

A case study into the making and evolution of populist discourse

Examining Hugo Chávez's discourse and its radicalisation through time.

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1. Introduction

“You are not going to re-elect Chávez really, you are going to re-elect yourselves, the people will re-elect the people. Chávez is nothing but an instrument of the people” (Hugo Chávez, 2006, cited by Hawkins, 2007:2).¹

Political legitimacy is an essential attribute for any leader as it directly contributes to the nation’s stability and authority. Weber (1978) illustrates three categories of legitimation strategies used to justify the right of leaders to rule. One of them, charismatic legitimacy, stems from the ideas and charisma of the leader, whose authoritative persona captivates and dominates the citizens leading to their approval of the government’s regime and rule. While difficult to quantify, charisma is a renowned quality of various effective rhetorical speakers given its ability to influence supporters.

The rise to power and popularity of late Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez, can be understood by the exploitation of charismatic legitimacy. An adept orator, Chávez rallied popular support through his ability to inspire crowds with his blunt albeit passionate speeches. Chavez’s persona was perhaps best exemplified through his television programme, *Aló Presidente* (“Hello Presidente”). The programme was broadcast live every Sunday, from 11am to 5pm, although its ending was not firmly fixed. Entirely unscripted and sometimes played out like a presidential reality show, Chávez utilised it as a populist platform to engage with the broader masses “in person”. Depending on Chávez’s agenda, a programme could last for hours on end, whereby he would muse on his political philosophy, sing and dance, announce policies, and signal the next step in his Bolivarian Revolution.² Given his successful political trajectory, Chavez’s discourse deserves attention.

¹ All quotes illustrated here are my own translations from the original Spanish. As the methodological framework of this paper is concerned with the use of language, the translations attempt to balance the need for maintaining the original content with making sense in English.

² Chávez described his revolutionary concept as the Bolivarian Revolution; while not subscribing to this concept, the term is used in this way in order to adhere to Chávez’s discourse.

“Whoever is not with Chávez is not Venezuelan” (Hugo Chávez, 2012, cited by Anom, 2012).

As the quote illustrates, Hugo Chávez was an outspoken and polarising political figure; you were either with him or against him. A middle ground, grey area did not exist and if it did it was very remote. Without a doubt, Chávez was a major protagonist of contemporary Venezuelan history.

Before the emergence of Chávez, from 1974 to 1999, Venezuela’s history suffered from a series of cycles both politically and economically. Venezuelan society had been shaken and subjected to several injustices as well as corruption from elected political leaders who neglected the lower sectors of society. The loss of credibility by, and subsequent apathy towards politicians propelled the emergence of an incredulous society and the latent need for change. In the midst of this turmoil, a young restless military man surged as a true testament to these events. His social class was derived from being a teacher’s son in a small town in Barinas, Sabaneta, which together with his military rank, made him well aware of the realities of the time. Furthermore, the disarray of the political class broke the strong party discipline the people had towards the two main party establishments, AD and COPEI.³ This created the opportunity for an outsider with an anti-system alternative to capitalize on the majority of the people’s animosity towards the traditional political establishment. As a result, Chávez became a prominent national figure and successfully won the 1998 presidential elections, becoming Venezuela’s new president.

From that point onwards, he was able to reach out to millions with his ideals and philosophy of life, and the power that he had over people was immense, as he never lost an election throughout his fourteen years in power. Although Chávez’s leadership trajectory culminated in his death: what made him win over so many followers not only in Venezuela but in Latin America and around the world? Without a doubt, many of his projects played a key role. However, this

³ Known as Democratic Action and Christian Democratic Party.

study argues that what mostly influenced people was his discourse.⁴ As prescribed here and as popularised by discourse theorists and postmodernists, “‘discourse’ is not a reference to instances of speech or written text, but it is a technical term describing any distinct language that subconsciously expresses – and, in the postmodernist view, shapes or constitutes – our fundamental assumptions” (Hawkins, 2010:30).

As Hawkins (2010) argued, Chávez’s language is not just that of Chávez or a repeat of what we would essentially find in any chief executive’s speeches. It has distinctive elements that the theoretical literature identifies with populist discourse. Thus, Hawkins’ article is particularly relevant in that he foreshadows the need for rhetorical inquiry into Chávez’s discourse by emphasizing how charismatic political power is derived from the orator’s effective speech. Consequently, as Chávez represents a paradigmatic case of populist discourse, this study aims to evaluate the composition and evolution of his discourse throughout his presidency. I will establish a methodological framework in order to classify the discursive elements he utilised, their purpose, and how through their employment he was able to mobilise masses, gain supporters, and advance his Bolivarian Revolution. Taking into account the theoretical insights of Ernesto Laclau, I develop two elements, personalism and polarisation, that capture the traditional patterns of populist discourse.

However, I argue that a third corollary element, revolution, is also present in Chávez’s populist discourse. As reiterated by Hawkins (2010:63), a consequence of Chávez’s belligerent language is a constant emphasis on systematic change, which in this case develops as a discourse of revolution. While Chávez consistently critiqued neoliberalism and certain aspects of capitalism, such as its emphasis on individualism, his early ideology was not socialist. Despite scholars identifying Chávez’s transition to radical leftism (Wilpert, 2007; Ellner, 2008; Hawkins, 2010; Brading, 2013), this study aims to examine whether his radicalisation also transpired in his discourse. After winning a third presidential

⁴ It is worth noting that Chávez’s leadership is complex and doesn’t only come down to his discourse. It would be irresponsible to state that Chávez gained his followers only through discourse. However, many scholars (Gámez; Mixon; Hawkins) believe that it was an essential tool to advance his revolutionary agenda.

election in 2006, Chávez declared, “another era will begin, another revolutionary era” (Hawkins, 2010:65). Thus I will argue that, as his political control became increasingly consolidated, Chávez radicalised his revolutionary discourse to frame his government’s new advancements.

To guide the study, I have developed the following research questions:

1) Did the discourse of Hugo Chávez follow the traditional patterns of populist discourse?

2) How did Chávez’s discourse evolve throughout his presidency?

The overall structure of the study takes the form of five chapters, including this introductory chapter. The second chapter devises a theoretical approach through a critical literature review in order to establish a methodological framework. Consequently, the next chapter will discuss the methodology, anchored through a combination of both a dictionary quantitative approach and a qualitative interpretation, presenting how the research was conducted, as well as the rationale behind it. Finally, the fourth chapter, which constitutes the bulk of the study, will explore and discuss the findings in order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The final chapter presents a conclusion.

Given that the scope of the study is limited to the analysis of Chavez’s populist discourse and that the findings and arguments are limited across time and space, the study does not provide an all-encompassing review. In light of these restrictions, the analysis primarily focuses on revealing insights into the composition and evolution of Chavez’s discourse.

2. Theory

This section critically analyses relevant literature in order to build a theoretical framework by drawing links to existing theories. It proceeds in four stages: Firstly, it explains the discursive definition of populism utilised in this study. Secondly, it considers the framework for traditional populist discourse in the literature. Thirdly, it identifies the elements of Chávez's populist discourse, personalism, polarisation, and revolution, providing their theoretical importance. Finally, it provides some context for the twelve years of Chávez's presidency that I will be analysing.

2.1 Conceptualisation of populism as a discourse

The study of populism is supported by an extensive literature, covering its conceptualisation and definition and focusing on different areas of the world from Europe to Latin America (Laclau, 1977; Canovan, 2002; Drake, 1982; Taguieff, 1995; De Benoist, 2000; Taggart, 2000; Weyland, 2001; Mudde, 2004; Panizza, 2005; Nyenhuis, 2013). The lack of uniformity on populism extends to a range of concepts, it being variously defined as an “appeal” (Canovan, 2002), a “political style” (Knight, 1998), a “language” (Kazin, 1998), a “thin ideology” (Mudde, 2004), or a “discourse” (de la Torre, 2000; Laclau, 2005; Panizza, 2005). Yet, what these conceptualisations do have in common is that they perceive populism as a set of ideas incorporating their inherent meanings for leaders and participants (Hawkins, 2010). For this study's specific context, I employ Hawkins' definition of populism as a discourse as it is more applicable than the other definitions. Hawkins contends that,

“[p]opulism is a set of fundamental beliefs about the nature of the political world – a worldview or, to use a more rarefied term, a ‘discourse’ – that perceives history as a Manichean struggle between Good and Evil, one in which the side of the Good is ‘the will of the people’, or the natural, common interest of the citizens once they are allowed to form their own opinions, while the side of Evil is a conspiring elite that has subverted his will” (2010:5).

Using Hawkins' definition of populism not only helps to clarify the underlying theory of this analysis but also to understand the methodological model.

Similarly, Roberts (2007:5) defines populism as “the top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge elite groups on behalf of an ill-defined *pueblo*, or ‘the people’”. Thus, both definitions illustrate populism in the form of a personalistic leader portraying an alternative route with an entity called “the people” or *el pueblo*⁵ mobilised against the establishment. Furthermore, it advocates a resilient anti-systemic and Manichaeian discourse contesting with opponents that are represented by political adversaries, the business sector, and the United States government. Together, both definitions set the stage for the development of my theoretical framework. Despite Hawkins’ (2007) finding of Chávez’s high level of populist discourse, I refer to the theory of populism introduced by Laclau (1977) to identify the content of populist discourse in order to be able to ground my claim in a sustained and rigorous way. Thus, in attempt to examine these concepts and their link to Chávez’s discourse, I will begin by looking at the traditional discursive premises of populist discourse as proposed by Laclau and Hawkins before characterising the discourse of Chávez.

2.2 Ernesto Laclau’s discursive theory of populism: establishing the traditional patterns of populist discourse

Laclau (1977) argued that the peculiarity of populist discourse is to frame politics as an antagonistic confrontation between *el pueblo* and the oligarchy. In *On populism* Laclau stated that, “despite the wide diversity in the uses of the term, we find in all of them the common reference to an analogical basis which is the people. [...] it is certainly true that reference to the people occupies a central place in populism” (Laclau, 1977:165). Nonetheless, the predominance of a signifier such as *el pueblo* is insufficient to justify talking about a populist discourse. As Laclau himself argued, “the presence of popular elements in a discourse is not sufficient to transform it into a populist one. Populism starts at the point where popular-democratic elements are presented as an antagonistic option against the ideology of the dominant bloc” (Laclau cited by Stavrakakis, 2004:254). Thus, the two criteria highlighted by Laclau, a focal reference to *el*

⁵ As this is not a simple non-connoted reference to “the people” but something that was loaded ideologically in Chávez’s discourse, I kept the Spanish reference to *el pueblo*.

pueblo and a consistently antagonistic discourse, will serve as the two premises for traditional patterns of populist discourse. In other words, I will try to establish a relation between Laclau's hypotheses and the discourse of Chávez, in order to conclude whether Chávez's discourse adheres to Laclau's two criteria of populist discourse. This will allow me to ground the claim that the discourse articulates populist elements.

2.3 Hawkins' five elements of populist discourse

Despite the abundance of literature on populist discourse, its conceptualization remains inconsistent. Hawkins' (2007:20) study on the measurement of populist discourse in comparative perspective finds that contemporary populist discourse is a fairly rare phenomenon. As of late 2005 and early 2006, Hawkins found only two clear examples of populist discourse in Latin America, (Chávez and Morales) and potentially three in his sample of fifteen countries outside of Latin America (Bush, Lukashenko, and Yushchenko) (Ibid: 20). Moreover, his findings claim that Chávez had a "very populist discourse" when compared to the other leaders in the large comparative sample (2007:19). This meant that Chávez incorporated all of the five elements of populist discourse identified in his rubric. Hawkins (2010) argued that Chávez's language is not just that of Chávez or a repeat of what we would essentially find in any chief executive's speeches. It has distinctive elements that the theoretical literature identifies with populist discourse.

In contrast to Laclau, Hawkins (2010:33) identifies five elements of populist discourse: "a Manichaeian outlook; identification of Good with the will of *el pueblo*; identification of Evil with a conspiring elite; and two corollary elements: an emphasis on systematic change and an anything-goes attitude toward minority rights and democratic procedure". Hawkins' first three elements coincide closely with the two criteria proposed by Laclau. However, the recognition of the fourth corollary element, a need for systematic change, is crucial for the characterisation of Chávez's discourse. In this way, in order to provide a holistic characterisation of Chávez's populist discourse, I have incorporated this third corollary element alongside Laclau's two elements.

2.4 Analytical Model: three pillars of populist discourse

The discursive definition of populism as well as Laclau's theoretical insights suggest two elements that allow me to identify populist discourse more clearly. These are personalism and polarisation. Moreover, utilising Hawkins' (2010) findings, I am able to establish one corollary element: revolution. Thus, in order to characterise Chávez's discourse I have constructed *three pillars of populist discourse*, which serve as the methodological framework for this study.

2.4.1 The first pillar: Personalism

The first pillar, personalism,⁶ serves to conceptualise Laclau's first criterion of discursive elements in populist discourse, the central role of *el pueblo*. In several definitions, appealing to and identifying with *el pueblo* is a baseline and necessary condition (De La Torre, 2000; Laclau, 2005; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). As Jagers and Walgrave (2007:323) highlight, "by referring to the people, a political actor claims that he or she cares about the people's concerns, that he primarily wants to defend the interests of the people, that he or she is not alienated from the public but knows what the people really want". In Chávez's discourse *el pueblo* represent the common people, those who have been marginalized, ignored, and exploited (Brading, 2013).

2.4.2 The second pillar: Polarisation

The second pillar, polarisation, conceptualises the vital "us vs. them" axis, which seeks to remind the popular masses that the opposition is the enemy, reflecting Laclau's second criterion. Through its antagonistic representation, this pillar gives *el pueblo* its "political salience and hegemonic appeal within populist discourse" (Stavrakakis, 2005:234). As Brading (2013:147) argues, "Chávez's discourse depends greatly on confrontation in order to draw attention to the dichotomic terrain poor Venezuelans have faced for many years". In this way, Chávez used the threat of these groups as a tool to unite *el pueblo*, aggravating political and social polarisation and producing greater support for his Bolivarian Revolution.

⁶ Taken to mean: "allegiance to a particular political leader rather than to a party or ideology" (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2011).

2.4.3 The third pillar: Revolution

For Chávez's populist discourse, the premises discussed previously have one important corollary. It is that the "subversion of the people's will requires some form of systematic change, or what Laclau (2005) calls 'rupture'" (Hawkins, 2010:35). Hawkins (Ibid) argues that populists frequently express their goals in terms of revolution. Not surprisingly, throughout Chávez's presidency the political process was conceived as a revolution, which served to advance his intentions of engaging in a long drawn-out struggle that would pass through distinct phases. As a result, this pillar aims to demonstrate that references to revolution not only permeate the language of Chávez but also intensify over time, with new stages always on the horizon. Although this element deviates from traditional patterns of populist discourse, according to Laclau's criteria, Hawkins' theoretical insights reinforce how Chávez's use of revolutionary language fulfils yet another prerequisite of populist discourse. The revolution pillar serves to fill an ideological void and provide an alibi to nationalise a revolutionary project. As Ellner (2005) argued, Chávez relied on his discourse to expand abstract ideas as his political movement lacked ideological clarity.

Moreover, this study argues that Chávez's revolution refers to two different concepts. The first is the national Bolivarian Revolution, named after Simón Bolívar, an early nineteenth-century Venezuelan and its foremost revolutionary leader. The second concept was introduced after 2004, reflecting a revolutionary change in agenda to a radical ideological revolution of twenty-first century socialism. By creating two subdivisions for the revolution pillar, I am able to stress the evolution and radicalisation of Chávez's discourse over time. The radicalisation of Chávez's discourse will be measured through an increase in the frequency of the revolution pillar throughout his presidency. This is because the revolution pillar highlights his goal of engineering thoroughgoing change in the nation, coinciding with the traditional revolutionary concept of an "abrupt and thorough break with the past" (Ellner, 2008:143). In continuation, I will examine each subdivision, clarifying its existence and relevance to the study.

i. **Bolivarian Revolution: utilising the symbolism of Bolívar**

Since Chávez was elected president in 1998, he transformed Venezuela's government and society in what he characterised as the Bolivarian Revolution. Based on Chávez's interpretation of the thinking of Venezuela's founding father, Simón Bolívar, this revolution brought together a set of ideas. Hawkins (2010:33) highlights how populist discourse oftentimes validates the moral significance of its ideals by linking them to revered national leaders. This is confirmed by Carrera (2003), who believes that Bolívar symbolizes the nation's emancipation and that his ubiquitous presence has become a national cult in Venezuela. Moreover, Conway (2003:4) argues that, "Bolívar represents the continuity and coherence of key terms and concepts, such as independence, liberty and the nation". Thus, establishing this link with Simón Bolívar is a key discursive strategy for Chávez, as he used Bolívar's work in an ahistorical fashion, extracting his words and ideas to endorse his revolutionary agenda. In my analysis I aim to show how this subdivision of revolution is consistent in Chávez's discourse and continues to accompany the new socialist language and goals that Chávez adopted after 2004.

ii. **Twenty-first Century Socialism: a new economic model**

The second subdivision of revolution highlights how Chávez's revolutionary agenda changed gears to twenty-first century socialism, confirming his radicalisation over time as he called for further advance towards a revolutionary transformation of society. As Wilpert (2007), Ellner (2008) and Hawkins (2010) all recognise, Chávez laid a number of cornerstones for a programme of radical change. The platform included increasingly radical proposals such as greater state involvement in the economy, more land reforms, and new forms of local government (Wilpert, 2007:27). Moreover, in 2003, Chávez developed a series of socialist programmes, which entailed the launching of government anti-poverty initiatives in several areas such as housing, education, and healthcare. These are all key features of Chávez's revolutionary leftwing programme of social transformation that were reiterated and reinforced in his discourse.

2.5 Context: The four phases of the Bolivarian Project

As Ellner (2012:12) states, “all movements that stand for far-reaching change are challenged to defend their utopian visions”. Hence, caught in this predicament Chávez employed language to reinforce his idealistic designs. In support of my hypotheses, I established four phases of the Bolivarian Project, which help to elucidate the evolution of Chávez’s discourse. In continuation I will provide context to each phase in order to support my argument that Chávez’s discourse radicalised along with the radicalisation of his ideas and policies.

The four phases of the Bolivarian Project:

Phase I: The moderate stage, 1999-2000

Phase II: Opposition revolt and Chávez’s retaliation, 2001-2004

Phase III: The change in revolutionary agenda to twenty-first century socialism, 2006-2008

Phase IV: Chávez’s illness and further consolidation, 2010-2012

The first phase, from 1999 to 2000, is characterised as the moderate stage as Chávez still maintained dialogue with the private sector and followed a moderate economic course (Ellner, 2008:110). The second phase, from 2001 to 2004, signals the beginning of Chávez’s radicalisation in November 2001 when a series of radical reforms were implemented by the government, including forty-nine “new enabling revolutionary laws” (Brading, 2013:67). On April 11th, 2002, the opposition in Venezuela staged a coup, and although Chávez resigned he was quickly reinstated. Moreover, in December 2002 a new strike occurred with the participation of workers from the state oil company, PDVSA⁷, causing the supply of petrol to drop substantially. However, both acts failed to get the social support from the “other” camp (*el pueblo*). What followed was further radicalisation of Chávez’s project with the construction of social, economic, educational, and cultural programmes called “misiones” in April 2003, seeking to help the previously excluded in poor and secluded areas of Venezuela (Ibid:89). These developments emboldened Chávez to go beyond the mere undoing of neoliberal measures, and the re-election in December 2006 marked the

⁷ Meaning Petróleos de Venezuela, Sociedad Anónima (Petroleum of Venezuela, Joint Stock Company).

beginning of the third phase. This phase was ushered in with Chávez announcing “new radical measures that promised to carry the ‘revolutionary process’ to a new level” (Ellner, 2008:127) with the development of a new economic model of socialism in Venezuela. This “socialist construction” not only required radical changes to the constitution with a constitutional reform referendum, but also numerous expropriations where the government took control of strategic industries including oil, steel, telecommunications, and electricity (Ellner, 2012:24). These advances and reformulation of objectives reflect Chávez’s strategy of constantly deepening the revolutionary process by introducing new programmes and goals. Finally, the last phase begins in 2010 with the continuation of his radical trajectory and further consolidation, as the National Assembly granted Chávez the power to pass laws by decree for eighteen months (Suggett and Pearson, 2010). In 2011, Chávez’s cancer was revealed but this did not deter him from running a grand presidential campaign, which ended victorious with his re-election in 2012. However, in December 2012 Chávez announced that his cancer had come back, and he passed away in March 2013.

Thus, the transition of the four phases of the Bolivarian Project will help elucidate and provide context to the evolution of Chávez’s discourse, which will be discussed later on in the study. This trajectory shows Chávez’s increased radicalism as his political control and support became more and more consolidated. This overview sets the stage for the development of a methodological model to examine the keywords in Chávez’s populist discourse in order to further analyse the composition and evolution of his discourse through the four phases.

3. Methodology

This section builds the methodological framework used in the analysis by presenting and justifying the data selection, which covers a twelve-year period of Chávez's presidency divided into four phases. Resting on the three pillars of populist discourse previously established, it justifies the use of content analysis in this study, anchored through a combination of both a dictionary quantitative approach and a qualitative interpretation.

3.1 Research Questions and hypotheses

My first research question:

Did the discourse of Hugo Chávez follow the traditional patterns of populist discourse?

will be assessed by its adherence to the two criteria highlighted by Laclau: a focal reference to *el pueblo* and a consistently antagonistic discourse. However, I will argue that Chávez's populist discourse contains one corollary element as introduced by Hawkins (2010), highlighting its departure from traditional discursive constructs. In this way, I aim to validate my first hypothesis, which argues that **three main pillars of populist discourse will appear in Chávez's discourse.**

Furthermore, when addressing the second research question:

How did Chávez's discourse evolve throughout his presidency?

I will test the other three hypotheses I constructed, illustrated below, to further guide my research.

Hypothesis 2: The personalism pillar will remain stable over time.

Hypothesis 3: The polarisation pillar will increase over time.

Hypothesis 4: The revolution pillar will increase over time.

3.2 Data and Design

3.2.1 Content Analysis: Quantitative dictionary approach

Williams (1976) argued that through discourse, populist leaders give new meanings to “keywords” in their political cultures. As a result, with the aim of analysing the composition and evolution of Chávez’s populist discourse, this study utilises a quantitative analysis of textual data, in the form of transcripts, employing the dictionary-based approach of social research. It will report the quantitative results followed by qualitative quotes to support the arguments. In the dictionary-based approach, words are assigned to pre-existing categories following rules that are created by the researchers, and the categorisation results are analysed quantitatively (Higuchi, 2004). This is complemented by the qualitative approach, which explores the intentionality and implication of categories by highlighting numerous extracts from the transcripts. This study analyses textual data in the form of transcripts of the episodes of Chávez’s weekly television programme, *Aló Presidente*, extracted from the website of the Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information.

This study’s dictionary-based quantitative approach consists of three categories derived from frequency-sorted word-lists, controlled for the distribution of words and their respective categories over the texts. In computational linguistics, a frequency list is a sorted list of words, which “records the number of times that each word occurs in the text” (Baron et al, 2009:41). Consequently, this study will take frequency to mean the number of occurrences of a word in a given text. Thus, after devising the frequency lists I established three categories to depict the main pillars of populist discourse that I deemed highly relevant to the study of Hugo Chávez’s discourse: personalism, polarisation, and revolution. The three frequency lists are an amalgam of thirty-two keywords, derived from critical perspectives as well as my own judgement. For the establishment of the pillars, I used an ex-ante word-list; however, I discarded all words with fewer than five references throughout the period in order to ensure rigor in my analysis. Thus after converting the frequency of each word into a quantitative matrix (i.e. a frequency list) corresponding to the three pillars, I used Adobe Reader’s search and retrieval methods to examine the saliency of these

keywords in the transcripts. Consequently, both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to analyse the matrices in order to generate inferences about Chávez's discourse.

To measure the frequency of each pillar annually, I created the following formula:

$$\text{Frequency of pillar} = \frac{\text{Total number of words in pillar}}{41\% \text{ of words in an episode}^8} \times 100$$

Thus, the frequency of a pillar, expressed as a percentage, illustrates the total number of words mentioned from a pillar in the episodes of that year, divided by 41% of the total words mentioned in the episodes from that year. However, in order to make the frequency of a pillar more tangible, I also calculated the average words per episode of Aló Presidente that were mentioned from a pillar.

This was done by calculating the average word count of the episodes in the dataset, amounting to 37,692 words.⁹ For clarification, Figure 1 shows the calculation of the frequency of phase I (1999-2000) of the personalism pillar.¹⁰ In 1999 and 2000, the personalism frequency was 2.29% and 2.10%, respectively. This means that in 1999, 829 words in an episode were from this pillar. While in 2000, the word count decreased slightly to 791 words per episode.

⁸ Applying Bruter and Harrison's (2011) method of calculating the proportion of total useful words, I took a random sample of four transcripts from my dataset, calculating how many words were valid in each one (i.e. discarding connective words such as casual and comparative connectives). Through this, I worked out an average of the four transcripts and found that 41% of the total words in a transcript are valid.

⁹ Refer to Appendix 7.

¹⁰ All the calculations can be found in Section 7.1 of the Appendices.

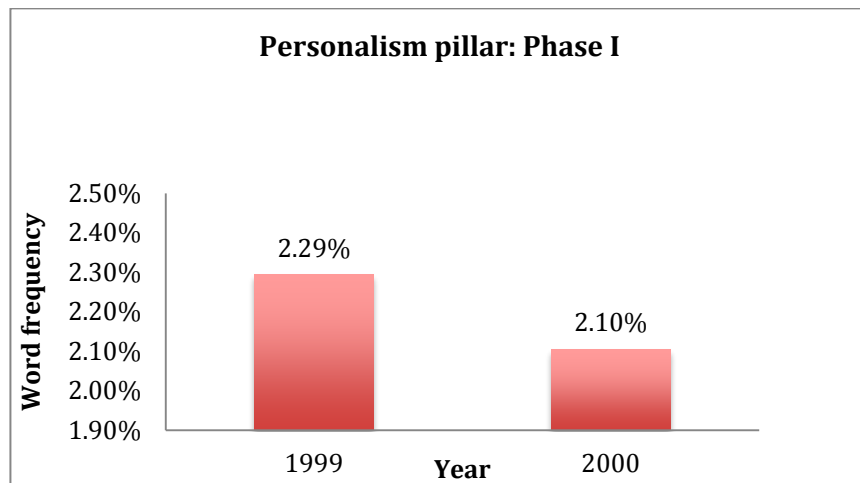


Figure 1

3.2.2 Data Selection

In 1999, a weekly television programme, *Aló Presidente*, hosted by Chávez, broadcasted on Venezuelan state television and radio stations every Sunday. The programme did not have a fixed ending time or a set topic of discussion and was largely unscripted. All the transcripts of the episodes are readily available on the website of the Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information. Thus, for my analysis I randomly selected a hundred and seven transcripts¹¹ as the dataset, ensuring that I selected at least nine transcripts every year.¹² The current selection provides a representative sample across time allowing me to examine his weekly discourse with the Venezuelan public. The transcripts cover a period of twelve years and were formatted to include references made solely by Chávez. Although the transcripts vary in length, there is a clear increase over time. As shown in Figure 2, the amount of words in an episode increases substantially from phase I to the consequent phases. Given that the average words per episode is 37,692, in phases I and II the episodes were shorter than the average as they contained less words. However, reinforcing Chávez's personalism discourse, over time the episodes began to get longer as he spoke more, highlighting his demagogic and populist persona.

¹¹ Refer to Section 7.2 of the Appendices.

¹² However, in 2011 and 2012, due to Chávez's illness, the number of broadcast decreased thus I utilized a total of seven and three transcripts, respectively, for those two years as they were the only ones available.

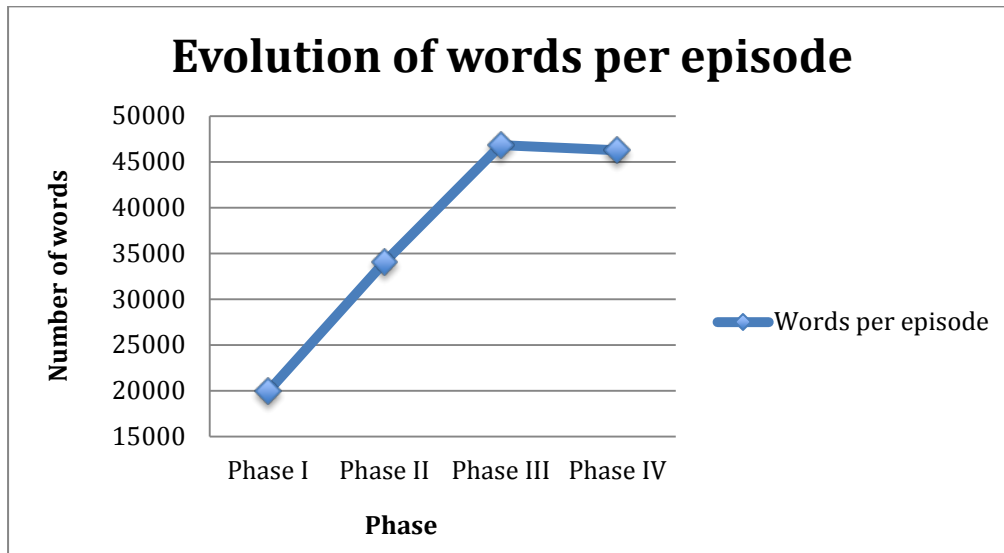


Figure 2¹³

3.3 Analytical Model

3.3.1 Personalism pillar

The ten words in this pillar, illustrated in Table 1, served to illustrate Chávez's aim to enhance his connection with his main constituency, *el pueblo*, i.e. the lowest sectors of society. As a result, personal pronouns like me, we, as well as references to the government, *el pueblo*, Venezuelans and comrade were included.

Table 1: Personalism keywords

	Spanish terms	English terms
1	Yo	Me
2	Nosotros	We
3	Pueblo	The people
4	Compatriota(s)	Compatriot(s)
5	Compadre(s)	Comrade(s)
6	Hermano(s)	Brother(s)
7	Ustedes	You (plural)
8	Gobierno	Government
9	País	Country
10	Venezolano/a (s)	Venezuelan(s)

¹³ To calculate these findings I used the data in Appendix 7, taking into account the first year of every phase to illustrate the number of words per episode.

3.3.2 Polarisation pillar

A Manichaeian discourse permeated Chávez's politics, as he often presented issues in terms of the antagonistic forces of good and evil, with *el pueblo* symbolizing the ultimate good, and the opposition (including political parties, the business sector, as well as Western nations such as the United States) as bad or evil. As Hawkins (2010:61) highlighted, "Chávez talks frequently about 'enemies', 'the oligarchy', 'the nightmare of world capitalism', and 'savage neoliberalism', but almost never simply the 'opposition' or 'those who disagree with us'". Chávez demonises the "other camp" by calling them the Devil, never dignifying his opponents by referring to them by name. Thus, the polarisation pillar aims to conceptualise this vital "us vs. them" axis present in Chávez's discourse through the thirteen words shown in Table 2. Words relating to the "enemy" are: enemy, oligarchy, the United States, empire, capitalism, neoliberal, the past, and devil. Words like fear, misery, threat, and war are what Hawkins (2010) described as bellicose language relating to war. Ultimately, these words served the same function, reinforcing antagonism between supporters of the revolution and those who opposed it.

Table 2: Polarisation keywords

	Spanish terms	English terms
1	Pasado	Past
2	Enemigo(s)	Enemy (ies)
3	Guerra	War
4	Oligarquía	Oligarchy
5	Estados unidos	The United States
6	Amenaza	Threat
7	Miseria	Misery
8	Miedo	Fear
9	Imperio	Empire
10	Capitalismo	Capitalism
11	La verdad	The truth
12	Neoliberal	Neoliberal
13	Diablo	Devil

3.3.3 Revolution pillar

The categorisation of the revolution pillar comprises of eleven words, illustrated in Table 3. Each word chosen here adheres to the embodiment of Chávez's on-going Revolution, as he relied on his discourse to expand abstract ideas. In this pillar, words such as: Bolivarian, fatherland, military, and Simón Bolívar conceptualise nationalism and the Bolivarian Revolution, whereas, words like socialism, socialist, battle, and missions represent the radicalization of Chávez's ideology towards a twenty-first century socialist revolution. As his political movement lacked ideological clarity these words reflect common references in Chávez's discourse that propelled and legitimised his ideological project and agenda.

Table 3: Revolution keywords

	Spanish terms	English terms
1	Militar	Soldier
2	Mision(es)	Mission (Social programmes)
3	Revolucion	Revolution
4	Cuba	Cuba
5	Socialismo	Socialism
6	Socialista(s)	Socialist(s)
7	Clase	Class
8	Bolivariana/o(s)	Bolivarian(s)
9	Batalla(s)	Battle(s)
10	Patria	Fatherland
11	Simón Bolívar	Simón Bolívar

4. Results & Discussion

In this section, I will present, discuss and interpret the findings. I will begin by answering the two research questions separately, whilst testing my hypotheses throughout.

(1) Did the discourse of Hugo Chávez follow the traditional patterns of populist discourse?

(2) How did Chávez's discourse evolve throughout his presidency?

4.1 Did the discourse of Hugo Chávez follow the traditional patterns of populist discourse?

4.1.1 Personalism pillar

Table 4 summarises the findings for the frequency of the personalism pillar in Chávez's discourse. Throughout the years, Chávez's discourse employed words from the personalism pillar for an average of 1.98%. Thus, on average, 716 words mentioned in an episode came from this pillar. One possible reason for the high frequency could be because of the inclusion of personal pronouns like me, we and us, which are used frequently in discourse. Nonetheless, I am able to deduce that this pillar does exist in Chávez's discourse, fulfilling the first criterion of Laclau's theory of populist discourse.

Table 4: Personalism

Year	Frequency of pillar	Average words per episode
1999	2.29%	829
2000	2.10%	791
2001	1.88%	678
2002	2.12%	791
2003	1.99%	716
2004	2.04%	753
2006	1.91%	716
2007	1.86%	678
2008	2.00%	753
2010	1.91%	716

2011	1.86%	678
2012	2.00%	753
Average	1.98%	716

4.1.2 Polarisation pillar

The establishment of the polarisation pillar reflects Laclau's second criterion of populist discourse, which requires an "us vs. them" axis. As shown by the findings in Table 5, the polarisation pillar has an average frequency of 0.19% in Chávez's discourse throughout his presidency. Therefore, on average 37 words in an episode pertain to this pillar. Although the frequency of this pillar is the lowest out of the three, it is still deemed existent by virtue of the frequency not being zero. Thus, Laclau's second criterion of populist discourse is fulfilled, as Chávez's discourse proves to utilise the antagonistic words represented by this pillar.

Table 5: Polarisation

Year	Frequency of pillar	Average words per episode
1999	0.14%	37
2000	0.13%	37
2001	0.13%	37
2002	0.16%	37
2003	0.15%	37
2004	0.30%	113
2006	0.22%	75
2007	0.24%	75
2008	0.24%	75
2010	0.24%	75
2011	0.15%	37
2012	0.13%	37
Average	0.19%	37

4.1.3 Revolution Pillar

While the use of nationalism and national heroes has been associated with populism (Brading, 2013:150), the particular revolutionary discourse of Chávez surpasses any traditional patterns of populist discourse as established by Laclau's criteria. The average frequency of the revolution pillar in Chávez's discourse is 1.61%, as depicted in Table 6. The prominence of this discourse is clarified by acknowledging that, on average, 603 words in an episode pertain to this pillar. Therefore I am able to assert that it not only exists but that the findings emphasise how it also gains momentum throughout his presidency. In continuation I will provide a deeper analysis of the evolution of Chávez's discourse and discuss its implications and intentionality.

Table 6: Revolution

Year	Frequency of pillar	Average words per episode
1999	0.85%	301
2000	0.85%	301
2001	1.35%	489
2002	1.50%	565
2003	1.63%	603
2004	1.77%	640
2006	1.56%	565
2007	1.87%	678
2008	2.44%	904
2010	1.53%	565
2011	1.77%	640
2012	2.24%	829
Average	1.61%	603

4.2 How did Chávez's discourse evolve throughout his presidency?

With the aim of discussing the evolution of Chávez's discourse throughout the four phases of his Bolivarian Project, I have quantified the evidence, tabulating the findings and showing their intentionality in qualitative form through the

support of quotes. I will analyse the evolution of each pillar separately, testing the hypotheses to further validate their implications as highlighted in the theory section 2.

4.2.1 Overview of Chávez's evolution of discourse by pillar

In order to illustrate clearly the evolution of discourse across the four phases, I grouped the years of each phase together and calculated the average frequency of each phase in order to be able to make a comparison. The average frequency of each phase was calculated using the formula for the frequency of a pillar illustrated in the methodology section 3.2.1. Consequently, after adding the annual frequencies of the pillar in the corresponding phase, I then divided the result by the number of years in that phase. Then, using a ranked list from 1 to 4, with 4 signifying the phase with the highest frequency average, I was able to formulate a simplified table, as shown below, in order to visually illustrate the modulation of each pillar over time.

Table 7: Evolution of discourse

	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
Personalism	4	3	2	1
Polarisation	1	3	4	2
Revolution	1	2	4	3

4.2.2 Personalism pillar: identification with *el pueblo*

The personalism pillar aimed to conceptualise a common attribute of populist discourse including frequent references to *el pueblo* and the sense of community it evokes. The findings in Table 8 and Figure 3 confirmed its presence and consequently reaffirmed the second hypothesis, which argues that this pillar will remain stable over time, with no meaningful change in frequency. If I compare phase I to phase IV, which represent the phases with the highest and lowest frequencies of 2.12% (791 average words per episode) and 1.92% (678 average words per episode), respectively, there is a 14.2% decrease in frequency (i.e. 113

words). However, Figure 3 highlights the systematic occurrence of this pillar in Chávez's discourse as proved by the high average of words per episode throughout the four phases, discrediting the decrease in frequency over time as a meaningful change in frequency. Furthermore, as mentioned in section 3.2.2, even though the referencing to the personalism pillar remained considerably consistent over time, the length of his episodes on Aló Presidente increased greatly, which served as another mechanism to extend his appeal to *el pueblo* and enhance his personalism and populist tendencies.

Table 8: Personalism

Phases	Year	Frequency of pillar	Average	Average words per episode
Phase I	1999	2.29%	2.12%	791
	2000	2.10%		
Phase II	2001	1.88%	2.01%	753
	2002	2.12%		
	2003	1.99%		
	2004	2.04%		
Phase III	2006	1.91%	1.92%	716
	2007	1.86%		
	2008	2.00%		
Phase IV	2010	1.91%	1.87%	678
	2011	1.86%		
	2012	2.00%		

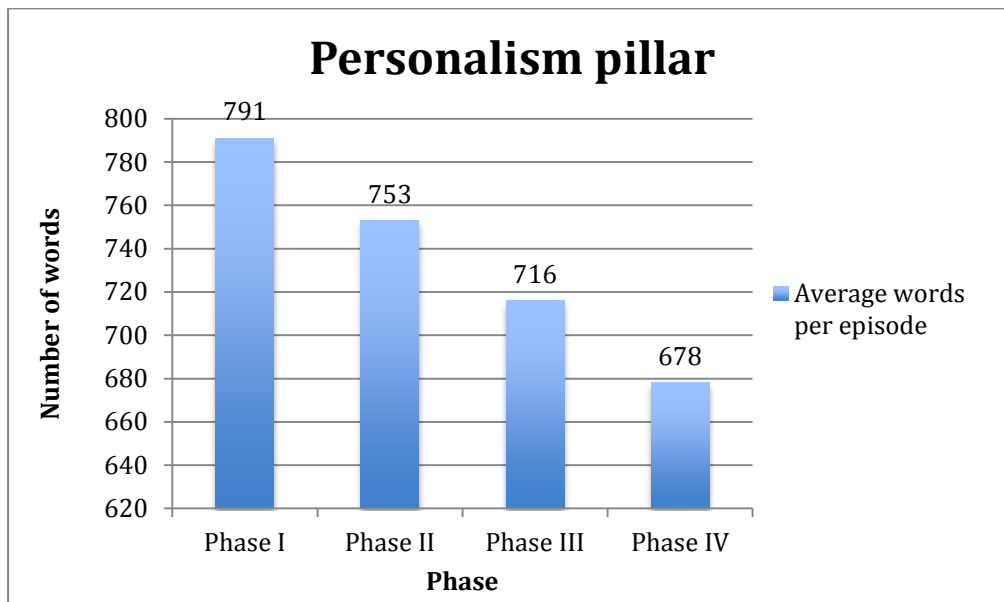


Figure 1

Thus, this pillar demonstrates how Chávez established an inclusive discourse that invited the lowest sectors to be active members of society and members of the revolution (Aponte, 2008). Given the past incumbents' neglect for the lower classes, Chávez gave a new voice to the sectors that had been excluded from the democratic process. For example, in a speech made on the day of the 2002 coup d'état, Chávez said:

“Venezuela belongs to all and everyday it will belong more to all and for all of us,” and “[one fatherland] for all, beautiful for all” (Aponte, 2008:6).

Similarly in a speech made in 2011, Chávez continued to give a voice to sectors that felt alienated:

“(The people and middle class, popular sectors), as a whole! as a whole! We must unite, together! Reunify, and not let them divide us, to place ‘the people’ against the people, or the people against the middle class. No, no, no! Nobody fall for their little game to divide us, we will strengthen the union” (Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information, AP369¹⁴, 2011:51).

¹⁴ “AP” meaning Aló Presidente and the subsequent number denoting the episode.

These extracts highlight the inclusive nature of the personalism pillar, which exists since the beginning of his presidency in phase I until the end in phase IV. Moreover, in a speech given one hundred days after he took office in 1999, Chávez discussed the challenges that his government had assumed:

“We have come here, we have assumed this immense task, difficult task, hard task, but beautiful task, of rescuing the fatherland, our fatherland, the fatherland of all” (Ibid: 7).

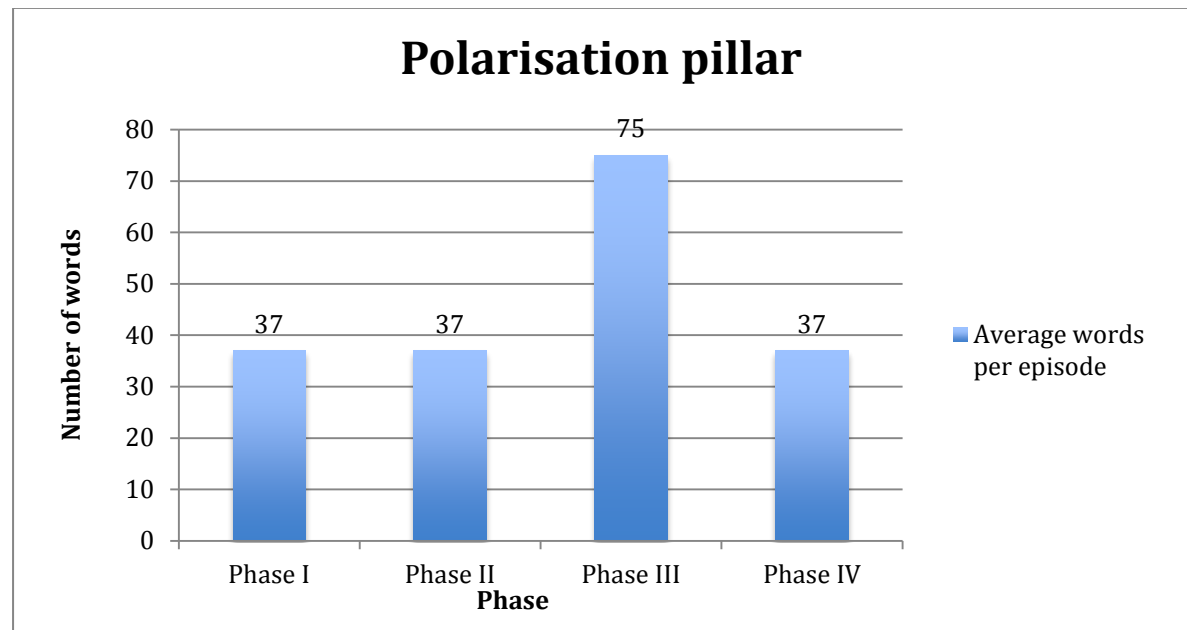
As Fløttum et al. (2006) argued, the use of “we” in a discourse creates a sense of togetherness and blurs the speaker-listener divide, and this community promotes agreement. Thus, this pillar remains prominent in Chávez’s discourse throughout the four phases and was used to reinforce his image as emerging from *el pueblo* and how he would return power to them, replacing the elitist incumbents who had neglected them. Reaffirming with Chávez’s commonly used phrase that “with Chávez the people rule” (Roberts, 2000:14).

4.2.3 Polarisation pillar: antagonism and polarisation of the nation

The findings, which are tabulated in Table 9 and Figure 4 below, highlight how a Manichaeian discourse is present throughout the four phases of Chávez’s presidency. As illustrated in Table 9, there is a systematic increase in the frequency of each phase, validating my third hypothesis. Furthermore, Figure 4 highlights that throughout phases I, II and IV, 37 words in an episode would come from this pillar. Phase III however, has the highest frequency, with the average words per episode increasing substantially by 103%, meaning that in phase III 75 words in an episode were now from this pillar. Moreover, given the systematic increase in frequency from phases I to III and taking Chávez’s illness into consideration, I do not regard the decrease in frequency from phase III to phase IV to be meaningful enough to disprove my third hypothesis.

Table 9: Polarisation

Phases	Year	Frequency of pillar	Average	Average words per episode
Phase I	1999	0.14%	0.14%	37
	2000	0.13%		
Phase II	2001	0.13%	0.18%	37
	2002	0.16%		
	2003	0.15%		
	2004	0.30%		
Phase III	2006	0.22%	0.23%	75
	2007	0.24%		
	2008	0.24%		
Phase IV	2010	0.24%	0.17%	37
	2011	0.15%		
	2012	0.13%		

**Figure 2**

During phase III Chávez consolidated power once again, overcoming the opposition's coup d'état and the general strike, as well as winning a third presidential election in 2006. Consequently, Chávez reacted forcefully to these developments, hardening his already polarised discourse in phase III to coincide

with his radicalisation and his new advancement towards twenty-first century socialism. Moreover, by analysing the evolution of the polarisation pillar, I am able to acknowledge how Chávez continued to fill his language with competing terms, employing a strategy of division in his discourse to perpetuate a polarised society between the revolutionary forces in Venezuela and the opposition.

According to Chávez, the revolution marked a historical break from Venezuela's past. By extracting quotes from his discourse, I am able to elucidate how Chávez retrospectively portrayed the time period before the revolution as having lacked revolutionary values. Through a frame of division, Chávez utilized words from the polarisation pillar associated with past incumbents and free market tendencies to represent what the revolution stood against. For instance, in an episode in 2011, Chávez said:

"That's one of the things that has to differentiate itself more each day, the old history, Capitalism, the Fourth Republic, the Pact of Punto Fijo and the revolutionary politics, the politics of a Socialist government. A government of the people!" (Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information, AP369, 2011:11).

Chávez's word associations concerning the language he used to describe the competing systems made the poorest sector of society see Chávez as the only viable option. Chávez implemented Manichaeian elements within his discourse to illustrate apparent differences between the two systems, allocating for Venezuelan identification with the revolution and Venezuelan division with a vile view of the opposition. Another example can be seen in an extract taken from the same episode in 2011,

"Meanwhile our adversaries are bombarding us everyday. It is the battle for the minds, creating anxiety. Mostly trying to persuade Venezuelans, that is the every day work of the oligarchy, of capitalism, of great global capital and its national expression, the stateless bourgeoisie. They will always be trying to generate shadows in the minds of Venezuelans, darkness, and fear for the

present and fear for the future. Fear for the future!" (Ibid, AP373, 2011:8).

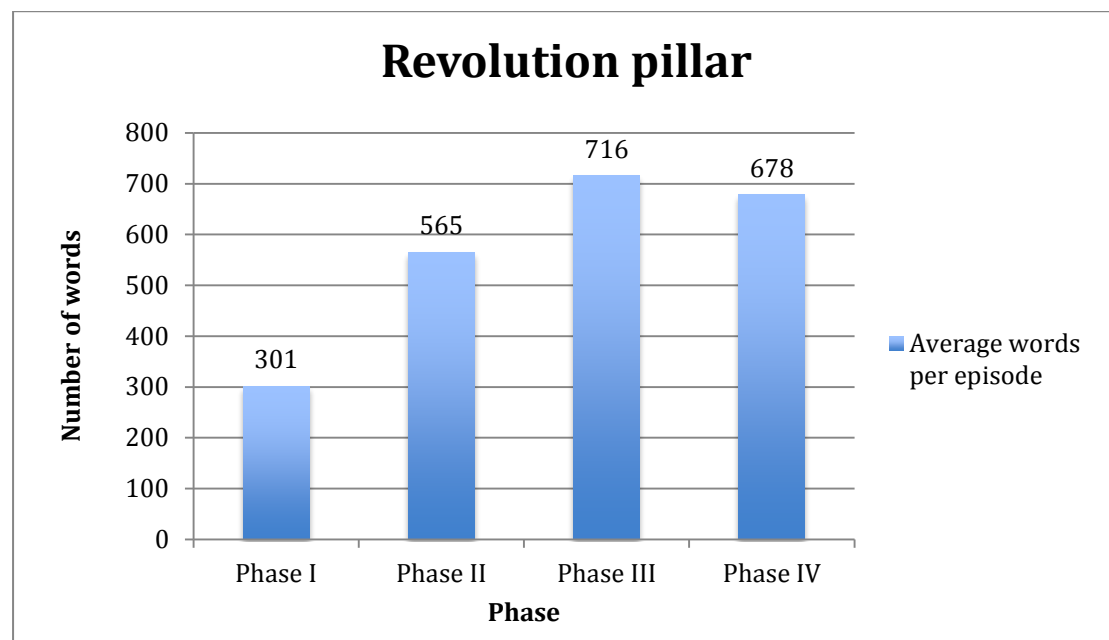
A reliance on antagonistic terms helps to prevent social dichotomies from dissipating. In order for Chávez to maintain his understanding of Venezuelan identity, he had as his primary goal to safeguard the antagonistic relationship between his Bolivarian Revolution and his enemies. As Brading (2013:148) argued, "if Chávez and his political project stop reminding the people that the 'enemy' is accountable for all evils in Venezuela's society, the Bolivarian project would collapse". As a result, Chávez based Venezuelan identification on a hostile division, whereby perpetuating that partition was an essential application of his discourse.

4.2.4 Revolution pillar: deepening his revolutionary agenda

The evolution of the revolution pillar, illustrated in Table 10 and Figure 5, shows the breakdown of frequency throughout the four phases, highlighting a substantial increase over time. In phase I, the frequency is the lowest at 0.85% signifying that 301 words in an episode were from this pillar. By contrast in phase III this rose considerably to 716 words with a frequency of 1.96%. Thus, the average words per episode rose by 138% from phase I to phase III, reaffirming hypothesis 4, that the revolution pillar would increase over time, which I argue signals the radicalisation of Chávez's discourse. Moreover, phase III has the highest frequency, as opposed to phase IV, with a percentage decrease in words per episode of 5.3% (i.e 38 words). However, given the substantial change in frequency from phase I and taking Chávez's illness into consideration, the decrease is only minor and not enough to disprove the hypothesis.

Table 10: Revolution

Phases	Year	Frequency of pillar	Average	Average words per episode
Phase I	1999	0.85%	0.85%	301
	2000	0.85%		
Phase II	2001	1.35%	1.56%	565
	2002	1.50%		
	2003	1.63%		
	2004	1.77%		
Phase III	2006	1.56%	1.96%	716
	2007	1.87%		
	2008	2.44%		
Phase IV	2010	1.53%	1.85%	678
	2011	1.77%		
	2012	2.24%		

**Figure 3**

Overall, the radicalisation of Chávez's discourse over time coincides with the fact that with the passing of each phase, after each confrontation, Chávez emerged

stronger and more consolidated, and his hold over power more secure. Whether it involved confrontations with the opposition, or winning an election, Chávez's grasp over power grew more secure after each battle (Wilpert, 2007; Hawkins, 2010). Thus, in order to substantiate my fourth hypothesis I will examine this phenomenon, by analysing the two sub-divisions of the revolution pillar separately, using quotes to illustrate my argument.

i. **Bolivarian Revolution**

This first division, the Bolivarian Revolution, aims to show the initial construction of Chávez's national revolution whereby he unabatedly utilised the symbol of a national hero, Simón Bolívar, to legitimise his political trajectory (Mixon, 2009). Through analysing the evolution of the revolution pillar the findings¹⁵ show that references to Simón Bolívar, Revolution, and Bolivarian for example, are constant throughout the four phases. This is to be expected, as Chávez consistently emphasized systematic change and the concept of revolution whilst utilising the symbol of Bolívar for the construction and legitimation of his political-ideological project. In 2006, Chávez said:

"I want to remember Simón Bolívar, the father of the Nation, the father of our country, that Father of the Revolution" (Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information, AP255, 2006).

The above quote illustrates how Chávez framed his revolution, depicting a scenario whereby opposition to his policies or projects meant that you were against the ideals of Bolívar. As Blanco (2002: 96) argued, "the cult of Bolívar in Venezuela served as an instrument to reduce diversity, to unite the opinion of the different sectors and the justification of the verbal punishment, of the dissidents of the revolutionary project". Similarly, Chumaceiro (2003) highlighted how Chávez's excessive references to Bolívar and Bolivarian in his discourse have two main functions: the first is to legitimise his policies, and the second is to help delegitimise his opponents. Thus, the reiteration of these words

¹⁵ Refer to Appendices 5 and 6.

served as an instrument to unite Chávez's followers around a lucid political project that was the Bolivarian Revolution (Ibid).

ii. **Twenty-first Century Socialism**

By contrast, the second division aims to highlight the change in Chávez's strategy as his agenda became more radical with the introduction of twenty-first century socialism, crystallising a revolutionary break with the past. As illustrated in Table 10, in phase I Chávez's discourse employs the revolution pillar for a total frequency of 0.85%, increasing to 1.56% in phase II. During this time Chávez pressed ahead with radical reforms to the economy and the political system, prompting two opposition general strikes, that of April 2002, culminating in the failed coup attempt, and another from December 2002 to February 2003, mainly led by workers of the national oil company, PDVSA (Ellner, 2008). Thus, the opposition's hard line caused Chávez to shut the door to compromise propelling the radicalization of his discourse as he made more references to ideology and nationalism in order to strengthen his ideals and further radicalise his revolution. For instance in an episode of *Aló Presidente* in 2004, Chávez said:

“So in two years how much has changed, a strengthened Navy, a strengthened PDVSA, which were weaknesses that we had, one must see the weaknesses of a country where a military elite is committed to the enemies of the Fatherland, or a good part of the military elite at that time; or to the technocratic or oil elite, that has changed radically, and the Venezuelan people have increased their level of awareness and battle because we have been testing our strength throughout the battle. Battle and victory, battle and victory, battle and victory. And new victories will come, new battles and new victories” (Venezuelan Ministry for Popular Power in Communication and Information, AP188, 2004:73).

Through these statements, Chávez indicated to his followers that, in addition to radical institutional transformation, other battles lay on the horizon, implying that thoroughgoing economic change was on his agenda. Consequently, as Chávez introduced his radical twenty-first century socialism, the revolution

pillar increased in frequency in phases III and IV to 1.96% and 1.85% accordingly. Taking a closer look into the word frequencies for the revolution pillar¹⁶ shows that phase III sees the beginning of new terms such as socialism and socialist, which were only mentioned in phases I and II a total of eleven and twelve times, respectively. This is illustrated in one of Chávez's speeches made after being re-elected on December 2006, steeping in the language of reform and radicalization he declared:

"The new era will begin today as an idea, central force, basic, fundamental strategic line, deepening, extension and expansion of the Bolivarian Revolution, of the democratic revolution in Venezuelan life towards socialism" (Aponte, 2008:4).

Chávez's discourse bluntly depicts the radical changes that he was making with twenty-first century socialism. This dramatic and late shift to socialism signified a shift in ideology and discourse as the findings in Table 10 and Figure 5 reveal. Thus, although the first subdivision, Bolivarian Revolution, was always present in Chávez's discourse, his revolutionary discourse expanded to accompany the new socialist language and goals that Chávez adopted after 2004. In this way this pillar highlights how Chávez relied on his revolutionary discourse to expand abstract ideas as his political movement lacked ideological clarity (Ellner, 2005). Similarly, it also served to legitimise his revolution to his most ardent supporters, as "this discourse is a token of his sincerity and a manifestation of his beliefs" (Hawkins, 2010:46).

4.3 Final remarks

Initially, when evaluating the first research question, Hugo Chávez's populist discourse was confirmed, as shown by the findings in section 4.1, validating the first hypothesis that three main components of populist discourse would appear in Chávez's discourse. However, the presence of a third corollary element, revolution, in section 4.1.3, signalled the deviation of Chávez's discourse from the standards of traditional populist discourse, as it does not adhere to Laclau's

¹⁶ Refer to Appendices 5 and 6.

two criteria. As a result, the first research question: *Did the discourse of Hugo Chávez follow the traditional patterns of populist discourse?* was negated.

Alternatively, through the evaluation of the second research question in section 4.2, I was able to test my other hypotheses. The second hypothesis, argued that the personalism pillar would remain stable over time. The findings in 3.1.2 and 4.2.1 reinforce this assertion, highlighting a key element of populist discourse. Moreover, the third hypothesis that the polarisation would increase over time was validated as illustrated in section 4.2.2, with the frequency of the polarisation pillar increasing systematically through phases I and III. Finally, in section 4.2.3 the fourth hypothesis was also validated, asserting that the revolution pillar would increase over time. The increase of the revolutionary component of Chávez's discourse illustrated the radicalisation of Chávez's discourse throughout his presidency further clarified through the evolution of the two subdivisions of the revolution pillar. As expected, the first subdivision, the Bolivarian Revolution, was present throughout the four phases with no substantial increase. This illustrates how Chávez continually exploited the figure of Simón Bolívar, the national hero, to glorify and give resonance to his revolutionary agenda depicting himself as the successor of Bolívar's unfinished work. On the contrary, the second subdivision, twenty-first century socialism, emerged in the third phase, with the stark increase in references to words like socialist and socialism, which highlights the drastic radicalisation of Chávez's discourse that coincided with the deepening of his revolutionary vision.

5. Conclusion

This study has established the discursive elements of Hugo Chávez's populist discourse and their evolution throughout his presidency. After explaining the meaning of populism as a worldview or discourse, I evaluated Laclau's discursive theory of populism in order to establish the traditional patterns of populist discourse. In doing so I identified two criteria, which served as the first two discursive elements in Chávez's discourse: personalism and polarisation. However Hawkins' (2010) findings allowed me to recognise one corollary element in Chávez's discourse: revolution, i.e. the systematic need for change. Deviating from the traditional patterns of populist discourse, this pillar served to illustrate the radicalisation in Chávez's discourse. In this way I constructed "three pillars of populist discourse" which provided the methodological framework for the detailed analysis of Chávez's discourse representing and describing Chávez's discursive strategy. The analysis was anchored through a combination of both a dictionary quantitative approach and a qualitative interpretation of Chávez's discourse in his television programme, *Aló Presidente*. The analysis covers a twelve-year period of Chávez's presidency divided into four phases, depicting a transition characterised by steady escalation of conflict, polarisation and radicalization.

Using my methodological model to analyse the composition and evolution of Chávez's discourse, the findings reaffirmed Chávez's populist discourse throughout his presidency. However, the findings also supported the presence of a third corollary element, revolution, which served to refute the first research question, contending that Chávez does not follow traditional patterns of populist discourse. Consequently, the first hypothesis was validated, as the findings revealed the presence of three main pillars of populist discourse in Chávez's discourse. Alternatively, the second research question was answered through the validation of the remaining hypotheses proving that Chávez's personalism pillar remained stable, while the polarisation and revolution pillar increased over time. The findings highlighted the meaningful modulation in the revolution pillar, through the stark increase in Chávez's revolutionary discourse as conceptualised with constant references of nationalism and ideology. This

served to reflect the radicalisation of his Bolivarian Revolution and consequently his discourse. Although Chávez was renowned for many as a twenty-first century socialist, this study has demonstrated that his revolutionary agenda and discourse changed throughout his political trajectory as he intensified his Bolivarian project. Thus the findings have extended knowledge of the area by addressing the radicalisation of Chávez's discourse. Moreover, several analyses of Chávez's discourse (Aponte, 2008; Mixon, 2009; Smith, 2010; Gámez, 2013) employ critical discourse analysis in order to examine his discourse in depth and to recognise the role of language in structuring power relations in society. However, the claim of this study is not to invalidate those findings but to add a different quantitative dimension, which, used in conjunction with those qualitative studies, might give an interesting sense of the evolution of his discourse across the four phases of his presidency.

Taken together, all three pillars of Chávez's populist discourse were able to support the establishment of his revolution. The personalism pillar aimed to identify with *el pueblo* through his constant praise of and identification with marginalised peoples, helping Chávez sustain his influence via personal appeals. The polarisation pillar reinforced the vital "us vs. them" axis by employing antagonistic terms, which seek to remind the popular mass that the opposition is the enemy. This reinforces the importance of the Bolivarian Revolution to *el pueblo* and makes the emotional link between him and the masses more difficult to replace. By contrast, the revolution pillar used the symbol of Bolívar to advance and legitimise his revolution as well as his socialist ideology to help expand abstract ideas as his political movement lacked ideological clarity. Through their employment, Chávez was able to propel his Bolivarian Revolution and distance himself from previous governments, which helped to consolidate his power over time.

This study has analysed the making and evolution of Chávez's populist discourse. The findings support the claim that Chávez's discourse was populist throughout his presidency, contributing to knowledge in the field. Moreover, the study has highlighted that although many scholars are now familiar with Chávez's radical leftism, many may be less aware of the early ideological content of his discourse

and its radicalisation over time. Thus, in an attempt to overcome this deficit in the literature, I have tried to prove the radicalisation of Chávez's discourse over time. However, further work and methods are needed for research to examine why Chávez retained his populist discourse and why it radicalised over time despite becoming part of the establishment and consolidating political control.

Although this study is limited to Hugo Chávez's remarkable rise and consolidation of power, the implications extend far beyond Venezuela. Chávez was an exemplar of charismatic legitimacy; emerging as a political outsider and radical military man with no political connections. His charismatic leadership then, goes a long way towards explaining leader's political radicalism. Chávez vowed to eradicate Venezuela's old order and initiate the Bolivarian Revolution, consequently leading the country to twenty-first century socialism. His charisma and ideas were fundamental for him to gain control of the presidency and the main political institutions, eroding the autonomy of checks and balances. Moreover, Chávez's personalised charismatic leadership highlights how a significant group of Venezuelan people had, in effect, stated their preference for authoritarian leadership over democracy. This group of supporters had more faith in Chávez as a leader than in their own ability to rationally select other competent alternatives. Thus, Chávez's case study highlights the implications of charismatic leadership, whilst his ascent to power and popularity are certainly a testament to the power of language.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Tables

Appendix 1

Personalism word frequency	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Me	2796	2787	2191	2645	2279	2659
We	702	587	600	670	654	789
The people	719	557	912	902	927	1004
Compatriot(s)	77	59	23	29	70	96
Comrade(s)	4	3	28	12	8	18
Brother(s)	378	125	193	172	199	178
You (plural)	671	371	511	533	690	1021
Government	259	311	344	450	455	431
Country	629	653	520	632	670	572
Venezuelan(s)	623	423	442	689	574	709
Total frequency	6858	5876	5764	6734	6526	7477
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.0229 4221	0.02104 5016	0.01879 4958	0.02115 4879	0.01988 3975	0.02038 5517

Appendix 2

Personalism word frequency	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012
Me	2879	1529	3161	3472	2226	914
We	1090	588	1095	1193	572	279
The people	1194	476	935	1035	681	207
Compatriot(s)	37	17	41	24	29	28
Comrade(s)	38	33	153	283	122	49
Brother(s)	295	106	107	116	34	13
You (plural)	971	518	1200	1026	601	196
Government	493	177	462	462	279	104
Country	579	369	357	451	160	176
Venezuelan(s)	488	301	390	393	239	122
Total frequency	8064	4114	7901	8455	4943	2088
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.01913 7666	0.01856 8501	0.01997 1285	0.02030 8946	0.0195 2605	0.01631 4157

Appendix 3

Polarisation word frequency	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Past	123	100	129	124	117	115
Enemy (ies)	10	7	2	24	15	31
War	67	60	53	105	77	149
Oligarchy	2	2	23	11	28	61
The United States	52	42	47	74	41	145
Threat	16	14	17	25	18	26
Misery	25	14	14	10	11	7
Fear	5	21	7	15	20	26
Empire	6	4	2	3	8	39
Capitalism	6	0	2	14	9	11
The truth	46	65	46	82	68	89
Neoliberal	27	14	6	24	39	51
Devil	30	22	37	10	47	353
Total frequency	415	365	385	521	498	1103
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.00138 8308	0.00130 7255	0.00125 5388	0.00163 6723	0.00151 7349	0.00300 7252

Appendix 4

Polarisation word frequency	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012
Past	119	59	103	75	60	34
Enemy (ies)	23	13	20	51	11	3
War	142	73	190	150	60	30
Oligarchy	44	20	72	41	6	5
The United States	210	120	93	109	30	13
Threat	49	38	22	47	17	8
Misery	35	27	61	32	20	16
Fear	30	8	22	36	12	3
Empire	110	66	104	89	39	18
Capitalism	85	64	141	289	79	23
The truth	46	24	41	41	27	4
Neoliberal	28	5	21	10	3	5
Devil	11	6	74	19	20	1
Total frequency	932	523	964	989	384	163
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.00221 1843	0.00236 0556	0.00243 6694	0.00237 5582	0.00151 6893	0.00127 3567

Appendix 5

Revolution word frequency	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Soldier	238	254	265	354	228	299
Mission (Social programmes)	136	115	77	206	358	548
Revolution	191	197	492	529	364	403
Cuba	26	46	100	77	307	262
Socialism	2	0	4	4	0	1
Socialist(s)	1	1	1	4	2	3
Class	81	104	68	108	230	150
Bolivarian(s)	120	131	494	490	375	361
Battle(s)	55	67	88	59	126	377
Homeland	156	33	79	99	167	219
Simón Bolívar	31	20	24	33	30	46
Total frequency	1037	968	1692	1963	2187	2669
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.00346 9098	0.00346 6912	0.00551 7187	0.0061 6677	0.00666 3539	0.00727 6842

Appendix 6

Revolution word frequency	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012
Soldier	254	105	188	258	177	38
Mission (Social programmes)	590	224	768	153	286	323
Revolution	485	343	607	579	338	191
Cuba	303	103	246	183	58	72
Socialism	144	190	255	196	54	52
Socialist(s)	54	251	979	299	273	251
Class	100	44	43	150	63	8
Bolivarian(s)	365	141	225	264	361	120
Battle(s)	114	65	344	208	47	37
Homeland	207	109	265	256	153	65
Simón Bolívar	84	121	34	70	29	21
Total frequency	2700	1696	3954	2616	1839	1178
Percentage out of the transcripts for that year	0.00640 7701	0.0076 5488	0.0099 9449	0.00628 3643	0.00726 4496	0.0092 0406

Appendix 7: Transcripts

Year	Number of transcripts	Word count subtotal	Average¹⁷
1999	15	298925	19928
2000	10	279211	27921
2001	9	306678	34075
2002	9	318319	35368
2003	9	328204	36467
2004	9	366780	40753
2006	9	421368	46818
2007	9	221558	24617
2008	9	395618	43957
2010	9	416319	46257
2011	7	253149	36164
2012	3	127987	42662
Total	107	4033070	
	Average	37692.24299	

¹⁷ The average was calculated by dividing the subtotal into the number of transcripts for that year.

7.2 Primary source material

*I have randomly selected four episodes of *Aló Presidente*, one from each phase of Chávez's Presidency, in order to illustrate the content and nature of his speeches. However, given their extensive length, ranging from 20 pages in 1999 to 90 pages in 2012, I will solely illustrate excerpts from the episodes.¹⁸*

ALÓ PRESIDENTE Nº 2

Sede de Radio Nacional de Venezuela, Caracas

Domingo, 6 de junio de 1999

Presidente de la República de Venezuela, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías:

Tomando café. Me acaban de regalar un café en Radio Nacional de Venezuela y brindo por Venezuela, hoy 6 de junio, Día de la Radiodifusión Venezolana. ¿Tú eres radiodifusor? Juan Barreto, ¿cómo es que los llaman a ustedes? El dúo dinámico. ¡No quiero más gordos! Bueno...buenos días a todo el pueblo venezolano. Saludos a todos los radiodifusores de Venezuela y el reconocimiento primero, a la labor que siempre han cumplido; labor que a veces nos lleva al sacrificio, situaciones difíciles, y que influye tanto esa labor -en lo que acontece a diarios en Venezuela- [como a] la generación de la opinión pública. Así que vayan nuestros saludos a todos los radiodifusores y, especialmente, un llamado, como lo hacíamos, y el llamado lo hago ahora a nombre de Venezuela, a nombre de la esperanza nacional, de ese sentimiento nacional. Hago un llamado a los radiodifusores, a los dueños de medios de radiodifusión; a los dueños de los medios de comunicación social, de la prensa escrita; a los dueños de estaciones de televisión; El Nacional, Miguel Henrique Otero; El Universal, el señor Andrés Mata; Últimas Noticias, señor Capriles, y así por el estilo, a todos ustedes, al Canal 2, Granier, Marcel Granier, un llamado a todos ustedes, Canal 4: Cisneros; Canal 10, Televen, Camero, a todos los que tienen poder de decisión sobre lo que sale en la prensa, sobre lo que se transmite por radio y televisión yo les hago un llamado especialmente sabiendo, como sabemos, y aquí lo refleja hoy una encuesta publicada por el diario El Nacional de Consultores 21: el Gobierno y la Constituyente tienen 80% de aceptación. Pero preocupa que hay una importante cantidad de venezolanos, según esta encuesta y uno lo palpa en la calle (porque yo ando en la calle también haciendo encuestas sobre la marcha -otro tipo de encuestas; no son encuestas científicas, pero son encuestas hechas por el instinto y el contacto cara a cara con la gente por todas partes), pues hay muchas personas, muchos venezolanos, muchos de ustedes que no tienen claro, pero completamente claro, (deben tener completamente claro, sin ninguna duda, como cuando uno va a presentar un examen de alguna materia en el cual se estaba jugando el grado, el título de bachiller, el título de licenciado, de doctor, lo que fuere); tiene que estar completamente claro todo el mundo de qué se trata la Asamblea Constituyente, cuáles son las bases para la elección de

¹⁸ Primary source material (i.e. transcripts) is in Spanish although full translations can be provided where necessary.

la Asamblea Constituyente y qué es lo que tiene que hacer todos los días, desde aquí hasta el 25 de julio. Vamos a dedicarle ese día a Bolívar que cumple años el 24 y nació a la media noche del 24 para amanecer el 25. No puede haber ningún venezolano que no sepa con claridad, Juan Barreto, con claridad hermano, qué es lo que pasa con la Constituyente. Entonces, por eso yo hago un llamado a los dueños de los medios de comunicación, ¡dedíquenle una página sin cobrarle a nadie!, una página gratuita, ¡regálensela al pueblo! Una página en el diario El Nacional, todos los días. Una página en el diario El Universal, todos los días, una página en todos los diarios de la Cadena Carriles, y de todos los periódicos de todo el país; una página gratis informando; no lo mismo todos los días, no; informando todos los días, (ustedes saben de eso), cuál es el proceso y las bases comiciales y haciendo un llamado a que no se quede nadie sin ir a votar. Igual a la televisión, que regalen un espacio, media hora diaria; a la radio, programas y programas para informarle a la gente; una gran escuela. Venezuela debe ser una gran escuela donde todos aprendamos muchas cosas; pero, en este caso, me refiero a la Asamblea Constituyente originaria, a la Asamblea Constituyente popular para transformar el país para la revolución pacífica que vamos a elegir, por primera vez en la historia, vamos a elegir una Constituyente de esta magnitud, así que con ese comentario comienzo este nuestro Segundo programa, después de que el domingo pasado -como ustedes saben- no estuve, no pudo venir acá porque estábamos en Ciudad México, culminando con la Cumbre del Grupo de Río y esta semana hemos tenido una actividad muy intensiva, especialmente con el Proyecto Bolívar 2000. Pero bueno, aquí estamos para oír a nuestro pueblo, para oírlos a ustedes, y pues yo voy a dar ahora por concluido este comentario inicial, este llamado a todos, con este saludo a todos, con esta fe de todos. Allá a la entrada había mucha gente, una muchacha muy joven llorando que no le tienen respuesta a su problema educativo, una niña pidiendo por su padre que está desempleado, una anciana pidiendo la pensión, yo ando llorando y ardiendo por dentro con el dolor del pueblo venezolano. Ayer en Puerto Cabello, igual: no hay poderes locales que atiendan a las necesidades de los pueblos, no hay viviendas; se caen las viviendas de los pobres; los ríos invaden los sembradíos de los pobres campesinos; las escuelas se caen. El Proyecto Bolívar 2000, con las Fuerzas Armadas y las comunidades y el Gobierno nacional y algunos gobiernos locales que colaboran -no todos, lamentablemente-; pero por encima de todo eso nosotros saldremos adelante; así que por encima del dolor, como le dije a esta niña que estaba llorando ahí; una joven de unos 18 años -quizás, como mi hija María Gabriela-; le dije: Sí, esas lágrimas, llora, porque tú eres víctima y esas lágrimas deben ser un compromiso para nosotros, tus padres, para darte Patria. Y ése es mi llamado a todos los padres: hombres y mujeres de Venezuela, a esos niños no podemos permitir que sigan sufriendo, delante de nosotros saquearon a Venezuela. Pero ¡ya basta! Vamos a construir la patria con alegría, con cantos, con fe en Dios y en nosotros mismos, para dejársela hermosa a nuestros hijos. Ése es el reto.

ALÓ PRESIDENTE Nº 63

Desde el Palacio de Miraflores, Caracas

Domingo, 4 de Marzo de 2001

Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez:

Bueno, ¡muy buenos días, Roberto!, ¡buenos días a todos!, ¡qué tal, muchachos!, ¿cómo está el equipo, Teresita?, ¡equipo campeón! ¡Muy buenos días!, a toda Venezuela, muy buenos días compatriotas de toda Venezuela, y quienes nos están oyendo más allá de nuestras fronteras patrias, allá en Cuba, la transmisión por Radio Rebelde, Habana Cuba, y también salimos al aire por toda Venezuela y desde toda Venezuela hacia países vecinos, hacia sectores, nos han reportado desde algunos sectores de Colombia, de Las Antillas, y de países del Caribe, y más allá. Así que, donde quiera que nos estén oyendo, ¡muy buenos días!, a todos desde Caracas, y como ya lo decía Roberto, estamos transmitiendo desde el Salón Bolívar, aquí está hay unas obras extraordinarias, allá tenemos a Miranda, el Generalísimo. Un cuadro, ¿de quién es ese cuadro? Un cuadro extraordinario, Francisco de Miranda, y todo indica que ése es Miranda en la I República, cuando se le dio el título de Generalísimo. Bueno, aquí estamos en el Salón Bolívar. ¡Qué tal, Amaya!, ¿cómo estas? El General de División, Amaya Chacón, inspector general de la Fuerza Armada Nacional, también está con nosotros todo el Alto Mando Militar, junto al equipo de Radio Nacional de Venezuela. Germán Marín Gómez, ¡qué tal!, estuvimos trabajando como hasta las dos, dos y tanto de la mañana, estábamos revisando el Plan Bolívar 2001, que ya arranca en todo el país. Estuvimos revisando los detalles con el General Manuel Rosendo, quien es el jefe del Comando Unificado de la Fuerza Armada Nacional. También, está con nosotros el comandante del Ejército, el General de División Lucas Rincón Romero, está el comandante de la Armada, el Vicealmirante Jorge Sierralta, el comandante de la Fuerza Aérea, General de División Arturo García, el comandante de la Guardia Nacional, General de División Briceño García, y el comandante del Cufan, ya lo había mencionado, el General Manuel Rosendo. Bueno, aquí estamos, yo tenía, bueno, hace poco vinimos a este Salón. Yo tengo muchos recuerdos de este Salón. Allá está el jefe de la Casa Militar y un viejo amigo, más amigo que viejo, el gobernador del estado Lara, Luis Reyes Reyes, además, hombre de estos espacios, también, durante muchos años; comandante del Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército, lo veo por allá, el General Párraga, Luis Felipe Párraga. ¡Saludos a todos!, a los oficiales que están de guardia acá, que nos han recibido, los soldados, por ahí vi un soldado Unda, me dijo que es de Barinas, ese apellido es muy de Portuguesa, Unda, muy de esos llanos de Portuguesa, de Barinas. Saludo a todos los empleados que hoy están trabajando, acá, en el Fuerte Tiuna, los soldados, allá veíamos a los policías militares en sus alcabalas, muy temprano. Los campos de softball, están todos, los vi activos, el campo de Ingeniería. Los domingos el Fuerte Tiuna se convierte, además de Fuerte Militar, todos los días lo es, este no es un Fuerte cerrado al público, todo lo contrario, ha sido así durante muchos años y ahora con mayor razón, pero, los domingos se convierte en un centro deportivo nacional, juegos de fútbol por todas partes, ligas, desde fútbol infantil, diversas categorías, softball, beisbol, gente caminando, igual el Círculo Militar, que esta aquí al lado, al laguito, a lo

largo, bordeando el laguito, gente caminando con su familia, Los Próceres, éste es un ambiente bien pensado, bien construido, bien diseñado, y sobre todo bien mantenido, se ha mantenido, se han mantenido estos espacios. Uno viene aquí y se llena de recuerdos porque son, desde el año 1971, uno se sembró en estos espacios. Pero, yo decía que..., ¿qué tal, Elías?, el Ministro de la Secretaría de la Presidencia, y por allá está Adán Chávez, mi nuevo secretario privado, por ahí lo vi. Ya va a empezar a acostarse muy tarde, ¿no?, que aproveche estos últimos días. Ayer aproveché. ¡No!, ya mañana se acabó la ñapa, hoy tiene ñapa. Bueno, y yo decía que en este Salón, para mí tiene una significación muy especial porque el 4 de Febrero de 1992, ya yo estaba prisionero, prisionero, pero, por supuesto, tratado con dignidad, con altura y con mucha camaradería, debo decirlo así. Yo jamás olvidaré aquellas horas, especialmente eso, la forma como fui tratado por mis hermanos, mis compañeros de arma, a pesar de la situación que aún se estaba viviendo. Entonces, en el Despacho, ahí estuvimos un rato, hasta que se tomó la decisión de que yo saliera a los medios, a través de los medios de comunicación a llamar a algunos compañeros, algunas unidades militares que aún estaban en armas, no habían rendido las armas, era cerquita del mediodía recuerdo, y después de una discusión allá adentro y unas deliberaciones donde yo participé, junto al grupo de generales y almirantes y oficiales de varios grados, que allí estaban, pues, se tomó esa decisión. Ellos la tomaron por supuesto y, en esa misma puerta, allí en esa puerta fue donde yo me paré, donde está este muchacho parado, ahí estaba yo parado y aquí estaban los medios de televisión, las cámaras, los periodistas y fue desde allí donde hablé durante unos, creo que fueron, cuarenta segundos para llamar a rendición y donde desde el fondo, de algún fondo del alma salió aquella frase: “por ahora”. Eso, pues, para mí llena este Salón de mucho significado, en lo personal y, también, en cuanto al proceso que estamos viviendo. Porque en verdad la Fuerza Armada, sus hombres, sus mujeres, sus espacios, están, ¿cómo evitarlo?, ni que uno quisiera, aunque no lo queremos, por supuesto, porque es parte de nuestra alma, diría Bolívar algún día: fuera del ejército, ¿cómo fue que dijo?, fuera del Ejército estoy fuera de mi centro, decía Bolívar. El soldado, en esencia uno es soldado, después de tantos años, vístase como se vista, sea cual sea el ropaje que uno lleve, sea cual sea el cargo que uno ostente, el rol o el papel que uno juegue en un momento determinado de la vida, en esencia uno se hace soldado, se hace soldado. Bueno, entonces, es parte esencial, es parte fundamental de este proceso, está alimentado en el corazón de este proceso está y estará siempre la presencia de estos espacios, de estos símbolos, de estos signos, de estas cornetas, de esta pasión de soldados por la patria. Es esencial. Es como el oxígeno del agua: Fuerza Armada y pueblo. He allí, hidrógeno y oxígeno del proceso bolivariano que está en marcha hoy, sin vuelta atrás. Bueno, así que saludo desde aquí a toda Venezuela, y de manera muy especial al pueblo venezolano; soberano pueblo venezolano que sigue impulsando este proceso con un fervor, con una pasión, con una entrega. A mí de verdad, bueno, ya no me sorprende, después de dos años no me puede sorprender esto, sino que me llena y nos llena a todos de una gran fuerza espiritual y nos fortalece, sobre todo el compromiso, aquí no hay ningún ego, ningún sentimiento egolátrico. ¡No!, ¡no!, ¡no!, aquí lo

que se fortalece, cuando uno percibe como hace unos días en Los Teques, por ejemplo, inaugurando o poniendo la primera piedra de esta obra que tenía quince años en espera, como lo es el Metro de Los Teques que arrancó ya, y dentro de tres años debemos, Dios mediante, estar inaugurándolo para transportar sesenta mil personas diariamente, en esa primera etapa entre Los Teques y Caracas y viceversa por supuesto, pues, ahí estaban miles de personas a lo largo de las calles, rodeando el sitio de la estación El Tambor, donde va a funcionar allí la estación El Tambor, y el apoyo del pueblo y de los hombres, las mujeres, los niños, eso nos fortalece mucho. Ése es el oxígeno, es la esencia de este proceso y por supuesto compartido con la esencia de la Fuerza Armada, y toda esta pasión patriótica que nos impulsa. Les decía que estaba revisando una encuesta, de hace unos días, que me ha llegado, creo que de Eugenio Escuela, una encuestadora muy tradicional de hace muchos años y en verdad, no sorprendido sino comprometido cada día más, cuando leemos los resultados y las opiniones del pueblo, a pesar de tantas dificultades que hemos enfrentado, a pesar de tanta campaña orquestada contra la revolución y contra nosotros, contra este proceso y contra los acontecimientos, los hechos y las decisiones, a pesar de todo eso y a pesar del dolor por la miseria tan grande, tan difícil de superar en apenas dos años, a pesar de todo, allí está el pueblo venezolano manifestando su apoyo en casi un setenta por ciento, según esta encuesta, al gobierno bolivariano, a la revolución bolivariana, a las decisiones que se están tomando, a las políticas económicas, a las políticas sociales, a las políticas internacionales, es decir, el pueblo sabe. Ustedes saben lo que están haciendo. Este no es un gobierno de Chávez ni es un gobierno de un partido ni es el gobierno de un sector, este, en verdad, es un gobierno de ustedes, es un gobierno por ustedes, es un gobierno para ustedes. Una verdadera democracia estamos creando.

ALÓ PRESIDENTE Nº 310

Salón Ayacucho, Palacio de Miraflores, Caracas

Domingo, 4 de mayo de 2008

Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez:

En este mismo instante el pueblo de Bolivia está, como dijo Fidel Castro... ¡Hey, Fidel! How are you? ¡¡Epa Fidel! ¿Cómo estas? Fidel Castro, Cuba. Dijo Fidel un día: "Venezuela, un pueblo bajo el fuego". Bueno, así está Bolivia ahora. Nicolás Maduro, señor canciller. Y bienvenidos todos los invitados especiales a este programa, dedicado, bueno, a la vivienda, ¡la vivienda! Ustedes saben que el Gobierno Bolivariano, esta Revolución dedicada, está por entero a la solución de los más sentidos problemas de ustedes, de todos los venezolanos, aun de aquellos que no nos quieren, ¡qué nos importa! Pero tenemos que garantizarles energía eléctrica, ¿verdad? [risa], tenemos que garantizarles agua ¿no? Ustedes allá, los que pudieran estar viendo este programa, aunque sea para tomar nota de alguna pifia o buscando algún detalle ¿no?, o los que hacen inteligencia;

ustedes pues, todo el país, nosotros estamos pendientes de todo el país. Esta semana tuvimos un fallón, ¿no? en el sistema eléctrico. Bueno, dedicamos horas y horas a evaluar causas, tal, y además a verificar todo lo que se hizo. Hubo una buena respuesta, primero del pueblo, la población, a pesar de un apagón que fue muy grande, no hubo ninguna tragedia; y algunos estaban haciendo planes para que hubiera una tragedia, ¿eh?, no sé qué más, una explosión; no, no, no, la población calma, tranquila, tranquila. Yo salí incluso por ahí a echar ojo, la gente, bueno el metro, tal, la gente caminó; y además actuamos rápido, solucionando rápido. En Estados Unidos, hubo un apagón una vez que duraron como dos días pa' solucionarlo. Bueno, los problemas, nosotros estamos 24 horas al día para garantizarles a todos ustedes, 27 millones de habitantes de este país, nuestro país, aproximadamente, ¿verdad?, bueno qué: la alimentación, la alimentación, la alimentación... la salud, la salud, ¿eh?, la vivienda, los servicios básicos... Quítate, hijo, por favor, espérate. Oye. ¡Ajá! No ves que estoy comenzando el programa. Por favor, después. ¡Ajá! La alimentación, los servicios básicos, la electricidad. Bueno, y, decía Simón Bolívar: "La mayor suma de felicidad posible". La mayor suma de felicidad posible. Y qué casualidad, fíjense ustedes, saludando a Evo, a Bolivia, ese es el mismo camino que lleva Evo, es el mismo camino que lleva Bolivia, pueblos infelices los que han vivido, o como hemos vivido. Que muchas veces, de tanta infelicidad y frustración han tenido que tomar el camino de la violencia, aquí en Caracas, aquí en Venezuela, en el 89; luego la Revolución del gas en Bolivia, del agua, del agua y del gas. Pueblos, bueno, pasando hambre, explotados por unas oligarquías enriquecidas y subordinadas al imperio de los Estados Unidos. ¡Eh!, ¿casualidad? Fíjense ustedes, el mapa de la felicidad. Yo le comentaba anoche a un grupo de amigos lo siguiente, en los últimos meses, años, hemos, hemos visto como nuevas corrientes de... nuevas visiones, van surgiendo en el mundo, nuevas visiones, nuevas visiones. Y eso es muy positivo. ¿A qué me refiero? Que ya instituciones de mucho prestigio, academias, universidades, encuestadoras, etc., no se están dedicando sólo a medir que, si el ingreso en dólares, a medir los indicadores macroeconómicos, ¿no? eso es puro neoliberalismo; ¡no!, ahora hay gente preocupada una vez más en la medición de la felicidad, el mapa de la felicidad, ¿eh? Esta es la Universidad de Leicester, en Inglaterra, ha realizado el primer mapa mundial de la felicidad. Y además ellos alertan, por ahí, aquí están sólo los gráficos, pero yo tenía un material escrito por ahí... ¡Aquí está! Mapa de la Felicidad, Universidad de Leicester, Adrian White, experto en psicología social, ¿uh? Una universidad en Inglaterra, ¿uh? "Según la universidad, ¿eh?, si bien se trata —estoy leyendo aquí— de un área muy subjetiva, el análisis es muy confiable. El experto en psicología social, Adrian White, basó su análisis en las siguientes variables, Nicolás, fíjate: esperanza de vida. Bueno, es una cosa utópica, que andan por ahí: "¡Ah! ¿Usted está feliz?, porque está cantando" No, no, esperanza de vida, mediciones matemáticas pues. La matemática para tratar de medir la felicidad. Vuelvo al tema de la matemática, no se puede entender el mundo sin la matemática, es imposible, y la buena matemática. Esperanza de vida, bienestar económico y acceso a la educación de la población. "Esa universidad utilizó datos publicados por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (Unesco) y cifras de la OMS(Organización Mundial de la Salud), para ilustrar sobre el nivel de felicidad". Ustedes recuerdan a Bolívar. ¡Claro, como no recordar a

Simón Bolívar! Pero cuando Bolívar lanzó su discurso de Angostura, uno de los más profundos discursos de Bolívar, ¿eh?, porque allí él... Bolívar en Angostura, quizá inspirado por el padre río y por la situación moral que vivía el Ejército Bolivariano, de que habían liberado Guayana, y tenían esa inmensa zona bajo control, Bolívar andaba, bueno... en, digamos en plenitud de sus sentimientos, de su, de su existencia política, militar, humana, 1818, 1819. Quien analice las cartas de Bolívar, los discursos de esos días, bueno, era una época jubilosa, de grandes victorias, aun cuando grandes retos. Bolívar entonces allí, él como que hace el mayor esfuerzo, ideológico, filosófico, ¿eh?, de concentración. Bolívar cargada siempre muchos libros, seguramente leyó, tomó nota de sus estudios, de cuando era joven, de sus lecturas, y entonces lanzó tremendo discurso, que él mismo de puño y letra lo hizo, y Bolívar incorpora allí el concepto de la felicidad, de la felicidad. Ahora, el concepto de la felicidad ya ante lo habían manejado algunos teóricos, Jeremy Bentham, por ejemplo, 1789, 6 años tenía Simón Bolívar, cuando Jeremy Bentham, allá en el Reino Unido, allá en Inglaterra, desarrolló el tema de la felicidad. Es la corriente de la filosofía moral, filosofía moral, ¿eh? Entonces, dijo Bentham esto que voy a leer: "El objetivo político debería ser el de traer la mayor felicidad al mayor número de personas posibles". Bolívar, ¿cuántos años después? 89, al 90, 1; al 800, 11; 30 años después... ¿30? 11... Sí, 30 años después Bolívar, que se leyó a estos teóricos, Bolívar no dejó de estudiar a todos aquellos teóricos, filósofos de su época, bueno de su época y de los años anteriores, de la historia, pues, de la antigüedad: Platón, Aristóteles. Bolívar leyó mucho, estudiaba mucho, ¿eh? Su biblioteca fue de las más, a pesar de que anduvo en guerras todos años, un baúl lleno de libros, de los mejores libros. Bueno, luego Bolívar recoge y precisa, precisa en Angostura, o recoge con precisión, cuando dice: "El mejor sistema de Gobierno será aquel que le proporcione a su pueblo la mayor suma de: estabilidad política, de seguridad social y de felicidad posible". Un concepto moral, un concepto filosófico, político. Bueno en ese camino vamos nosotros. Esa es la línea central de la doctrina bolivariana revolucionaria. Que hoy brota por todas partes, también en Bolivia. Desde aquí, bueno, nuestra solidaridad con el pueblo de Bolivia, con Evo, y que continúen su camino, ¿eh?, para lograr, para aquel pueblo hermano y querido, aquella nación hermana y querida, que lleva el nombre de Bolívar, además, la mayor suma de felicidad posible. Bueno, fíjense ustedes: El mapa de la felicidad. A global projection of subjective well-being. No sé qué leí, pero leí ¿no? [Raúl] Ameliach, ¿qué dice aquí? ¿Tú hablas inglés, no? ¡A ver!, pon aquí la... ¿Qué pasó, esto no puede salir al aire? ¿Ah? Dale pues. El mapa, ¿ve? A global projection, una proyección global, ¿no?, de estado de bienestar, ¿no?, subjetivo. Lo que ellos llaman la felicidad pues. Fíjense ustedes, mientras más colorado más feliz, mientras más rojo ¿verdad?, más feliz. Miren el color de Venezuela, es de los más intensos, de los más intensos... quizá... ¿Sí se ve bien, no?, ¿eh?, fíjate. Bueno, y es que Venezuela, ahora cuando vamos a los números, a los números, aparece en América Latina, en el segundo lugar, detrás de Costa Rica, vean esto es como una pirámide, quizá la forma de graficarlo no ha sido la mejor, ¿ve? Pero, imaginémonos, que esta es una pirámide, ¿ve?, y aquí está Venezuela en segundo lugar, después de Costa Rica, ¿eh?, es el lugar 25 en el mundo, ocupa Venezuela, ¡25 en el mundo!, y segundo en América Latina.

ALÓ PRESIDENTE Nº 369

Escuela B.sica Nacional “Flores de Catia”. Parroquia 23 de Enero, Caracas.

Domingo, 9 de enero de 2011.

Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez:

¡Domingo 9 de enero! y estamos en el 9 de enero, pero, en el 23 de Enero, ¿quién entiende eso? ¡Ah! tiempo y espacio; en el espacio 23 de Enero. ¡Miren!... Un paneo, muchachos, para allá, (¿cómo llaman ustedes?), un paneo, allá. ¡Mira los bloques!, ¿Qué bloque será ése, Felicia?, ¿tú no conoces por aquí?, ¿qué bloque sera aquél, Andrés? ¿Ah?, bloque 29 y bloque 30, mi querido 23 de Enero; yo me la pasaba por aquí, cuando era cadete de primer año, cadete de Segundo año y brigadier; y ¡allá están los superbloques! Ésa fue una buena idea y un buen proyecto, en el gobierno del general Marcos Pérez Jiménez, y despues llegaron los adecos, miren, ¿eh?, y dejaron al pueblo a la deriva; con la supuesta democracia. No defiendiendo a la dictadura de Pérez Jiménez, ¡no!, la hubiera combatido, pero, “a Dios lo que es de Dios, y al César lo que es, del César”, ¿verdad?, .ffijate!, ¡ve!, tú no habías nacido, ¿tú naciste en qué año? ¡Tú eres un chamo vale!, ¡ffijate!, [risa], un chamo, ¿no es un chamo? ¡Mira! ¡ffijate!, eso lo mandó hacer el general Marcos Pérez Jiménez. –Yo era un niño, y él estaba–, cuando yo nací Pérez Jiménez era el Presidente en 1954, ¿ve?, también mandó hacer: la autopista Caracas-La Guaira –esa la hizo Pérez Jiménez–, y la autopista Regional del Centro, y la Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas, y el Fuerte Tiuna y todo ese conjunto de Círculo Militar, la avenida Los Próceres –eso es bueno que se sepa–, y comenzó hacer, hizo la primera etapa de la gran represa del Gu.rico, (y esa la dejaron los adecos igualito, la abandonaron después); y comenzó hacer todo lo que es el complejo de Matanzas: la Siderúrgica, el Guri, ¡todo eso! Era un hombre muy inteligente y tenía un ¡proyecto nacional!, un proyecto nacional desarrollista. Yo conversé con el general, Pérez Jiménez, una tarde larga en Madrid –y me echó cuentos y cuentos–, ya estaba bastante afectado de salud, le había dado un infarto, tenía problemas de salud y, me dijo: “Mire, comandante, si es que a usted le permiten llegar a Presidente, tenga en cuenta estas ideas”; ¿eh? un proyecto, claro, el proyecto nuestro, es otro, muy, muy distinto, porque coloca en primer lugar lo social, no es el proyecto desarrollista, pero, sin embargo,–repito–, “a Dios lo que es de Dios y al César lo que es del César!; ahí está el 23 de Enero y después eso se abandonó, ¡eh!, y se fue poblando todo esos ranchos. Yo tengo una foto, por all en Miraflores, hay unos libros, de cuando comenzaron hacer el 23 de Enero, las máquinas haciendo las terrazas, no se veía ni un rancho, en todo esto, no había, eran bosques, pues, luego vinieron los adecos y los copeyanos, ¡el populismo!; y ¡permitieron!, no sólo [no sólo] permitieron, ¿eh?, motivaron, empujaron al pueblo. Se traían gente del interior, engañados, y les daban cuatro tablas, cuatro bloques, una lata de zinc y les permitían hacer un rancho, y con eso los tenían, ¿eh?, así se fueron ganando mucha gente, “¡ay, qué bueno es Don Rómulo!”, ¡qué bueno es!, te condenaron allí; allí estamos nosotros ahora con esta gran batalla, para darle al pueblo lo que es del pueblo, ¿eh?, vida digna y justicia social, ¡Socialismo! Socialismo, democracia verdadera!. Bueno, aquí estamos hoy, en la Escuela Básica Nacional “¡Flores de Catia!” es una

escuela nueva, –mírenla muchachos, cámara, luces, cámara acción–, vean, esto es nuevo, este era un patio lleno de monte, allí al lado está el liceo, –uno de los liceos más tradicionales de todas estas barriadas–, del 23 de Enero, que lleva el nombre, por cierto, de un barinés, ¡ilustre barinés! Fue diputado por Mijagual, al primer Congreso hace 200 años, en estos días estaba instalado el Congreso Constituyente de la Primera Rep.blica, Venezuela estaba naciendo, pues, estaba ¡el parto en plena marcha, 200 años, Manuel Palacios Fajardo!, un gran revolucionario, escritor, Manuel Palacios Fajardo tiene un libro que se llama La revolución en América. Fue un ideólogo, asesor directo de Simón Bolívar, lamentablemente murió muy joven, (allá en Angostura). Poco después del Congreso, él fue uno de los redactores, –junto a Simón Bolívar–, del proyecto de Constitución de Angostura y ¡ayudó a Bolívar!, a elaborar el discurso que dio ese día, un discurso muy pro-socialista, “.igualdad, igualdad!” –decía Bolívar–, “¡la ley de leyes, debe ser la igualdad!”, ¡ésa es la piedra fundamental del Socialismo!, ¿eh?, de nuestro Socialismo Bolivariano, democrático, venezolano, del siglo XXI ahora, está bien bonito. Ahí está Jennifer Gil ¿Cómo estás? Jennifer? la ministra Jennifer, –le dicen algunos, sus amigos le dicen “la negra” Jennifer–, ¿Cómo estás Jennifer?, ¿eh?, bueno, comienzan las clases mañana de nuevo y estamos haciendo un gran esfuerzo, para terminar la migración de miles y miles de refugiados, que por obligación, por necesidad, más bien, se vinieron a las escuelas, aquí los atendimos; en esta escuela por ejemplo, totalmente nueva, una escuela básica, aquí se da de primero a sexto grado, eh, aquí estuvo un grupo de refugiados de aquí del 23, pues, ¿Cuántos estuvieron aquí de refugiados? Para refugios que serán también transitorios, pero, poco mejores, pues, la escuela fue el primer refugio y muchos otros lugares, iglesias, aun cuando, bueno los curas de parroquias prestaron las iglesias, la jerarquía eclesiástica no quiso, ¡volteó la cara!, qué cosa tan dolorosa, .no?, dijo el monseñor que las iglesias no deberían ser utilizadas como refugio, eso lo vi yo, ¡increíble, pero, cierto!, ¡increíble, pero, cierto, Izarra!, (¿lo viste?, ¿tú lo viste?, ¿verdad?), ¡no!, ¡no!, que las Iglesias, ¿no?, ¿ve?, qué cosa, ¿no?, pero, los curas de parroquia ¡sí!, porque los curas viven con el pueblo, los curas de la parroquia, como decía, Alí Primera: “Para hacer la revolución no busques al cardenal, busca al cura de parroquia”, dile que: Dios no se molesta/que él está contento con Revolución. Yo sí quise aprender a tocar guitarra, pero, nunca me puse y en Yare, el sargento Freitas, toca guitarra, y entonces, yo le dije: “¡Enséñame!” Teníamos tiempo, pero, yo soy zurdo, entonces, había que voltear las cuerdas y esto, ¿no? déjalo así más bien. Una guitarra para zurdos porque el mundo cree, los derechos creen que van a dominar al mundo, aquí estamos los zurdos, ¡zurdas conducta, más nada, zurda conducta! Bueno, bonita escuela. ¡El 23! ¡El 23!, hay fiesta en el 23! Yo no bailaba nada, yo no bailo nada, pero, yo bailaba por allí salsa, ahí ¿tú sabes? hacia el intento, salsa de la buena, ¡salsa brava!, ¡bravo!, aquí está Bolívar. ¡Mira! Liceo “Manuel Palacio Fajardo”, bueno, es el liceo allí, ¿no?, ¡ajá!, y ésta es la Unidad Básica. Flores de Catia [Flores de Catia], y aquí está el rostro de Bolívar, aquí izan la bandera los niños, ¿verdad? Y cantan el Himno Nacional: Gloria al Bravo Pueblo que el yugo lanz./la ley respetando... Tiene sus baños, su agua fría, tienen su comedor, aulas frescas, cocina ¿y allá arriba? ¿Eso también es de la escuela?