" (p. 197). The commercial media understood this logic inasmuch as when Chávez entered electoral politics in 1998, some mainstream outlets supported him during the campaign and even continued doing so through the first few months of his presidency (Lugo & Romero, 2003, p. 1). The logic was that as an outsider, Chávez was seen by media elites as a spectacular modern figure that could more easily be molded than, say, an Adeco or Copeista dinosaur. This honeymoon obviously did not last long, though, as Chávez quickly launched his media wars, as he increasingly used the discourse of "21st-century socialism" in part to antagonize commercial outlets (Parra, 2009).

In the final analysis, Bolivarian media policy, interfacing dialectically with its authoritarian and populist roots, can be characterized as an inversion of Puntofijismo's politics and practices, though, as with any inversion, it has echoes of what preceded it. In early 1999, following Chávez's electoral victory,

and after his administration oversaw the writing of a new constitution, the president increasingly used his newly realized powers to enact legislation by decree. Some media observers accused him of overstepping his boundaries and practicing power grabs characteristic of the Punto Fijo era (Ellner, 2004, p. 48). Likewise, the Chávez government used the discourse of RATELVE, analyzed above, as a model for its TeleSUR project and to justify its refusal to grant a concession to the opposition outlet RCTV in 2007 on the grounds that it was complicit in the 2002 against his government (Touissant, 2011, p. 6). In the year 2000, the administration began a practice of allocating licenses to groups with close links to the state through the National Telecommunications Commission, an agency created under his administration.

Although, seemingly, Chávez's mediated competitive authoritarianism four decades after the Puntofijismo era was a break, the late socialist leader's savvy use of media accords with the history of Venezuelan spectacular modern media populism and the authoritarian optics that preceded it, a trajectory in which state and media became increasingly intertwined. One key difference is that whereas his predecessors inherited the infrastructure of commercial media, which they then refashioned to suit their political interests, Chávez, taking advantage of digital and satellite media constructed a network of so-called public news disseminators built on a series of alliances with his own United Socialist Party of Venezuela (Cañizález, 2016).

Following the attempted coup against him in 2002, Chávez proceeded to erect a network of clientelistic media outlets (Waisbord, 2013a). Thus, RCTV (2007) and Globovisión (2010) were absorbed by the state. That failed 2002 coup attempt against him resulted in the closure of what the regime repeatedly branded as "*medios golpistas*" (media involved in a coup) and the ongoing construction of parastate, clientelistic broadcasters (Rojas Barboza, 2007) ostensibly to counterbalance these *golpista* outlets. In retrospect, then, this botched overthrow became the gift that kept on giving to this competitive authoritarian media presidency.

One such parastate station is the West Caracas-based Catia TVe, an outlet largely funded by PDVSA (the national oil company), whose infomercials it is obligated to show. This parastate media broadcaster, which first went on the air in 2001, exemplifies what media anthropologist Naomi Schiller (2011) calls "oil nationalism," a petroleum-dependent ideology that shapes the push-and-pull relationship its producers have with *oficialismo chavista* and their ostensible autonomy. Oil nationalism in other words is a form of statist spectacular modernity.

Although Chávez followed in the footsteps of his spectacular modern predecessors, 21st-century technology allowed him to inflate the competitive authoritarian media presidency in ways that were impossible during 20th-century media populisms. Pseudocommunity outlets such as Catia TVe exist in the age of the Internet and social media and thus have a far greater impact than 20th-century populist media.

Indeed, Hugo Chávez was among the first media presidents to master Twitter in populist "pink-tide" communication. In 2010, he announced "Mission 2.0: ChávezCandanga," and set up the account @ChavezCandanga ("candanga" literally means "devil" in Spanish, but in Venezuelan slang it describes

a wicked person.) Chávez pledged that the state would hire employees to help him fight asymmetrical warfare via tweeting.

He declared Twitter a “secret weapon,” adding that the Internet cannot solely be in the hands of the bourgeoisie; “microblogging” became part of an “ideological battle” (Block, 2016). For Chávez, Twitter became a 140-character version of *Aló, Presidente!*, especially accessible to his imagined community of Spanish speakers outside of Venezuela. As Chávez was forced to gradually step out of the office of presidency in 2012 while undergoing cancer treatment, he did not shy away from Twitter, where he would continue his populist media presidency. Thus, social media proved itself to be an effective tool for this spectacular modern regime whose roots are in authoritarian-populist dynamics.

Chávez’s successor @NicolasMaduro has maintained the Twitter media presidency. With the Maduro administration, this authoritarian-populism dialectic has produced a growingly autocratic Twitter presidency. While it relies on Twitter to promote its agenda, it seeks to censure that same platform, as it has blocked users’ access to images of antigovernment demonstrations in 2014 (Delgado, 2014). As a media populist, Maduro is forced to rely on Twitter because without the telegenicity of his predecessor, he would not make a plausible reality TV president. For populist leaders who lack the oratorical skills for long-winded televised discourses, the simplicity and brevity of Twitter is a logical alternative.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that at the time of writing, Venezuela is wracked in a political and humanitarian crisis whose origins go back to 2013 following the death of Chávez and when Maduro entered power amid soaring inflation and crime rates. The wide perception has been that his administration has done little to undo this crisis, resulting in nonstop nationwide protests starting in 2014, and these had a strong social media presence amid what was otherwise a media blackout. Such tension remained over the next couple of years, but came to a head in mid-2017 when a Chavezmadurista constituent assembly replaced the opposition-led National Assembly. And this turmoil was exacerbated even further a year later when Maduro won another presidential term under dubious circumstances. The upshot of this ongoing bloody tragedy is a Venezuela, once the envy of the continent, with its noticeable social mobility, that has lost its middle class and no longer remains a regional power. With Venezuela currently embroiled in an economic depression and dwindling approval rates of Maduro, spectacular media populism has shown its vulnerability.

### **“Spectacular Modernity” and Populist-Authoritarian Media Presidencies in Other Geographical Contexts**

This article argues that “capital” (petroleum) and populism interface in unique ways in Venezuela’s specific geocultural and sociohistorical circumstances, resulting in a sui generis media ecology imbricated in spectacular modernity. This increasingly presidentialist media environment is anchored in a dialectical tension where populist and authoritarian forces compete.

It is worth considering briefly how spectacular modernity could be useful to study populisms in other geographical contexts. Among the world’s major petrostates, three outside of South America have experienced populist rule in recent years: Russia, under Vladimir Putin (United Russia, 2000–08, 2013–);

the Philippines, under Rodrigo Duterte (PDP-Laban, 2016–); and Iran, under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Alliance of Builders, Society of Devotees, 2005–13). I have selected these regimes for this very brief consideration of cases of spectacular modernity outside of Venezuela principally because their populisms straddle the lines between “right wing” and “left wing,” thus echoing the populism-authoritarianism dialectical dynamic that emblemizes Venezuela’s media presidency.

One of the central reasons for Russia’s reemergence as a superpower in the 21st century is the oil boom that coincided with Putin’s emergence in the late 1990s (Goldman, 2008). This explosion in energy and soaring profits of its national oil company Gazprom has enabled what sociologist Rasa Baločkaitė (2012) calls “energy imperialism,” as the Kremlin has assumed an increasingly aggressive foreign policy. Domestically, this boom has created a panorama of populism that has affinities with spectacular modernity and its authoritarian-populist practitioners in Venezuela. Indeed, the petro-reserves boom has undoubtedly resulted in an increase in living standards and has allowed Putin to narrativize making Russia great again (Rutland, 2015). And like in Venezuela, where boom times allowed Chávez to progressively consolidate media power, Russia’s main television networks have become either state-run or properties with close ties to the Kremlin (Schimpfoss & Yablokov, 2014). Unlike social networks, which are very much fragmentary in nature, the main broadcasters continue to play a key role in unifying the nation (Burrett, 2010). Like the Chavezmadurista regimes, Putin has exercised a tight grip on the media, jailing and exiling opposition media moguls and even ordering the assassination of critical journalists.

Like Putin, Duterte’s success can be attributed to his deployment of a 21st-century populist-authoritarian style that seemed palatable with a Filipino public discontent with the status quo. Winning the presidency in 2016, a year full of populist upsets (Donald Trump, Brexit, and a populist victory in Italy), Duterte, whose violent rule in some ways resembles that of Putin, emerged to power over this petrostate amid an era of social media profusion. As with the Donald Trump campaign, the Duterte team in 2016 used social media to deploy “alternative facts” in its favor (Lang, 2017). His success was made possible in part by the help of what communication scholar Jermaine Beltran (2017, p. 6) refers to as “anti-media,” namely, “the virtual community composed of individuals disapproving of the practices of news media.” Thus, using antimainstream media rhetoric about the coverage of his campaign, Duterte successfully galvanized his base. His meteoric rise coincides with the Philippines undergoing a boom in infrastructure and energy projects unseen since the times of dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1972–81), including the erection of new airports, seaports, railways, and bus lines (Heydarian, 2018). Political scientist Richard Heydarian (2018) comments that in the epoch of Duterte, the Philippines, “like Gramsci’s Italy, is caught in an interregnum, struggling to anchor itself somewhere between strong-man populism, autocratic nostalgia and democratic resistance—with no clear resolution on the horizon” (para. 4).

Although Iran is rich in natural resources, it claims to have the world’s second largest oil and gas reserves, like the Philippines, Russia, Venezuela, and many petrostates, it has been cursed with inner turmoil, namely, war and revolution and their aftermath. In some respects Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s spectacular rise to the Islamic Republic in 2005, where he sought to reestablish the populism of the early years of the Islamic Revolution (1978–79), parallels Chavismo. A firebrand with authoritarian tendencies from the beginning, Ahmadinejad did not hide his confrontational style as he went out of the way to lambast the United States and Israel. Likewise, his advocacy for pan-Arab unity (Dorraj & Dodson, 2009) has echoes

of Chávez's call for a consolidated South America. Ahmadinejad's move toward petropopulism was seen as a response to the country's ongoing economic woes. Although his arrival coincided with robust oil profits, and he promised redistributive policies, the Iranian economy slumped under his rule. This malaise was exasperated by hurried state interventions in the market (Looney, 2007) and culminated in 2009 with the student protest movement. Amid these empty promises of prosperity, Ahmadinejad's rule was characterized by its tight control of publishing, the arts, broadcasting, and cinema (Khalaji, Robertson & Aghdami, 2011). Interestingly, Iran's neoconservatives also embraced Ahmadinejad's anti-imperialist, petropopulism (Warnaar, 2013).

This brief section has considered how spectacular modernity might look in geographically different contexts. Based on their tight control of information, the regimes of Duterte, Putin, and Ahmadinejad all fit the definition of competitive authoritarian governments like the Chavezmadurista state. However, there is an important distinction that sets apart spectacular modernity in the Venezuelan context from these other cases. Whereas in these other regions petrostates are common, Venezuela has had the privilege of being the sole petro power of the subcontinent. Likewise, in contrast to Venezuela, these other petrostates have diversified economies and are not solely reliant on oil. Thus, in many respects, Venezuelan leaders have often been able to idealize this capital and the discourse of the singularity of Venezuela more persuasively than could be done elsewhere.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The goal of this article is to consider the ways in which capital interfaces and idealizes with populism in Latin America's sole petrostate. I discuss how natural resources and this nation's attendant sense of singularity feed Venezuela's presidentialized media ecology. In doing so I attempt to postulate a typology of populisms that, imbricated in populist-authoritarian contexts, offers perspectives on different mediatizations of capital across time. Different personality cults in oil-rich Venezuela have used broadcast media, cable, satellite, and now social media to legitimize themselves.

I argue that the Venezuelan populist media presidency has its origins in the dialectical authoritarianism-populism configuration that characterized the nation's foundation as a petrostate in the 1950s. The Pérez Jiménez dictatorship used the discourse and ideology of "progress" and "modernity" to legitimate its undemocratic rule through image and affect. The Acción Democrática and COPEI parties that followed tried to bury memories of that dictatorship. But these populists, and later Chávez, still presided over the region's sole petrostate, and thus inherited its legacy of spectacular modernity, which they refashioned as spectacular media populism.

### References

- Aguirre, J. (1977). El proyecto RATELVE: diseño para una política de radiodifusión del Estado venezolano [The RATELVE project: Design for a broadcasting policy for the Venezuelan state]. *SIC*, 40, 400, 513-516.
- Arenas, N. (2012). La Venezuela rentista: imaginario político y populismo [The rentier Venezuela: Political imaginary and populism]. *Cuadernos del Cendes*, 29(80), 137-145.
- Baločkaitė, R. (2012). Russian energy imperialism: The world mapped along the gas Pipelines. *Politikos mokslų almanachas*, 12, 85-96. Retrieved from <https://vb.vdu.lt/object/elaba:6127416/6127416.pdf>
- Beltran, J. V. (2017). The emergence of "anti-media": the Duterte factor. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 14(1), 61-74. Retrieved from <https://ojs.uajy.ac.id/index.php/jik/article/view/833>
- Bisbal, M. (2002). Venezuela y televisión: El espectáculo visual de la modernidad [Venezuela and television: Visual spectacle as modernity]. *Comunicación, Estudios Venezolanos de Comunicación* 120, 4-17. Retrieved from [http://gumilla.org/biblioteca/bases/biblo/texto/COM2002120\\_4-17.pdf](http://gumilla.org/biblioteca/bases/biblo/texto/COM2002120_4-17.pdf)
- Blackmore, L. (2017). *Spectacular modernity: Dictatorship, space, and visibility in Venezuela, 1948-1958*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Block, E. (2016). *Political communication and leadership: Mimetization, Hugo Chávez and the construction of power and identity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Burrett, T. (2010). *Television and presidential power in Putin's Russia*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Cañizález, A. (2016). Hugo Chávez: *La presidencia mediática* [Hugo Chávez: The media presidency]. Caracas, Venezuela: Alfa.
- Cañizález, A., & Lugo-Ocando, J. (2008). The media in Venezuela: The revolution was televised, but no one was really watching. In J. Lugo-Ocando (Ed.), *The media in Latin America* (pp.185-210). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Cañizález, A., Tamayo, A., & Vilorio, J. (2015). La menguante programación de opinión política en la televisión de Venezuela [The decline of public opinion programming on Venezuelan television]. *Contratexto*, 24, 133-167. Retrieved from <http://medialanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Desaparecen-los-programas-de-Opini%C3%B3n-Pol%C3%ADtica-en-la-televisi%C3%B3n-venezolana-2015.pdf>

- Capriles, O. (1996). *Poder político y comunicación* [Political power and communication]. Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad Central de Venezuela.
- Coronil, F. (1997). *The magical state: nature, money and modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Corrales, J., & Penfold, M. (2016). *Dragon in the tropics: Venezuela and the legacy of Hugo Chávez*. New York, NY: Brookings Institution Press.
- Dávila, L. R. (2000). The rise and fall of populism in Venezuela. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 19(2), 223–238. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261305099000820>
- De la Torre, C. (2013). El tecnopopulismo de Rafael Correa: ¿Es compatible el carisma con la tecnocracia? [The technopopulism of Rafael Correa: Is charisma compatible with technocracy?]. *Latin American Research Review*, 48(1), 24–43. Retrieved from [https://www.jstor.org/stable/41811586?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41811586?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- Delgado, A. (2014). Nuevas (y viejas) formas de censura de la información en internet. [New and old forms of censorship of information on the Internet]. *Cuadernos de periodistas*, 29, 110–118. Retrieved from [http://www.cuadernosdeperiodistas.com/pdf/Cuadernos\\_de\\_Periodistas\\_29.pdf](http://www.cuadernosdeperiodistas.com/pdf/Cuadernos_de_Periodistas_29.pdf)
- Di Marcantoni, E. (2016). Television venezolana, años 60–70: Regulación vs. poder. [Venezuelan television during the 1960s and 1970s: Regulation vs. power]. *DesdelaPlaza.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.desdelaplaza.com/columnistas/cronicas-hertzianas/television-venezolana-anos-60-70-regulacion-vs-poder/>
- Di Tella, T. S. (1965). Populism and reform in Latin America. In C. Veliz (Ed.), *Obstacles to change in Latin America* (pp. 47–74). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dix, R. H. (1985). Populism: Authoritarian and democratic. *Latin American Research Review*, 20(2), 29–52. Retrieved from [https://www.jstor.org/stable/2503519?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2503519?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- Dorraj, M., & Dodson, M. (2009). Neo-populism in comparative perspective: Iran and Venezuela. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29(1), 137–151. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/262229/pdf>
- Ellner, S. (2000). *The radical populism of Chavismo in Venezuela: A throwback to the Trieno of Rómulo Betancourt?* Paper presented at the Conference of Latin American Studies. Retrieved from <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/Lasa2000/Ellner.PDF>
- Ellner, S., & Tinker Salas, M. (Eds.). (2003). *Venezuela: Hugo Chávez and the decline of an "exceptional democracy."* New York, NY: Rowan & Littlefield.

- Ellner, S., & Hellinger, D. (2004). *Venezuelan politics in the Chávez era: Class, polarization, and conflict*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Fernández Soto, Z., & García Cunto, A. (2004). Las agendas temáticas del Aló Presidente y El Nacional [The thematic agendas of Aló Presidente and El Nacional] (Master's thesis, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, Venezuela). Retrieved from <http://biblioteca2.ucab.edu.ve/anexos/biblioteca/marc/texto/AAQ1620.pdf>
- Fox, E. (1988). *Días de baile: el fracaso de la reforma en la televisión de América Latina* [Days of battle: The failed reform of television in Latin America]. Paris, France: Felafacs.
- Goldman, M. (2008). *Petrostate: Putin, power, and the new Russia*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hernández Díaz, G. (2007). Gubernamental TVES [Governmental TVES]. *Comunicación, Estudios Venezolanos de Comunicación*, 139, 26–30. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2971662>
- Heydarian, R. J. (2018, March 20). Understanding Duterte's mind-boggling rise to power. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/03/20/duterte/?utm\\_term=.8cd055f73ab8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/03/20/duterte/?utm_term=.8cd055f73ab8)
- Karl, T. L. (1997). *The paradox of plenty: Oil booms and petro-states*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kaufman, R. R., & Stallings, B. (1991). *The political economy of Latin American populism*. In R. Dornbusch & S. Edwards (Eds.), *The macroeconomics of populism in Latin America* (pp. 15–43). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Khalaji, M., Robertson, B. & Aghdami, M. (2011). *Cultural censorship in Iran: Iranian culture in a state of emergency*. Small Media. Creative Commons. Retrieved from <https://smallmedia.org.uk/old/pdf/censorship.pdf>
- Lang, J. (2017). Putting Southeast Asian media into context. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 9(3), 509–513. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/aspp.12327>
- Langue, F. (2009). Rómulo Betancourt: Liderazgo democrático versus personalismo en tiempos de celebraciones [Rómulo Betancourt: Democratic leadership versus personalism in times of celebrations]. *Redalyc*, 11(21). Retrieved from <https://revistascientificas.us.es/index.php/araucaria/article/view/1222/1117>
- Looney, R. E. (2007). *The reemergence of Iranian petro-populism*. Retrieved from [https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/40695/Rel\\_GRC-07\\_article.pdf?sequence=1](https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/40695/Rel_GRC-07_article.pdf?sequence=1)

- Lugo Ocando, J., & Romero, J. (2002). From friends to foes: Venezuela's media goes from colossal space to confrontational actor. *Sincronía* 7(25). Retrieved from <http://sincronia.cucsh.udg.mx/lugoromeroinv02.htm>
- Muñoz, B. (2008). Cesarismo mediático [Media Caesarism]. *Comunicación: Estudios Venezolanos de Comunicación* 147, 4–11. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/ejemplar/257027>
- Ng'ambi, S. P. (2015). *Resource nationalism in international law*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nolan, R. (2012, May 4). The Realest Reality Show in the World. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/06/magazine/hugo-chavezs-totally-bizarre-talk-show.html>
- Novoa Monreal, E. (1979). *La nacionalización del petróleo en Venezuela: sus aspectos jurídicos* [The nationalization of oil in Venezuela: Legal aspects]. Mexico City, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Parra, L. N. (2009). Guerra mediática en Venezuela y revolución [The media war in Venezuela and revolution]. *Quorum Académico*, 6(1). Retrieved from <http://www.redalyc.org/html/1990/199016737006/>
- Pasquali, A. (1967). *El aparato singular: Análisis de un día de TV en Caracas* [The singular apparatus: Analysis of a day of television in Caracas]. Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad Central de Venezuela.
- Ponce, M., & Rincón, O. (2017). *Medios de lucha: Comunicación de gobierno en América Latina* [Means of struggle: Government communication in Latin America]. Montevideo, Uruguay: Universidad Católica del Uruguay.
- Ramírez, G. (2014). Acallar medios críticos, la política que une a gobiernos de Venezuela, Argentina y Bolivia [Silencing media critics, the policy that unites the governments of Venezuela, Argentina and Bolivia]. *Comunicación, Estudios Venezolanos de Comunicación*, 168, 18–20. Retrieved from [http://gumilla.org/biblioteca/bases/biblo/texto/COM2014168\\_18-20.pdf](http://gumilla.org/biblioteca/bases/biblo/texto/COM2014168_18-20.pdf)
- Rojas Barboza, I. (2007). Aproximación al uso y contexto del término golpe, presente en el discurso presidencial venezolano 2002–2004 [Approach to the use and context of the term coup, present in the Venezuelan presidential speech 2002–2004]. *Revista de Artes y Humanidades UNICA*, 8(19), 221–242. Retrieved from <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1701/170118451012.pdf>
- Rutland, P. (2015) Petronation? Oil, gas, and national identity in Russia. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31(1), 66–89. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1060586X.2014.952537>
- Savage, R. (2018). *Populist discourse in Venezuela and the United States: American unexceptionalism and political identity formation*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Schiller, N. (2011). "Now that the petroleum is ours": Community media, state spectacle and oil nationalism in Venezuela. In A. Behrends, S. P. Reyna, & G. Schlee (Eds), *Crude domination: An anthropology of oil* (pp. 190–219). New York, NY: Berghahn.
- Schimpfossi, E., & Yablokov, I. (2014). Coercion or conformism? Censorship and self-censorship among Russian media personalities and reporters in the 2010s. *Demokratizatsiya*, 22(2), 295–312. Accessed from [http://demokratizatsiya.pub/archives/22\\_2\\_Q0004344847N3648.pdf](http://demokratizatsiya.pub/archives/22_2_Q0004344847N3648.pdf)
- Tello, M. (1989). La historia efectiva de una utopía: políticas y planificación de la comunicación en América Latina [The effective history of a utopia: policies and planning of communication in Latin America]. *Diálogos* 24. Retrieved from <http://dialogosfelafacs.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/24/24-revista-dialogos-politicas-yplanificacion.pdf>
- Touissant, F. (2011). La política cultura y las televisoras públicas en México, Venezuela y Brasil [The cultural policy of public television in Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil]. *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*, 28(33), 91–111. Retrieved from <http://www.redalyc.org/html/316/31618563006/>
- Urquijo, J. (2000). *El movimiento obrero de Venezuela* [The worker movement in Venezuela]. Caracas, Venezuela: OIT-UCAB.
- Uzcátegui, R. (2010). *Venezuela: Revolución como espectáculo* [Venezuela: Revolution as spectacle]. Buenos Aires, Argentina: La Malestata Editorial.
- Waisbord, S. (2013a). Democracy, journalism and Latin American populism. *Journalism*, 14(4), 504–521.
- Waisbord, S. (2013b). *Vox Populista: Medios, periodismo, democracia* [Vox Populista: Media, journalism, democracy]. Barcelona, Spain: Gedisa.
- Waisbord, S., & Amado, A. (2017). Populist communication by digital means: Presidential Twitter in Latin America. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(9), 1330–1346.
- Warnaar, M. (2013). *Ideology and legitimacy during Ahmadinejad's presidency*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- World Bank. (n.d.). *Oil rents (% of GDP)*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PETR.RT.ZS>
- Yarrington, D. (1999). Populist anxiety: Race and social change in the thought of Rómulo Gallegos. *The Americas*, 56(1). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1008443.pdf>