Chapter 4 discusses the role of the party system in explaining statist economic reforms in Venezuela during Hugo Chávez’s presidency. It argues that the disarray of the party system during the late 1980s and early 1990s favored the rise of outsider, anti-system candidates and steered decision making away from Congress, which undermined the opposition’s ability to shape the president’s economic reforms. Once these reforms were undertaken, oil revenues allowed Chávez to sustain statist policies over time. Although sudden economic crises were absent in the years leading to Chávez’s election in 1998, the gradual deterioration of economic conditions contributed to the weakening of the party system. Other factors, including organized labor, the depth of neoliberal reforms, and the weakness that characterized the executive at the time Chávez reached power did not play a significant role in explaining statist reforms in Venezuela.

The leader and the led: hegemonic strategies in the leadership of Hugo Chávez

This chapter explores how Hugo Chávez came to power as president of Venezuela, focusing on the strategies he used to achieve hegemony. It examines not only the political content of the Chávez discourse...
but also its cultural content and how that contributed to his gaining legitimacy with the majority of the Venezuelan population and thus moving towards hegemony. It first looks at the origins of Chávez and the Bolivarian Movement and then analyses the coup d'état of 1992, the emergence and construction of Chávez's discourse and symbolism, and the subsequent transformation of the military Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 into the electoral and popular civic-military Movimiento Quinta Republica, which, allied to other leftist movements and parties in the Polo Patriótico, led to Chávez's victory in the 1998 elections. The chapter also examines the more recent attempt at unification of these disparate elements into a unified Socialist party, Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela. Finally, the chapter considers the manner in which Chávez reshaped Venezuela through the mechanism of the Asamblea Nacional Constituyente and the resulting Bolivarian constitution of 1999.

Democrat or authoritarian? Democracy in Bolivarian Venezuela in comparative perspective

Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

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Hugo Chávez has been repeatedly accused of authoritarianism, principally by opposition leaders but also by many foreign supporters of the opposition and even amongst some on the left. This chapter explores this dichotomy between democracy and authoritarianism in the Chávez government. Chávez has sometimes been compared with another Latin American president branded as both populist and authoritarian, Alberto Fujimori of Peru (1990–2001). Both presidents have been accused of authoritarianism, yet both presidents came to power through democratic means. Both presidents also based their discourse on a celebration of the ‘people’ against a corrupt and corrupting system. Both therefore raise questions about concepts of democracy and authoritarianism within the context of populism. To facilitate the comparison between Chávez and Fujimori, this chapter uses a framework based on ideas on democracy found in D. Rueschemeyer et al. and Roald Dahl, which encompasses five key policy areas generally accepted as indicative of democracy: electoral law and practice, presidential authority and institutional autonomy, human rights, media freedom and the right to information and associational autonomy.
Since coming to power in 1999, President Hugo Chavez has used the windfall of high oil prices to remake Venezuela internally along the model of twenty-first-century socialism and, even more audaciously, to rewrite global relations by directly challenging U.S. hegemony. The dramatic ascendency of the country in hemispheric and global international relations over the past decade is the subject of this book. The chapters offer insights into a wide array of questions hanging over Venezuelan foreign policy and the leadership of the maverick president, Chavez. While revenue from petroleum exports has swelled national coffers and allowed the expansion of public programs and the extension of aid to foreign countries, bolstering Chavez's popularity at home and abroad, the volatility of petroleum prices and the neglect of other export industries have the potential to render Chavez's—and Venezuela's—power tenuous.

**Populism, globalisation and the socioeconomic policies of the Chávez government**

Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

Previous democratic regimes in Venezuela, preceding the emergence of Hugo Chávez, failed in the long term to establish policies aimed at lessening social divisions thus losing popular legitimacy. Chávez exploited this lack of legitimacy and presented an alternative model seeking to democratise the political space, furthering participation of the popular classes and thus gaining the legitimacy denied the previous puntofijista regime. Central to this strategy was the use of discourse dividing the social space along antagonistic lines—el pueblo versus the oligarchy and partidocracia. This chapter examines the socioeconomic policies of the Chávez government, using a structure drawn from Susan Strange's book States and Markets based on four areas of political economy—finance, production, security and knowledge. Strange's
framework of analysis for international political economy is based on four basic values: wealth, security, freedom and justice. This chapter also discusses Chávez's populism and how his government is seeking to alter the position of Venezuela within the wider international framework of globalisation.


Harold A. Trinkunas

in Crafting Civilian Control of the Military in Venezuela: A Comparative Perspective

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This chapter examines the militarization of the Venezuelan state during the administration of President Hugo Chávez. It explores the link between the role of the military in Venezuelan politics, the deinstitutionalization of civilian control of the armed forces, and political destabilization in Venezuela. Hugo Chávez's victory in the presidential election in 1998 and his political agenda brought about major transformations in civil-military relations, such as the military's expanded jurisdiction in state affairs and simultaneous elimination of the underpinnings for civilian control of the armed forces. This transformation has generated enormous political and economic tension within society and resulted in two military rebellions.

The Catholic Church and the Leftist Populist Regimes of Latin America: Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia

Jeffrey Klaiber

in Democracy, Culture, Catholicism: Voices from Four Continents

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Klaiber analyzes the relationship between the Catholic Church and the leftist populist regimes of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Evo Morales in Bolivia. In each case, the populist leaders have used messianic rhetoric to describe their own leadership and associate themselves with the aspirations of the peasant class. At the same time, they have identified themselves as the voice of their national cultures, a move meant to separate civil society from the influence of
the Catholic Church. Yet, the leaders in each country support Christian-inspired social and educational services (e.g., Fe y Alegria schools). Historically, the Catholic Church has served as the moral mediator between national governments and civil society. It remains to be seen whether the Church will continue in that role as the political fortunes of leftist populist movements change over time.

Venezuelan international relations in the age of globalisation
Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

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Populism is essential for explaining chavismo, but much of the literature on populism fails to take sufficient note of the wider context of globalisation, viewing it primarily from narrower institutionalist perspectives. The previous chapter discussed populism in the context of democratisation processes, and how democracy's spread throughout Latin America remains incomplete. This chapter looks at globalisation from the perspective of its impact on development theory. It examines Anthony Payne's ideas on 'the global politics of unequal development', which neatly brings together the concepts of globalisation and development into one overarching theory. It then considers Venezuela's foreign policy and international relations (with China, India, Russia, Colombia and the United States) in the light of these discussions, arguing that it has sought to expand on and safeguard its emerging model by putting greater emphasis on a much more Latin Americanist and internationalist perspective, rather than the traditional pro-United States and anti-communist policies of previous governments.

Structural fractures, crises, the state and the emergence of Chávez
Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

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This chapter discusses Jürgen Habermas's ‘legitimation crises’ model and argues that Venezuelan society did not manage to achieve sufficient levels of robustness and inclusiveness to avoid a legitimation crisis of the entire system. This chapter examines these issues in an integrated manner, arguing that social fissures based on class and race have been integrated into Venezuela's development strategy, undermining it, as they perpetuate, and in turn are perpetuated by, the country's economic dependency on the advanced capitalist countries. To prove this, the chapter first analyses data supporting the thesis of Venezuelan economic dependence and then goes on to examine the rise and fall of the Punto Fijo system. It also contends that Hugo Chávez's emergence signals a polarisation around race and class, with Chávez finding support amongst the poorer darker skinned groups while the opposition support rests in the lighter skinned middle and upper social groups. Finally, the chapter considers the rise of neoliberalism and the death of a united Venezuela.

The Democratators
Joel Simon

in The New Censorship: Inside the Global Battle for Media Freedom
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Publisher: Columbia University Press
DOI: 10.7312/columbia/9780231160643.003.0003
columbia/9780231160643.003.0003
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines one of the most critical challenges to the media, the “democratators,” who came from a new generation of autocrats. The democratators have adapted to the new global reality as a result of being deprived of an ideological basis for state control of information. Instead of counting on direct control and brute force, they use stealth, manipulations, and trickery. While a few old-style dictatorships exercise absolute control over their domestic media, today's autocrats generally attempt to hide their policies behind a democratic façade and thus become part of the international community. Some of the most successful democratators include Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Russia's Vladimir Putin, and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. The chapter looks at these countries' systems of media control and how each leader established strategies of tyranny based on trial and error and their own historical circumstances.
“Bolivarian” Anti-Semitism
Claudio Lomnitz and Rafael Sánchez

in Powers: Religion as a Social and Spiritual Force

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: March 2011
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the use of religious symbolism to disempower others. It surveys recent cases of anti-Semitism in Venezuela that are directly related to Hugo Chávez's attempts to stabilize his position as the nation's leader. It argues that the attack on the Tiferet Israel Synagogue in Caracas on January 30, 2009, is part of a continuous stream of anti-Semitic statements and acts in Venezuela, which associate the Jews with Adolf Hitler and the devil through the symbolism of swastikas and the number 666, the Mark of the Beast in Revelation 13:18. Such anti-Semitism, combined with populism, military uniforms, and homophobia, helps to construct the regime's opponents as enemies of the state by associating them with Zionist imperialism and the Jews. It thus legitimates either expelling these outsiders from the body of the nation or subjecting them to the will of the people. This ideology has a firm basis in the work of the Argentine Holocaust denier Norberto Ceresole, who acted as Chávez's adviser, rather than in the writings of the great liberator Simón Bolívar.

The consequences and impact of populism: institutionalisation and democractisation in Chávez's Venezuela
Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

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Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the political consequences and impact of populism. Examining the literature, two principal consequences of populism emerge: increased popular participation and diminished institutionalisation. The chapter argues that this analysis overlooks the influence of ideology on the extent of popular participation in specific populist experiences, and fails to place populism and specific populist governments in Latin America within a global and regional context. In order to deal with these issues, the chapter examines some writings on
populism by two well-known U.S.-based political scientists, Kurt Weyland and Kenneth M. Roberts, who emphasise the consequence of diminished institutionalisation. It then considers the failings in this analysis, referring to the current global and regional context, particularly the expansion of democracy in the age of globalisation. The chapter also looks at Hugo Chávez's presidency to illustrate these arguments, comparing it with Alberto Fujimori's presidency for comparative purposes.

Introduction

Ralph S. Clem and Anthony P. Maingot

in Venezuela's Petro-Diplomacy: Hugo Chavez's Foreign Policy

The book focuses on continuity and change in Venezuela's petro-diplomacy. Venezuela's foreign trade deals connected directly to both the paramount energy security issue and the desire to limit U.S. influence, but they also illustrated the limitations inherent in the inertial international economic system. The economic fate of Venezuela rested on its capacity to exploit that resource and, perhaps even more so, on the price set by the international market. By 1976, Venezuela's oil-driven foreign policy initiatives had run out of steam. They came up against the same two powerful hemispheric forces that had stymied Bolívar a century and a half before: fragmentation and nationalist rivalry. The chapters in this book offer insights into a wide array of questions hanging over Venezuelan foreign policy and the leadership of the maverick president, Chavez.

The Cuba-Venezuela Alliance and Its Continental Impact

Max Azicri

in Cuba in a Global Context: International Relations, Internationalism, and Transnationalism

Since at least 1999, Cuba and Venezuela have worked together to establish a partnership based on a mutual reinforcement of sociopolitical forces and historical, ideological, and personal friendship factors cemented by geographical proximity. Although Cuba’s socialist regime
and Venezuela’s Bolivarian process remain systemically and structurally different, the two countries have put a claim to the Bolivarian ideal of a united Latin America free of U.S. dominance. This closely knit partnership has had a significant domestic effect—recognizing their capacity to help each other and exchange goods and services in a collaborative fashion. It has been matched by its widely felt continental impact. In addition to a source of vital resources and services for both countries, the partnership has promoted Latin American unity and other long-held objectives. ALBA—the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of the Americas—has been instrumental in pursuing such goals.

From Crisis to Collapse of the Party Systems and Dilemmas of Democratic Representation: Peru and Venezuela

Martín Tanaka

in The Crisis of Democratic Representation in the Andes

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: June 2013
Publisher: Stanford University Press
DOI: 10.11126/斯坦福/9780804752787.003.0002
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the role of the party systems collapse on the crisis of democratic representation in Peru and Venezuela. It explains that Alberto Fujimori and Hugo Chávez dismantled the preexisting political order through institutional reforms and established competitive authoritarian regimes in which democratic representation was replaced by plebiscitarian mechanisms of legitimation. This chapter also highlights the challenges for the countries in rebuilding state institutions with weakened political and social actors and in constructing a new system of democratic representation that is pluralistic and participatory.

Desire For Exception

Didier Fassin

in Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: May 2012
Publisher: University of California Press
DOI: 10.1525/california/9780520271166.003.0008
Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the aftermath of Tragedia in Venezuela in 1999, when the National Constituent Assembly declared a state of emergency and gave full power to President Hugo Chávez to deal with the humanitarian situation. The disaster affected all social categories indiscriminately which brought the entire country together and led to the
mobilization of 13,200 members of the three armed forces and police. Their aim was to transfer the homeless to shelters, to respond to urgent needs, to collect and distribute humanitarian aid, to administer medical care and recover bodies, to clean the water pipes and sewers, and to clear the streets. Security and humanitarianism went hand in hand, although the security forces themselves were also accused of excesses, abuses, looting and destruction. Thus even the initial wave of solidarity quickly gave way to looting by survivors, misappropriation of donations, abuses by the military, settling of accounts and complacent indifference of the privileged classes toward the victims.

Conclusion: populism and democracy in a globalised age

Barry Cannon

in Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution: Populism and Democracy in a Globalised Age

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This book has grouped a number of central questions into four central pillars—the ‘four Cs’: context, causes, characteristics and consequences. Hence, the book asked: What were the contexts in which Hugo Chávez emerged? What were the immediate causes of his emergence? What policies have been implemented—in other words what are the characteristics of chavismo? And finally, what consequences is chavismo having on Venezuela? This book has also examined the socioeconomic policies of the Chávez regime to show the extent to which Chávez has departed from established globalisation processes, so gaining legitimacy and establishing hegemony; the relative levels of democracy and authoritarianism found in the Chávez presidency; and Venezuela's foreign policy placing it within Anthony Payne's theory of the 'global politics of unequal development'. Finally, the book has argued that populism is a key explanatory concept for understanding politics in Latin America but that it is imperative to place the national context within the wider international structure in order to fully understand the phenomenon.
The Liberator’s Sword
Alejandro E. Gómez Pernia

in Simón Bolívar: Travels and Transformations of a Cultural Icon

Published in print: 2016 Published Online: January 2017
Item type: chapter

Alejandro Gomez Pernia analyzes the ways through which the swords of Simón Bolívar emerged as symbols of national and regional identity in the Venezuelan political imagination since the late nineteenth century, and more recently, in the ideology of the Bolívarian Movement in Venezuela leaded by Hugo Chávez. It explores these issues in the light of a long ideological tradition of hero worship established by the historiography of the country, defined by Germán Carrera Damas as the “cult of Bolívar,” and understood by the Bolívarian revolutionaries of the present as a champion of the people. It also studies how subversive left movements in Colombia incorporated that representation of the Libertador into their ideologies assuming his swords as a symbol of resistance since the 1970s.

When the Boat Comes In
Nicholas Roberts

in Simón Bolívar: Travels and Transformations of a Cultural Icon

Published in print: 2016 Published Online: January 2017
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Eugenio Montejo’s poem “Nostalgia de Bolívar” (1976) depicts Simón Bolívar as the (symbolic) essence of the Venezuelan land and people. But both are also emptied of this essence, as, within the poem, Bolívar departs to sea on a boat. “Bolívar” becomes a “floating signifier,” open to all and not bound to any one meaning. Its status as that which holds together all Venezuelans depends on this. In present-day Venezuela, however, the name “Bolívar” is irrevocably tied to those of “Chávez” and his Revolución Bolivariana. As a result, politically and socially, Bolívar has been closed off from effective use by others, amid an increasing call to “de-Bolívarize” the country and its political discourse, whilst, culturally, the revered figure of Montejo’s poem has been replaced by one satirized in stand-up routines. Will Bolívar set sail once more? Or will his current incarnation prove the undoing of the multivalent mythic Bolívar in Venezuela?
Rumbas in the Barrio
Sujatha Fernandes

in Curated Stories: The Uses and Misuses of Storytelling

Published in print: 2017 Published Online: June 2017
Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190618049.003.0006
Item type: chapter

This chapter presents an alternative example of the state-sponsored storytelling workshops conducted through the Misión Cultura program in Venezuela under the former radical leftist leader Hugo Chávez. The Misión Cultura provides an opportunity to examine what kinds of storytelling might be available in a context of heightened social movements and a state that has been rolling back neoliberalism. While the Misión Cultura promotes forms of subject-making and narrative based in dominant liberal tropes, it has also created openings for the telling of stories grounded in collective movements and struggles of everyday life that contain the seeds for more oppositional modes of agency.